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Ms Valerie Adams
Head of Planning Policy
Darlington Borough Council
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Your Ref:
Our Ref: PINS/L1310/429
Date: 05 December 2010

Dear Ms Adams

As you know, I have been appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Darlington Borough Council's Core Strategy (CS). I have now reviewed the documents that you have submitted to date. While I am unable to reach a view on the CS's soundness at the present stage, I am writing to advise you that I have some specific questions about the submitted CS and its supporting evidence base. These are set out in the Annex to this letter.

For clarification, these comments are not a complete list of my questions about the CS. At present, I have restricted my comments to those matters that, on the basis of the evidence before me, appear most likely to threaten the soundness of the CS.

Please give these comments your urgent consideration and provide me with a written response in the form of brief 'position statements'.

I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me via Lucy Mo, the appointed Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely

Patrick T Whitehead

Inspector

NB: My questions arise from the current issues regarding the status of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East. Whilst I would expect a resolution to the present situation prior to the hearings in January, I consider the Council should ensure that the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy is robust and credible. To this end I have set out some initial questions regarding (a) new housing provision in Policy CS10, (b) the employment land allocation in Policy CS5, and (c) the provision for affordable housing in Policy CS11.