

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Response to the County Durham Plan Pre-Submission Draft

COUNTY DURHAM PLAN PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT - Consultation October 2013

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Preferred method of contact (please tick): Email Letter

To which part of the County Durham Plan does your representation relate?

POLICY 50 Allocating and Safeguarding Transport Routes and Facilities

Q1

Do you consider that this policy/proposal of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan to be Legally & Procedurally Compliant and Sound?

Legally and Procedurally Compliant No (Go to Q3)

Sound No (Go to Q3)

Q2 – not relevant.

Q3

Why do you consider that this Policy/Proposal of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan is not Legally & Procedurally Compliant or sound? Is it:

Positively Prepared? No
Justified? No
Effective? No
Consistent? No

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Q4

If you do not consider this policy/proposal of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan to be Legally & Procedurally Compliant or Sound please use this box to explain why.

1. The Trust has already commented on the issue of new infrastructure as it relates to the two proposed relief roads for Durham City and on the gratuitous set of principles for endorsing new transport infrastructure as set out in Policy 49.
2. The Trust is generally supportive of the current rail and freight transfer proposals set out in paras 9.33-9.36. However, Policy 50 **falls short of being positively prepared** in that it takes insufficient account of the regional transport picture, the concern of a new combined authority transport body from April 2014. The Trust believes that money to be raised from developers and currently earmarked for the two relief roads could be more sustainably used to help improve rail links between Durham City and the north and the north east.
3. The new transport function of the Combined Authority should give priority to improving public transport links between the Central Durham area and the Tyne and Wear conurbation, as opposed to supporting a road-building programme designed by Durham Council to address more exclusively local issues. The safeguarding of those parts of the Leamside line within or along the County boundary should also be extended to the former Durham-Sunderland branch between Newton Hall and Leamside, for the same reasons that are set out in para. 9.34 of the draft plan. This safeguarding would be consistent with Policy 2 of LTP3 and with the Government's confirmation in 2012 of additional funding to improve local rail capacity into the Newcastle urban area.¹ Safeguarding the Leamside line should include provision of a station at Ferryhill.
4. The Trust welcomes consideration of options for extending the operations of the Tyne & Wear Metro into the county from their existing terminus on the former Durham-Sunderland branch at South Hylton to the proposed new railway station at Horden Sea View (Paragraph 9.30) but it would wish to see the Leamside line also included in considerations for any extended metro. This could provide opportunities for sustainable rapid transport links to be created from the Newton Hall and Belmont/Sherburn areas to Washington, Newcastle and Sunderland via Rainton, relieving the A167, A690 and A1(M). It would possibly also allow the Belmont Park & Ride site to be developed into a major multi-modal transport interchange, capable of feeding the Tyne & Wear conurbation in addition to Durham City, and thus reducing carbon emissions within the county which arise from cross-boundary car journeys.
5. The Trust endorses the proposal to improve Milburngate Bridge for cyclists and pedestrians (9.39). However this could only be achieved by upgrading and widening the bridge, as mentioned in the Durham City Integrated Traffic Approach. The alternative proposal in that document that existing space on the bridge would emerge once the relief roads were built is not supported by convincing evidence on future traffic flows.

1 *LTP3, Appendix*, pp 8-9; Department for Transport, *Railways Act 2005 statement* (2012), para 25.

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6. The Trust is not convinced that the proposal to move Durham's bus station is justified or positively prepared. The claim in the Integrated Transport Approach that the existing bus station "is not well connected with the primary retail environment" (p. 29) seems odd given that it lies in a street of retail outlets in North Road and when one aim of the draft plan is to boost retail business there. The claim that connections with the immediately adjacent railway station are poor seems exaggerated, given that there is a footbridge over the A690 from opposite the bus station to the road leading directly to the railway. The claim that the present location causes "congestion across the city" is not at all convincing as it stands, and it is very hard to see how a new bus station less than 100 metres away could address such an issue.
7. The new bus station seems an unjustified expense, for the proposal to replace the current A 690 roundabout at the top of North Road with a junction with traffic lights would in itself provide more space for increasing the capacity of the current bus station as well as easing pedestrian access across the A 690 towards the rail station.
8. To improve links between the A690 and A167, the Trust would wish to see safeguarded the route of a proposed minor road scheme, the Browney Lane (B6300) improvement, which has previously appeared in local plans. The line of the road (B6300) should be extended as near to the existing settlement boundary as possible. It would also substantially improve access to the Meadowfield Industrial Estate from the west, remove through traffic from Browney and improve traffic conditions along the A690 between Meadowfield and Nevilles Cross.

Q5

What change(s) do you consider necessary to make this policy/proposal of the Pre-Submission Draft Plan Legally & Procedurally Compliant and Sound

Transport planning for Durham City should be incorporated into the more sustainable and less parochial overview to be expected of the new regional transport body, especially in relation to railways.

Q6

Do you wish to participate in the Examination in Public? (Please note that the Planning Inspector will make the final decision on who will be invited to attend individual sessions at the Examination).

Yes

Q7

Do you want to be informed of the following:

The submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State? Yes

The publication the Inspector report? Yes

The adoption of the County Durham Plan? Yes