

DCC Responses to Examiner Questions of 5 June 2019

1. Would you confirm the dates of the Regulation 16 consultation on the Submission Draft Plan?

That consultation was held between 17th January 2019 and 4th March 2019.

2. Did the environmental bodies make any comments on the 2018 SEA and HRA screening reports?

There are no specific representations from these bodies regarding the 2018 SEA & HRA screening. However during the neighbourhood plan consultations they were given opportunity to comment. The representations received through the 2019 consultation are attached alongside a note of this council's position on the screening opinion regarding the revised plan.

3. Would you provide me with a copy / link to the Settlement Boundary Paper, the Housing Topic Paper, housing sites assessment and the assessment of Local Green Spaces?

All of the background evidence sent to examiner and available on the Community website at:

<https://witton-gilbert.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/policy-areas/evidence-papers/>

4. Has any detailed assessment or study been prepared for the land to the south of Front Street?

Yes, this is located at Appendix A of the submitted Neighbourhood Plan

5. Would the LPA provide me with a statement on the planning context for the Plan area from the standpoint of the emerging Local Plan addressing the position of the village in the settlement hierarchy, the likely level of housing growth required and any specific policy matters that may affect the parish?

Extant City of Durham Local Plan

The adopted development plan for the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area is the City of Durham Local Plan (2004). In terms of housing the relevant policies are considered to be out of date because of the passage of time. It does not propose any specific undeveloped housing allocations. However this plan includes provision for windfall development both within settlements and within the countryside.

This local plan defines a settlement boundary for Witton Gilbert and categories it as a 'Larger Village' (2nd order settlement type in its hierarchy).

Part of the designated Durham Green Belt falls within the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area.

Emerging County Durham Plan

The county council is scheduled to submit the new local plan for the area (The County Durham Plan) for examination on 28th June 2019.

The CDP does not contain a hierarchy of settlements, other than in relation to retail policies. In terms of housing, an assessment of the availability of services and facilities for each settlement has been undertaken. This provides an indication of the degree of accessibility to services and facilities (one strand of sustainability) and has helped inform the selection of specific housing site allocations alongside other considerations outlined in the site selection methodology (a copy can be provided if required).

The CDP housing requirement has been distributed to reflect the preferred CDP spatial strategy and in the context of an existing high proportion of deliverable housing commitments (see attached Housing data sheet for those within the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area. Land rear of Front Street has just been granted consent today at committee. This is not on the sheet).

The CDP makes provision for the full housing requirement for the entire plan period through deliverable commitments and site allocations. A strategic housing allocation (1700 housing units and associated infrastructure) which physically connects to Durham City falls within the wider Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area. This site is located within the Durham Green Belt as currently defined. This Green Belt release is the key strategic planning issue relating to this Neighbourhood Area which will be considered at the forthcoming CDP EiP. No further housing allocations are proposed within the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area. There is a committed site for 400 units which falls on the edge of the western boundary of the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area. This site relates to the settlement of Langley Park. Whilst the site falls within the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area Langley Park falls beyond the scope of the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Plan area. When drafting the neighbourhood plan regard has been had to this matter.

CDP Employment site allocations have been selected having regard to the findings of the Employment Land Review which identifies specific economic corridors and includes an assessment of existing and potential employment land in terms of function, viability and market attractiveness. No such allocations are proposed within Witton Gilbert village itself or the wider Neighbourhood Area.

No retail site allocation requirements for the county have been identified for the plan period.

County Durham is characterized by its dispersed settlement pattern which enjoys a rural setting. As well as specific site allocations the council anticipates that over the lifetime of the local plan there will be further pressure for some windfall development. The CDP therefore includes a criteria based policy framework to manage such development both within the built up area of settlements and within the countryside, including that relating to the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Area. The CDP defers the identification of specific settlement boundaries to neighbourhood plans.

The CDP includes a suite of countywide generic development management policies. There are no other specific policy matters that relate to this neighbourhood area.