
Darlington Local Plan Examination

Hearing statement prepared on behalf of Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council

Matter 2 Statement – Amount of development needed in the Borough April 2021

1. Introduction and context

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Jo-Anne Garrick Ltd on behalf of Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Parish Council (LC&MPC). The parish council has made detailed representations at each stage of the preparation of the Darlington Local Plan (DLP). Furthermore, LC&MPC engages fully in development management process, providing detailed comments on planning applications within and potentially impacting on the parish.
- 1.2 LC&MPC was the first parish in the Darlington Borough Council area to successfully prepare a neighbourhood development plan. The plan was subject to referendum in May 2019, where there was a 46.23% turnout, it was supported by 94.7% of those who voted. The Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in June 2019.
- 1.3 The parish council is therefore an important stakeholder in the plan making process and welcome the opportunity to participate in the examination process.

2. Response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions

Economic growth and employment land requirements (Q2.1 and Q2.2)

- 2.1 LC&MPC does not have any specific comments to make in response to these questions, but they wish to reserve the right to make further representations regarding these issues in so far as they may impact on the parish.
- 2.2 LC&MPC fully supports the statements submitted by Darlington Green Party and CPRE Durham with regards to economic growth and employment land requirements.

Household growth and housing requirements

Q2.3:

- 2.3 LC&MPC considers that both the minimum requirement of 422 net additional dwellings and target of 492 net additional dwellings are not justified, positively prepared or consistent with national planning policy. It is accepted that increased housing provision above that resulting from the standard method calculation is the starting point for the determination of the number of homes needed. However, PPG (ID:2a-010-20201216 and 015-20190220) identifies a number of circumstances where increases in housing

need are likely to exceed past trends. Within the DBC area there are no growth strategies with funding in place, no strategic infrastructure improvements, nor is it suggested that DBC has agreed to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities.

- 2.4 It is fully accepted that those matters identified above are not an exhaustive list of reasons to provide support for increase housing provision. However, LC&MPC submit that DBC has not provided the evidence to justify such a vast increase and full consideration has not been given to the level of development delivered in recent years as well as that with planning permission.
- 2.5 LC&MPC fully supports the statements submitted by the Darlington Green Party and CPRE Durham with regards to the additional dwelling requirements.

Q2.4:

- 2.6 In response to Q2.4 regarding the identification of the housing requirement as a range, LC&MPC has no detailed comments on this approach, however, is concerned that this could result in ambiguity and therefore has the potential for the policy to be ineffective.

Other development needs (Q2.5)

- 2.7 LC&MPC does not have any specific comments to make in response to question Q2.5, but they wish to reserve the right to make further representations regarding this issue in so far as it may impact on the parish.