

## Comment

Consultee	Mr Peter Evans (1174160)
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Event Name	Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 (Regulation 19)
Comment by	Mr Peter Evans (1174160)
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### Question 2

**Do you consider that this part of the Local Plan is unsound because it is not: (tick all that apply)**

### Question 3a

#### Your Comments

**Please give details of why you consider that this part of the Local Plan is not legally compliant or unsound or fails to comply with the Duty to Cooperate.**

I wish to submit my representation reference the Strategic Skerningham Development as outlined in the Darlington Local Plan 2020 – 2036.

I strongly object the proposal based on the following 3 important points.

- 1). The Darlington Local Plan document was developed prior to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 2). Infrastructure – in particular the existing local road network.
- 3). The estimated housing requirement 2020 – 2036.

Point 1). - The Darlington Local Plan document was developed prior to the Covid 19 pandemic, and as such all estimates for economic growth, employment growth, regional growth, and housing stock requirements should be re-evaluated taking into consideration the 'new norm' that now exists.

This is a simple fact that applies to any plan drawn up pre Covid 19 and the Darlington Local Plan is no exception, to simply ignore the world changing events and not undertake a review would be extremely negligent.

Point 2). - Infrastructure – I appreciate that infrastructure is a great deal more than just the existing local road network. However, it is this point alone which I strongly believe makes the whole Strategic Development 'totally impractical and unsound'.

For 4500 proposed homes, read 6000 to 7000 additional vehicles on the congested local road network from the new housing alone. On top of this 6000/7000 there will also be additional vehicles for the school runs morning and afternoon to the two proposed schools, plus delivery lorries and vans to the businesses located within the proposed development.

Whether access to the Proposed Skertingham Development is via Barmpton Lane or Whinbush Way, all of this additional traffic will at some point merge onto Whinfield Road (A1150) which pre pandemic was absolutely at saturation point. Notwithstanding the overcrowding of the A1150, both Barmpton Lane and Whinbush Way are wholly unsuitable to support such an increase in traffic volume.

At present Barmpton Lane has approximately 170 houses directly located onto the roadside which entails cars parked along both sides of the road and other cars reversing on / off driveways mornings and evenings. This road also directly feeds a garden centre and community allotments (2 access points) plus 6 residential roads which then in turn go onto feed a further 18 residential roads and a Primary School. (Not forgetting it then feeds the village and farms of Barmpton itself).

Whilst Whinbush Way does not have housing located directly onto the roadside as per Barmpton Lane, it does have major access points directly into a large supermarket and petrol station, a nursing home, an assisted living accommodation home, a doctors surgery plus pharmacy, and two areas of Housing Association Flats. Furthermore, Whinbush Way feeds 9 residential roads directly, which in turn go onto feed a further 40 residential roads.

It does NOT require the benefit of hindsight to see that the A1150 simply will not cope with any additional vehicle numbers from the Proposed Skertingham Development, whether it is via Barmpton Lane or Whinbush Way.

Point 3). – similar to point 1). – Any estimate formulated prior to the Covid 19 pandemic must be re-evaluated in light of the new norm that is now emerging. Even the formulae within the National Planning Policy Framework guidelines 2019 should undergo such a review.

Whilst not wishing to argue the numbers of housing stock required, on the face of it the number for Skertingham alone seems extremely high. A figure of 4500 homes as outlined in the Darlington Local Plan equates to an increase in population of somewhere in the region of 10,800 (based on 2.4 persons / household - ONS). This is almost an increase of 10% on the present population of Darlington, which even neglecting the Covid 19 pandemic appears to be extremely high for just one development site.

Summary – Darlington markets itself as an 'ingenious' town, well let's put that claim to the test with a review and a revised Local Plan. A Local Plan that shows some ingenuity and develops / redevelops from the town centre and radiates outwards. It is pointless to simply continue developing on the outskirts of Darlington if the heart of Darlington, the town centre is allowed to 'die'.

I do note some +ve signs in the Local Plan – i.e. the proposal for Northgate House, and that for waste land along John Street – redeveloped in these areas would be beneficial to Darlington. Recent history shows that some of the best redevelopment in Darlington has been on old redundant work sites, (Whesoe – Brinkburn Road, Cleveland Bridge – Neasham Road, Phoenix Tubeman – Wylam Avenue, etc.).

In my view, the massive West Park development does nothing to enhance Darlington and shows little ingenuity, it simply increases the footprint of the town. Whereas, the 3 examples of redevelopment quoted above are developments that do show some ingenuity and do enhance and benefit the local communities.

**Question 6**

**Do you request to be notified that the Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination under section 22(3) of the regulations and to be notified of the adoption of the Local Plan?** Yes, I request to be notified

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Yours faithfully

Mr Peter Evans

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