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Written Statement in response to the following:

M9. Transport and other infrastructure

Q9.8 Do policies IN6 and IN8 set out a sound approach to the provision of utilities and broadband infrastructure in development

- I consider that Policy IN8 does not set out a sound approach to the provision of broadband infrastructure in so far as, although the broadband will be available to the new development, its fibre optic cables run straight in front of existing properties on Barmpton Lane who will be bypassed and not able to connect to this broadband. This was confirmed by a BT Openreach engineer installing this bypass at 11.30pm on Thursday 20th May 2020.
- I live on Barmpton Lane where current download speeds are less than 2mb and upload speeds around 1mb. This is well below national averages. Our lines are old copper BT lines. There is no prospect for an upgrade in the near future.
- Both myself and Whinfield Residents Association have asked the Council, our local councillors and our MP how this could be improved so that local residents can access this facility – the answer is that they recognise the problem and are looking into it – meanwhile fibre broadband passes outside the front of our properties with cables laid by BT Openreach with no connection for us and other residents residing at Barmpton Lane, Darlington.
- I recognise that the government is requiring that all new build properties should support gigabit speed internet, the impact of Covid-19 and the ability to work from home highlighting the importance of broadband internet access, however the Council should be looking to provide this for all areas of Darlington, especially those that will potentially lie on the fringe of new developments who may have it but existing properties will not.
- Para 10.10.17 states that the Council will ensure that broadband infrastructure sites in larger housing sites will be identified and provision gaps closed during the planning application process. The Council must specify now in Policy IN8 the requirements for broadband infrastructure for all new builds and it must also build into this requirement the option for upgrading existing developments, especially where the fibre optic cables to connect new developments run right outside of existing properties. These properties should not be bypassed just because they are not new.
- The Local Plan should not just relate to new developments, it should be a Plan for Darlington as a whole, including existing residents and communities. With this in mind, and given the deliberate bypassing of the BT Openreach fibre optic broadband to existing residents in order

to facilitate new development I would consider Policy IN8 to be unsound in relation to the provision of broadband infrastructure.