

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Question 13

Considering the implications of each option, please specify which you prefer and please give reasons:

- a. Main Town Focus;*
- b. Sustainable Communities;*
- c. Sustainable Communities with Central Durham Villages;*
- d. Wider Dispersal; or*
- e. None of the above. Please suggest an entire alternative option, for example a new settlement, or a variation of one of the existing options.*

The City of Durham Trust considers that Options (b), (c) and (d) could provide the right distribution of development with the proviso that Options (b) and (c) would need to be associated with revised lower estimates of Objectively Assessed Need (OAN).

Option (a) is not supported; the evidence submitted in relation to the now withdrawn Plan and its Examination in Public demonstrated that unacceptable harm to the setting of the World Heritage Site and unjustifiable deletions of the Green Belt together with two 'relief roads' would be the consequence of seeking to locate at Durham City such a high proportion of the County's new housing.

Option (b) spreads new housing development to key locations across the County and recognises that most of the new job opportunities will be at or near these key locations. This is not only a highly sustainable pattern it also directly addresses the critical need for employment opportunities to be near where people already live so that female activity rates can improve. The caveat we enter is that the overall scale of Objectively Assessed Housing Need will need to be up-dated and reduced for this Option to be able to avoid the damage to the Durham City World Heritage Site and Green Belt identified in our comments above on Option (a). We are clear that Option (b) would be acceptable only if no deletions of Green Belt are involved.

Option (c) places greater emphasis on the villages around Durham City. Many have already benefited from the physical and social regeneration - notably the addition of new families - resulting from areas of new housing, and there is scope for more such beneficial regeneration. However, some of the villages have now reached their physical limits. Again, Option (c) can be supported if lower OAN estimates emerge that obviate over-development of the villages and deletion of any part of the Green Belt.

Option (d) takes distribution to the furthest extent of the four options. It is supported because it offers regeneration to the many communities across the County that still require major improvements to their physical fabric whilst certainly avoiding harm to the World Heritage Site and Green Belt.