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18 December 2017

Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum
The Miners' Hall
Redhills
DURHAM
DH1 4BD

Dear members of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum,

RESPONSE TO PRE SUBMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

Thank you for formerly consulting the county council on the pre submission draft Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.

First of all, on behalf of the county council I wish to convey recognition to the amount of time and resource which has been put into progressing to this stage of plan making, particularly in light of the requirement placed upon the Forum to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as part of the plan making process.

However, notwithstanding the level of support which has been provided to the Forum by relevant council officers (which has included the undertaking of two separate health checks) the council continues to have a number of concerns regarding the draft plan as it stands at present. The level of concern varies according to the issue and implications they pose. However, some of these concerns are extremely significant. Unfortunately this puts into question whether this version of the plan would meet the mandatory criteria known as the 'Basic Conditions' which central government requires a neighbourhood plan must meet in order for it to progress successfully to adoption by the county council. Therefore, the county council has no alternative at this point but to submit these concerns as a formal objection to the plan in its current form.

Appendix A of this response seeks to summarise the concerns which the county council currently has and the reasons for them. A detailed schedule of comments relating to the Sustainability Assessment Report is contained within Appendix B. A detailed schedule of comments relating to specific policies and recommended actions are set out in Appendix C. Given the fundamental nature of the concerns about the manner in which the sustainability/SEA appraisal has been undertaken the

response provided does not extend to the implications for each individual policy in this regard.

Notwithstanding the content of this representation I would emphasise that the county council is committed to continuing to offer positive support to the Forum in the progression of the plan throughout the remainder of the plan making process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Timmiss', written in a cursive style.

Stuart Timmiss
Head of Planning & Assets