

MATTER 1 – LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Issue - Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with statutory procedures and Regulations?

Questions

- b) *Has the Plan's formulation been based on a sound process of sustainability appraisal?*
- 1 Our understanding of the meaning of 'sustainable development' is "living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly" as defined by Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly and carried forward into the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - 2 We find that the Kirklees' Local Plan is contradictory to these aims and the effect its proposals will have in practice, especially in relation to economic growth, and land allocation will undermine any policy commitment the Council might express to carbon emission reduction.
 - 3 We also consider that the overall effect of the Plan will undermine the strong and distinct communities that currently exist in the Valley.
 - 4 In our view, the Sustainability Appraisal has identified a number of sites that we consider are not sustainable yet these continue to be promoted for development.
 - 5 We are not convinced about the proposals made in the Plan to reduce traffic volumes simply by encouraging more cycling and walking, particularly given the terrain in the Holme Valley.
 - 6 The road structure contributes to the nature of the character, appeal and historic importance of the Valley. Modern development might improve traffic flow and reduce congestion yet the Valley is renowned for its narrow, twisting, steep roads. Once they have gone, they will not return. So what price modern convenience? Particularly when the overall aim is to reduce reliance on private cars.
 - 7 Flood mitigation measures are limited, reactive and old fashioned.
 - 8 There is a real opportunity for creative uses of landscape and local heritage which would contribute to the overall for health of the population by promoting cycling, walking and other uses of the countryside and tourism in the Valley and the wider Kirklees area. We consider that these possibilities have been neglected.
- d) *Has consultation on the Plan been undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SD16) and statutory requirements?*
- 1 No.

2 The Statement of Community Involvement set out a series of actions designed at enabling local people to contribute to the Plan. We would like to see evidence from the Council to show that it has delivered on its intent, as we consider the consultation process has been severally lacking. Specially:

- There is no overall summary or map.
- The documents are numerous, long, dense and highly technical making the comprehension difficult for lay people to comment
- The ordering of allocated sites by submission number not helpful nor apparently logical making it difficult to work through and cross reference the documents
- No public meetings were held and very few public communications made during the consultation phases.
- Communication with groups was mainly as a result of the group's initiation
- It was not easy to respond to the on-line questionnaire and it was not easy to use the system to make policy points. These had to be communicated separately.
- It is difficult to see where and how the plan has been changed in response to local representation but we know that changes have been made to accommodate developers (for example at Hade Edge). This gives local people little confidence in the seriousness of the Council's commitment to consultation and less motivation to continue any involvement.
- Similarly it is not clear how the proposed sites were assessed and the lack of transparency serves to make local people feel disenfranchised. Moreover contentious sites have been released for development without full account having been taken of the overall plan.
- Ad hoc approval of sites in the Valley, despite considerable local concern, has occurred without proper assessment of the cumulative effect. This again has led people to feel excluded from the planning process.

g) Does the Plan take sufficient account of long term requirements bearing in mind the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that it should preferably cover a 15 year time period?

- 1 No. We consider that the short-term imperative of building more houses is actually undermining the sustainability of our precious countryside and preventing development in this distinct area which could actually be more sustainable while meeting the real housing need of local people.
- 2 The Council's economic plans are old fashioned and inflexible and have not been properly nor democratically approved.

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- 3 We consider the population projections are too blunt and given the significant differences between the constituent parts of Kirklees should be better nuanced.