

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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## Question 1

*Is this an appropriate Spatial Vision for County Durham, or is there something missing or a more suitable alternative?*

The preamble to this question, in paragraph 2.1, says “...we think the SCS Vision to create an 'Altogether Better Durham' is the starting point to inform the vision for the Plan.” However, the current SCS Vision dates from November 2014, and much has changed since then. Specifically:

- The prevailing assumption was that the country would continue as a member of the EU with European Structural and Investment Funds continuing to be available. These totalled €157 million from 2014 to 2020 and would presumably have continued going forward. The referendum result curtails this funding.
- There was a coalition government which has now been replaced with a Conservative administration;
- The Combined Authority was just getting started. It now seems likely to be replaced with a mayoral combined authority with increased powers, whose geographical coverage has yet to be finalised.
- The County Durham Plan, in the form referred to throughout the SCS, has been withdrawn.

This indicates that the Sustainable Communities Strategy needs to be revisited before it can form a sound basis for the Spatial Vision. Such an exercise could well result in changes to the key outcomes if they are to be realistic.

Such a revision also needs to introduce rigour and evidence into a document that is strong on aspiration and ambition but which lacks the sort of justification that will be needed to satisfy the Independent Inspector when it comes to the Examination in Public.