

**Matter 4 – Housing Development**

**Respondent ID 1168369**

**Dated April 2021**

**Representations by Mr N Swinbank**  
**to the Darlington Local Plan Publication Draft**

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**Statement of**

Mr Andrew Moss BA(Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. This Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Nigel Swinbank, the 'respondent'. The respondent's interests are around Neasham, a village defined in the Settlement Hierarchy as a 'Rural Village'.

2. **Inspector's Questions Matter 4, Question 4.1**

- 2.1. As a general comment it is noted that according to the summary table in PG28, the total expected completions 2020/21 – 2024 on sites of <10 dwellings with outline or full planning permission is '0'. The availability of small and medium sites throughout the Plan period is an issue which goes to the soundness of the Plan.

3. **Inspector's Questions Matter 4, Questions Q4.21 & Q4.22**

- 3.1. Policy H1 and reasoned justification paragraph 6.2.10 state that Policy H1 only supports housing development outside the development limits of Darlington main urban area and three service villages in circumstances where there is no longer a demonstrable supply of sites to fully meet the five year requirement. The policy approach does not therefore extend to include the eight rural villages. Whilst supporting the principle of the policy, it is not sound to exclude the rural villages. The rural villages can and should make a contribution where there is not the required supply. It was on such a basis that site 54 in Neasham was consented in 2016 and completed in 2020 pursuant to outline planning permission 16/01020/OUT and 18/00229/RM. The short time scale between the initial planning permission and the completion of the houses is to be noted. In addition to contributing to housing numbers, further benefits included the delivery of a small site by a small building firm providing a bespoke product contributing to the range and mix of housing within Darlington.
- 3.2. The above said, in a Plan led system, and to be sound in NPPF paragraph 35 terms, the Plan should allow for the delivery of the housing strategy in its own terms which should include some housing in each of the Rural Villages over the whole Plan period and provide for an adequate mix of sites, including small sites. Bringing such forward should not be left to circumstances where there is not a demonstrable supply of sites to fully meet the five year requirement and the vagaries of the development management process.

3.3. In the Matter 3 statement, reference was made to Policy 6 of the recently adopted Durham Local Plan which concerns development on unallocated sites. As noted in the Matter 3 statement, a similar policy in the Darlington Local Plan would have merit and be sound.

4. **Inspector's Questions Matter 4, Question Q4.23**

4.1. As set out in the response to Q4.1, it is noted that according to the summary table in PG28, the total expected completions 2020/21 – 2024 on sites of <10 dwellings with outline or full planning permission is '0'. The availability of small and medium sites throughout the Plan period is an issue which goes to the soundness of the Plan.