

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Question 10

Do you agree that these factors are the most important when considering the options for the Plan's spatial strategy or are there others?

The City of Durham Trust would add a further factor for considering spatial strategy, namely impact on female employment rates. Before elaborating on this, we offer comment on paragraph 3.15 relating to quantitative demand: three approaches for estimating the need for employment land are set out (labour demand, labour supply and past take-up). Our comment is that, as described, labour supply mistakenly slips from being the number of working people into being "the estimated growth in jobs". In order to avoid the confusions prevalent in the now withdrawn County Plan, we suggest that it is essential to distinguish between these two different metrics. Labour supply is surely the number of people available for work. Estimating how many jobs will be needed to support the population of the County is a very different thing from estimating how many jobs there will be.

Turning to spatial distribution of development, the factors set out of sustainability; impact on economic growth; viability and deliverability; and efficient use of land are the right headings. Within them is the inescapable tension between County Durham's inheritance of widely dispersed villages and small towns and the question of where the future jobs will be. It is noteworthy that NLP's Employment Land Review of 31st May 2016 refers to about half of all projected overall employment growth between 2016 and 2033 as being in the residential care, social work and health sectors: +5,860 out of a grand total growth of +11,640. These personal care job opportunities will be distributed around the County, which is a good match for our settlement pattern. Moreover, the work patterns of such workers will increasingly reflect the aspiration and policy direction for support to be in the client's own home, which will presumably mean less need for new work premises.

NLP observe in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.30 that, of the new jobs requiring B class space, twice as many will be in warehousing and storage as will be in offices. This would indicate that the distribution of these B class allocations will be more influenced by good road and rail connections than by sizeable population centres. We would suggest from this that Durham City has a valuable but not dominant role in the Plan's choice of spatial distribution of development. As a side point, there is a consequence for sustainability assessments too: if we are trying to improve sustainability and cut down on emissions then the energy used by the delivery trucks, railway engines, etc has to be added into the equation alongside the car and bus miles.

Returning the suggested additional factor, namely impact on female employment rates, it might be considered that this is merely an aspect of qualitative demand. However, we contend that it is fact critical for achieving higher employment rates and lower rates of hidden unemployment. Any test of the spatial distribution of development ought, we say, to

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

measure impact of female employment rates because it is the significantly lower rates presently experienced in County Durham that are dragging down the overall employment rate. It follows that an examination of where female workers (and potential workers) are and will be living and the accessibility and availability of jobs for them is key to achieving the overall aspirations of the County Council and County Plan.