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Ms Valerie Adams  
Head of Planning Policy  
Darlington Borough Council  
Town Hall  
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Your Ref:  
Our Ref: PINS/L1310/429  
Date: 6 January 2011

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Dear Ms Adams

I have received your responses to my questions which are helpful. In part, those questions arose from the issues regarding the status of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East. They were intended to ensure that the evidence base underpinning the Core Strategy is robust and credible following the Council's decision to remove references to the RSS in the Publication Draft Core Strategy (Cabinet 13 July 2010), particularly in respect of Policy CS10. However the situation is evolving and, as you will know, the Government's commitment to revoke Regional Strategies is now consolidated into Section 89 (3) of the Localism Bill, published on 13 December 2010. Until any further announcement is made and/or legislation to formally repeal or revoke RSS is implemented, the decision in respect of CALA Homes means that the RSS is part of the development plan on an ongoing basis.

The Summary Report to the Council's Cabinet meeting scheduled for 11 January includes a recommendation that "*the Council resolve now to adopt the DPDs on receipt of their respective Inspectors' reports*". For the Core Strategy this will probably be in advance of the LDS target of July 2011 and will almost certainly precede the Government fulfilling its commitment to revoke RSSs.

The litigation regarding CALA Homes is not complete and judgement has yet to be handed down, with a hearing scheduled for 17 January 2011. Meanwhile, **the RSS remains relevant as part of the development plan.** As a consequence it would appear necessary for my report to include recommendations reinstating appropriate references to the RSS in the Core Strategy. In reaching this conclusion I have taken account of the answers to my previous questions together with the fact that the DPD has been prepared so as to be in general conformity with the RSS. It will not be necessary for further consultation.

I would be pleased to receive your response as a submission to the Examination. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me via Lucy Mo, the appointed Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely

*Patrick T Whitehead*  
Inspector