



The Planning Inspectorate

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Mr R. Cornwell
The City of Durham Trust
c/o BHP Law
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham DH1 1TH

Our Ref: PINS/X1355/429/1

Date: 31st March 2015

Dear Mr Cornwell,

Re: The County Durham Plan

Thank you for your letter dated 27 March on behalf of the City of Durham Trust and other amenity groups.

I can confirm that Ben Linscott and I as representatives of the Planning Inspectorate will meet with officers from Durham County Council on 2 April at the Council's request. Your letter sets out a number of reservations about the meeting but I wish to assure you that PINS is fully conscious of these matters and indeed has given very careful consideration to them throughout. As to the scope of the meeting, PINS has reached the view that it is appropriate for us as senior representatives to listen to the Council's concerns and to provide any advice that we can within our limited remit about potential ways forward for the examination. Nonetheless, we have emphasised to the Council that the examination is on-going and that Mr Stephens is the appointed Inspector, and therefore any discussion at the meeting must not will not be permitted to prejudice his impartial role or the fair and open conduct of the examination. It would be neither appropriate nor reasonable for us to comment on the merits of the Council's case or that of any other participant in the examination and we will not do so. The Council has confirmed that it understands and agrees with these limitations and that a note of the meeting will be published so that everyone can be kept informed.

Given the limited time available before the meeting, it would not be possible unfortunately to broaden its scope to include representation from the City of Durham Trust and allied groups. In any event, I hope that this letter assures you that the interests of the Trust and others who have raised objections to the County Durham Plan and wish to continue playing a full part in planning for the future of Durham will not be compromised in any way by PINS agreeing to meet the Council on the terms that we have set out. I would like to emphasise that PINS stands by its fundamental core values of fairness, openness and impartiality and is vigilant in maintaining these standards in the conduct of all our business.

Thank you again for your letter and I hope that my reply provides you with the reassurance that you have sought.

I am copying this reply to Stuart Timmiss, Durham County Council as well as to Penny Mordaunt and Roberta Blackman-Woods.

Kind regards

Mary Travers

Group Manager - Plans
