

COUNTY DURHAM PLAN: CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER (June 2010)

Comments from the City of Durham Trust

GENERAL POINTS

1. The Core Strategy Issues and Options [CS], despite references to “sustainable development”, is of course predicated on a scenario of continuous development and consumption of the County’s resources which is impossible to sustain in the long-term. In the time span with which the CS is concerned, Trustees would have preferred to see quality of life and the natural environment in prime position.
2. General arrangement of the CS. As an economic document, the CS might have begun with a summary map, say, index of deprivation to reflect the scale and spatial variations in unemployment levels, living conditions, etc. From this starting point, the two alternative approaches - “Option A and Option B” – could be given and the logic of each enunciated.

The two alternative approaches should be mentioned earlier in the CS, and the aims/consequences of both given prominence throughout much of the subsequent document. As it is, many of the Sections are based on the assumption that Option A will be adopted.

Most strangely, although there are 64 questions in the document, each with “options for [us] to choose from” (p.2), there is no question to permit a choice between Option A or B, surely the over-riding, key question on which to choose. Why is this? No less strange is the fact that in *Durham County News*, July/August 2010, in a two-page article on ‘Planning in County Durham’ - the CS as such is not mentioned – there is a tear-out page with 13 questions, one of which does invite a choice between the two Options, albeit the choice is presented in a biased manner. (Refer to answer to Individual Question 3).

The Objectives of the CS are numerous (21). There is no ranking or hierarchical arrangement. Some are clearly more important than others; some may even be found to conflict. Having such a disparate range of objectives is misleading when the overall CS is weighted toward economic development. The objectives therefore need to be grouped and ranked in order that the main priorities of the CS are stated clearly and without giving the misleading impression that all objectives are equally important.

3. As an economic document, the CS presents the overall economic picture of decline in an unnecessarily dark manner. Here, we have concerns about the recently published supporting document, *The Economic Case supporting the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report* (June 2010).

<http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/economiccasforthecorestrategyissuesandoptions.pdf>

The sense of bleakness in the CS derives in part from its presenting a picture of absolute improvement from a very low base (the death of major industries) as one of decline relative to national statistics. Hence, “decline” often means improvement, although not as fast as other areas or as fast as desired. Anyone who has lived in this

County for the last 20-30 years knows it to have seen significant advances, due in part to various regeneration projects of the former District Councils and the old Durham County Council [DCC]. Here, we note the Council's slightly earlier *County Durham Economic Strategy, 2008-2013* (November 2008), which reads:

“major physical and environmental regeneration programmes have transformed many parts of the County and addressed the legacy of our former industrial communities including Seaham and Consett; The Turning the Tide project has significantly enhanced the Durham Heritage Coast” (p.6)

Thanks to former DCC officers like Mr David Miller, former industrial wastelands have been transformed and Durham County can be said to be one of the few areas of the UK whose landscape has strongly improved over the past generations.

4. The economic presentation in the CS document does not reflect the findings of recent DCC's reports. Any rigorous assessment of the current CS would do well to compare it with a report from the final months of DCC as a non-unitary authority, the substantial *County Durham Economic Strategy, 2008-2013* (November 2008), a document of 55 pages produced when the extent of the economic downturn was already apparent.

<http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/CountyDurhamEconomicStrategy20082013.pdf>

Although the comparison is not completely one of like with like, this document is strikingly comprehensive compared to the Options report for the LDF of June 2010, *The Economic Case supporting the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report*.

<http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/economiccaseforthecorestrategyissuesandoptions.pdf>

This latter “economic case” comes to only 9 pages and, after some general points on the state of the County, its content consists exclusively of an economic profile of Durham City alone, with reference to economic theory on the advantages of agglomeration, in contrast to the County-wide scope of the earlier and more comprehensive document. In other words, it is not an “Options Report” in the true sense.

Several comparisons will bear out the narrowness of the CS and the dubiousness of its polarisation of an Option A and Option B. The chapter of the fuller report entitled “Competitive places” certainly seems to question the focus of the later one on Durham City alone.

For instance, the section outlining the economic profile of “Durham City and the A1(M) Corridor” also gives some relevant attention to the “East Durham A19 Corridor” (p.31). It highlights “The Peterlee spatial framework” as a “location of particular opportunity for future development,” while past regeneration projects are seen as bringing “much progress” to Seaham and Murton.

Again, “The East Durham A19 Corridor forms part of the successful South and East Durham New Growth Point and with the Bishop Auckland-Darlington Corridor will play a key role in delivering more than 4,600 additional homes over the period to 2016/17.”

The section on the Bishop Auckland-Darlington Corridor highlights its “network of strategic employment sites including Newton Aycliffe industrial estate which alone accommodates nearly 10,000 manufacturing jobs and is one of the most important concentrations of manufacturing employment in the North East. It also includes NET Park, one of the County's seven Transformational Projects” (p32).

We are therefore puzzled why such points as these are not covered in the new 'Economic Case' options report, along with the earlier document's highlighting of developing stronger "economic links with the adjoining City Regions" such as the Bishop Auckland-Darlington Corridor.

5. The CS ignores spatial realities by treating DCC's area of jurisdiction as an island or isolated unit. In fact, of course, Newcastle/Gateshead, Sunderland, Darlington and Stockton are all closer to, and more significant for, many parts of the County than are other entities within it. Northwards there is scant reference to inexorable links with Tyneside, or southwards to Darlington's influence, while to the east there is not a single mention in the whole document to the City of Sunderland. (See Map 2). Compare this with the November 2008 document, *County Durham Economic strategy, 2008-2013*, which sought "to strike an appropriate balance between promoting indigenous economic growth across the County and optimising our connections with the Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley City Regions."

This raises an open question: the County's relative decline is pictured by gross value added {GVA}, a measure of economic activity in situ. In a survey of GVA across the UK the Office of National Statistics states that "These estimates are on a workplace basis, which allocate income to the region in which the economic activity take place" (National Statistics Online, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=420>)

This raises a question about the statistics in the report of June 2010: Do the DCC figures on "GVA per head" for the County give a fair representation of the wealth of inhabitants if, as the definition of GVA suggests, they discount the large amount of wealth that takes place between areas of the County and large, immediately adjacent centres such as Newcastle/Gateshead, Sunderland, Stockton or Darlington? (The Office of National Statistics website contains the following caveat about comparing GVAs between regions: "Please note that GVA per head can be distorted by the effects of commuting, especially for smaller areas" In this case the smaller area is inside the bigger area).

The earlier document (*County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013*) had described "a relatively self-contained labour-market, with 77% of residents living and working in the County (p.4). If this means that 23% commute and work elsewhere, would this not be a significant factor hidden by comparing the GVA per head of the County to the GVA per head of the region? How much of the relative decline stressed by DCC is actually a reflection of increased commuting since the decline of mining and related activities?

This question may also be important in highlighting the relatively contrived nature of a strategy that takes an area of administrative responsibility as an island to the extent of the current Draft. Although now officially sidelined, it is hoped that the broader perspective that informed the Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] will still influence any judgments of the CS that finally emerge.

6. Durham City is grossly over-emphasised, with numerous references to make it "the driving force of economic growth in County Durham." The key role of the City has been acknowledged and planned for during the last half century, but always in a balanced overall vision. The present CS, if taken at its face value, could mean the end of Durham as we know it. Take, for example, just two comments from the document regarding the City.

- (1) It has “a significant undersupply of high quality office provision” (para 5.13) Really? How much exactly does it have? What does “significant” convert to in numerical terms? How exactly does it compare, quantitatively or in percentage terms, with other centres (both within and to similar settlements outside the County)? The CS already lists the former Ice Rink, Millburngate House, Durham Science Park and Mount Oswald (para 5.14). What of the approved site at Stonebridge, or the huge potential of Durham’s Green Business Park?
- (2) It is to be developed into “a world class cultural and visitor centre” (para 7.4). What exactly would be the physical consequences: what additional features might be envisaged? What number of visitors would constitute success for this aim? (Note that world-traveller, Bill Bryson, before he become Chancellor of the University, called Durham “a perfect little city”.)

7. Since “fulfilling” or “maximising the potential” of Durham City is the consistent theme of the Plan, when will we know when the potential is maximised? What will it look like/consist of? And, what happens to this “potential” at the next round of the County Plan? No previous plan (Structure Plan variety or other) has threatened such potentially ‘steroidal’ growth of the City.

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS.

Question 1. The key role of Durham City is accepted, but not its over-emphasis. It is unrealistic to ignore the influence of Sunderland (not least, Doxford Park) and Darlington.

Question 2. The objectives are not of equal value; some might conflict. There is an over-emphasis on Durham City (Objective 2).

Question 3. This Question assumes acceptance of Option A, although the CS certainly does not put forward a convincing case (eg see Trustees’ answer to Question 6 below). Trustees do not accept Option A, which projects ‘steroidal’ growth on Bryson’s “perfect little city” in the eventual expectation of a trickle-down effect of prosperity to the rest of the County. If the expectation were to be realised, how long - how many Plan periods - would it take, and how would the City appear as a consequences? (See the Trust publication, *The Futures of Durham*, by Douglas Pocock, 2006).

Strangely, there is not a separate Question to allow choice between Options A or B. This is unfortunate since, as stated, much of the subsequent text assumes acceptance of Option A. Equally strangely, while the CS omits a choice, the Authority’s *Durham County News*, July/August 2010, in a two-page article on ‘Planning the future of County Durham’ - CS as such is not mentioned - does invite a choice as one of its 13 questions. It does it in a rather non-consultative way, with the summary for Option B reading:

“ This targets the most deprived areas of County Durham to try to

increase the quality of life for their residents and secure their regeneration. This has been the approach used by many of the former district councils but based on past experience *we believe this would be unlikely to deliver the necessary changes* to the county's economy”(p.26). (Italics added). How is any rational person going to express a preference for Option B in view of such a commentary?

(With reference to the CS's general predication for Option A, please refer to answers to Individual Question 4a, where housing predictions are shown to be inflated, and General Points 3 and 4, concerning the case for economic development).

To return specifically to Question 3, Trustees do not agree that Durham City has “a significant undersupply of high quality office provision” (para 5.13). The CS cites the former Ice Rink, Millburngate House (published figures suggest these two could have a combined potential of 2,500 employees), Durham Science Park and Mount Oswald (para 5.14). There are then approved sites at Stonebridge and the huge potential of Durham's Green Business Park. (5,000 employees is the published figure for the last named).

With regard to Aykley Heads, we suggest that considerable decentralisation from County Hall is possible, given the existence of relatively new former District offices and modern means of electronic communication. With regard to the site area schematically indicated on Map 5, Trustees would remind the Authority that its last attempt to establish offices on the south-eastern third of Aykley Heads Estate was withdrawn following the threat of a call-in from Government Office for the North East. (Refer to planning application, and advertisement by Chestertons, August 1988.)

Question 4a. Trustees reject this proposal, as a consequence of rejecting Option A. Map 6 clearly shows at least six housing sites within the Green Belt. The Durham Green Belt was only achieved after a public inquiry; DCC had wanted a thinner, discontinuous Green Belt. (Refer to Figure 12, p.85 in *County Durham Structure Plan Review Deposit Plan*, November 1995.) There should be no weakening of what was agreed only relatively recently, and to which amendments, as the CS itself states, could only be justified by “exceptional circumstances” (para 5.26). (Option B does not carry this threat.)

Exceptional circumstances do not prevail. In fact, the CS is based on an inflated estimate of housing requirements. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment [SHMA], on which the figures are based, is dated October 2008 (para 4.18) ie, immediately before the current severe economic downturn. The economic forecasts of the time are now seriously wrong. The estimates - and requirements - should therefore be revisited and downgraded.

Question 5a. See reference in answer to Question 4a that overall housing need is lower than the figures used in the CS because of the timing of SHMA, which means that its predictions are now seen to be significantly inflated. Trustees strongly urge choice of Potential Option 2. In Durham City itself there is a need to create a more balanced and sustainable community in areas that have an excess of Houses in Multiple Occupation. There is scope to increase the housing supply in the central part of the City by encouraging the building/extension of more University Colleges' accommodation.

Question 6. Trustees recommend Option B, Targeted Regeneration, aiming to produce balanced quality of life in the County as a whole by 2030 without threatening the fragility of Durham City by over-development. Option B best meets a key aim of the Vision (Refer to paras 3.12, 3.12, 3.36, 3.38, 3.39, 5.60). In contrast, Option A has decided - and acknowledged - drawbacks (eg paras 5.26, 9.19-9.21), while its case is at times weakly argued or relies on assertion (eg para 5.8). Is there in fact real evidence that small-scale regeneration has failed?

Questions 7,8,9. Trustees would expect earlier mention, greater prominence and more detail concerning Climate Change and Sustainability.

Question 10. Trustees suggest that aspects of possible transport plans could be outlined here. Surely, the project for Eastgate village is worthy of mention.

Question 11. This is another thin section, especially given the importance of tourism to the economy. (There is no mention of Beamish, for example.) This Plan should be a 'driver' for tourism, and not vice-versa, as given in paragraph 7.5.

Question 12. Trustees contest the assertion about Durham City "not achieving the level of tourist spend commensurate with its qualities" (para 7.8). This is presumably an aspect of the City as "not fulfilling its potential", as mentioned elsewhere in the Plan. But what is its potential? And how will one recognise it? In recent years the City has greatly increased the number of bed spaces and improved the quality of its facilities and range of events. (Meanwhile, other bigger venues within easy reach offer a variety of key attractions).

We recommend Option A, for limited intervention, even though the wording in the CS 'box' is unnecessarily negative. A gentle interpretation of Option B might be possible, but not along the lines envisaged by Durham City Vision [DCV]. This quango does not carry the confidence either of the City's population – indeed, it has generated anger - or of a great number of experts (whose expertise and knowledge of the City far exceed that of both DCV and outside consultants thus far engaged.). Option C would be disastrous.

Question 13. Apart from possible flaws in the arithmetic method used to achieve the scoring matrix, the use of the settlement classification is questionable. What is essential is the equation of infill and critical mass.

Question 14. Trustees recommend Option B. The Authority should already possess the requisite data to achieve this. The hierarchy should be used as a reference point for the direction, and achievement, of balanced, sustainable settlements/development. However, the Question should be reworded in order to exclude Durham City, since its inclusion distorts the whole process. (The selection of Option B in section 5.1, "targeting the most deprived areas of Co. Durham", conforms to the Option chosen here.)

Question 15. Trustees would urge the adoption of the higher figures, which is another reason for the selection of Option B. The current number of houses unoccupied is another factor to consider.

Question 16. Trustees prefer Options A and B. C runs the risk of houses being bought for letting.

Question 19. Trustees prefer Option A or B, definitely not C. The definition of 'executive housing' (para 8.29) is too precise. Terraced town houses may well provide attractive, desired – and extremely expensive - housing for 'wealthy achievers'.

Question 20. Trustees suggest refurbishment/restoration should always be considered as an alternative to demolish and develop. In Durham City houses currently in HMO category may provide restoration possibilities in the future.

Question 21. Low council tax banding is, of course, attributable to low house prices rather than intrinsic value.

Question 26. Add to the penultimate sentence of para 8.51 “while respecting the Green Belt boundary.”

Question 27. Trustees prefer Options B and C, certainly not A. There is always hope that there might be some re-conversion of houses currently classed as HMOs. Postgraduates pose much less of a problem of balanced communities.

Question 33. Add ‘living landscapes’ of the Wildlife Trust, with wildlife corridors linking discreet areas.

Question 34. DCC will need local policies in addition to any over-arching national goals.

Question 35. The question of sustainability of historic and listed buildings should be added to para 9.19.

Question 36. It is misleading to conflate two topics in these four paragraphs; each deserves its own Question for response. The WHS is crucial, of course. Reference to a buffer zone is desirable, as is the City’s Green Belt. Paras 9.22-9.23 and Map 9 are ostensibly concerned solely with the NW Durham Green Belt, but since much of the Durham City Green Belt, which adjoins the NW Belt, is also shown, the impression is strongly given that overall DCC is being generous in its proposal. However, an earlier map (6) in the Plan indicates possible nibbling at the City’s already narrow Green Belt. (Again, there was no opportunity to answer a specific question on this possible action.) Added protection in the North West is no reason or excuse for reducing the Green Belt around the City, where pressures are at least equally strong.

Question 37. Trustees disagree with the statement. We hold that there are many important options to consider in relation to so broad and crucial an issue. Support of the valuable aims for transport planning listed in para 10.1 also suggests that some of the means proposed are incompatible with the ends, e.g. proposed provision of new major road capacity is at odds with: managing demand; reducing the need to travel long distances, particularly by car; making the best use of existing infrastructure; and encouraging the use of public transport.

Secondly, the goal in para 10.2 of “locating most new development in places where it can be easily and safely accessed by sustainable means of transport and by helping to deliver future transport infrastructure appropriate to the level of development proposed” seems to question the logic of Option A. Certainly, any ambition the Highways Department may have to “lock in” improvements in City centre traffic allegedly offered by new road building (e.g. by widening pavements in central Durham) is ruled out by Option A.

Thirdly, it should be stressed that in the early part of the 20 year window covered by this Plan, DCC needs to find inexpensive solutions to any problems that it wishes to address. Expensive road building will not happen in the lifetime of this Parliament and possibly not in the next either. Today's problems need today's solutions.

See response to Questions 38 and 39 for specific comments on a Durham Northern Relief Road and Western Relief Road listed in para 10.4.

Question 38. Trustees believe that there are certainly many important options to consider in relation to so broad and crucial an issue. It surely true that the "location of new developments will have a significant influence on future travel patterns and means of transport" (para 10.5). Option A would clearly exacerbate traffic problems in Durham City, while Option B, if carefully implemented, would offer the possibility of dispersing demand into uncongested and accessible centres. (Moreover, a policy to protect key lines of currently unused railway lines would allow the future option of extending the Tyne and Wear Metro into the County.)

The CS document gives a slightly misleading impression at times (e.g. in para 10.7) of highlighting road-building options as a possible measure to be reserved pending further study. While the proposed "Western relief road" does seem to have fallen from a near empty sky, considerable research has in fact already been done over the last decade of traffic issues in Durham and about the Northern Relief Road in particular. It has twice been rated poorly in appraisal exercises, first in the Inspector's report for the LTP, and again in the competition for the Regional Funding Allocation at the end of 2005 (with the current route then being presented as one of three closely related possibilities), contributing to its being withdrawn also from LTP2. The Inspector's report relating to the road's omission from LTP 1 in 2001-2 included the following observations:

"The route of the Northern By-Pass shown on the PM runs through an Area of High Landscape Value (Policy E10), a SSSI (Policy E17), a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (Policy E18) and an area of Ancient Woodland (Policy E14) and lies entirely within the GB. Although not all of these Policies would wholly forbid new development within them, the scale and nature of the works involved in the construction of a new road of strategic importance mean that the statement in para 6.32 that it would have a 'perceived large negative impact' is if anything an understatement. It would be contrary to national and local environmental policies to construct such a scheme except where the need for it and the predicted benefits could be shown to be very large, and where it could be shown that extensive and effective mitigation would be incorporated as part of the scheme."

Finally, the large transport study by Jacobs consultants, completed in late 2008, undertaken to research the possibility of DCC bid to then Transport Innovations Fund, went into these issues of traffic and accessibility in Durham City in great detail. Surveying various transport measures and their combination, it found that, next to the combination of a cordon charge on the city coupled with bus fare subsidies, the Northern Relief Road offered some easing of congestion on Milburngate bridge --- if also coupled with a cordon charge (Durham TIF Study, DT7, p. 43). In sum, a projected reduction of traffic there of between 15 and 25 % compared to the base

year (2006) was both dependent on an option now deemed commercially damaging (viz. making Durham an island of congestion charging), and, of course, does not factor the increased traffic caused by major house building proposals such as those contained in Option A. The Jacobs' results also broadly support an earlier study (Capita Symons 2004) which estimated that the Northern Relief Road by itself would take about 1 car in 10 from Millburngate bridge.

Question 39. Question 39(i), on identifying potential strategic transport routes, begs the key question, since it follows an account of general transport issues with the requirement to select from a tiny and dubious shopping list of options. (There is a suspicion that the public consultation exercise is partly being used to give prominence to any measures which bodies other than DCC would largely pay for).

Congestion in Durham City, being a matter largely of peak hour traffic, should not be exaggerated. With reference to paras 10.8 and 10.9, it may be mentioned that a series of visiting major architects and planners from the South have simply smiled when they have observed what we have call our traffic problem. A more objective measure is given by a study of late 2008, which ranked all the constituencies in Britain by levels of congestion, and placed Durham City only 323rd out of 628, barely in the top half.- See "Keep Moving Government," http://www.keeppmoving.co.uk/home_content.aspx?content=government

Nevertheless, Option A, which envisages a considerable addition to the Durham City's housing stock, would exacerbate the congestion there is.

Those elements of the CS that seem to envisage large infrastructure bids in order to address congestion seem unrealistic from a national perspective, with the government's road building budget set to be shrinking for the foreseeable future and with the current suspension of all but a few local authority major schemes not yet under contract.

Trustees disagree with the claim in para 10.13 that these road-building measures are required under *either* Option A or B. This is at present only an assertion, lacking substantial factual support. This especially applies to the Western Relief Road. While resembling in some ways the much larger "Western Bypass" dropped in 1994, this scheme has had no place to date in local or regional planning documents. Its line, intercepting two junctions on the A167, is that of a relief road designed to reduce peak hour queuing, and it raises the issue of relative ineffectiveness of road-building as a means of addressing peak hour delays, which mostly affect commuter or, in this case, especially school-run traffic with few route options. Evidence is needed on possible measures to improve the junctions themselves, especially as the proposed route suggests only the channelling of traffic away from either one of two junctions on the A167 (Neville's Cross and Stonebridge). As was written in relation to Question 38, modelling by consultants in 2008 showed the northern relief road offered significant relief for congestion on Milburngate bridge only if also coupled with a cordon charge. However this projection of a reduction of traffic of between 15 and 25 % was dependent on an option now deemed likely to be commercially damaging (viz. making Durham an island of congestion charging). An earlier consultants study (Capita Symons 2004) estimated that the northern relief road by itself would take about 1 vehicle in 10 from Millburngate bridge.

Another issue against road building options is that of the traffic newly induced or generated by the mere provision of new capacity, an issue that has been estimated as significant in this case. The issue of latent traffic, together with the additional

housing proposed, suggests that Option A would put increased pressure on the nearby A1 motorway and its junctions.

DCC should surely be wary of foregrounding elements of the CS that address what are effectively nationwide problems with disproportionate and unwieldy local measures. Congestion and issues of air quality are national problems and we urge the DCC to continue doing its part in helping national government address them through such measures as increased fuel efficiency, the rapid introduction of electric and dual-fuel vehicles (and cheaper parking charges for such vehicles?), car-sharing schemes, more home-based working etc. . The argument against congestion charging in para10.12 applies only if Durham City is an isolated area of charging, yet even the RAC foundation recently saw some kind of national road pricing scheme as inevitable within the medium to long term.

The issue of congestion is one which cannot be isolated from large structural planning matters such as the location of new housing, employment patterns (including use of travel plans, home working, staggered work time patterns, regulations regarding use of private cars by university students etc.) . It should not be defined as solely a transport problem requiring a transport fix.

DCC has recently published surveys of the routes of the two relief roads, including estimates of their building. These came to £37.7M for the Northern Relief Road and £20.9M for the Western Relief Road. (An “optimum bias” of 32% is included in these costings, but it is still very often the case that road-building costs estimates tend to be too low.) Although the remit of the Trust is the environmental protection of Durham City and its surroundings, and that has necessarily been the focus of our answers, there must also surely be questions about the social responsibility of spending almost £60M on roads for which no convincing case has been made, when more economically and socially deprived areas of the County could make immediate good use of such money.

Finally, in answer to suggestions for ‘Other Routes’, Trustees would offer one minor road scheme, that from the A167 at the ‘Honest Lawyer’ to the A690, which would improve access to the Meadowfield Industrial Estate and provide some relief to the Neville’s Cross junction. (The District’s Local Plan safeguarded land for this scheme in Policy T3(b))

Question 40. Reduction in car travel in broad terms would be achieved by (1) not building major new roads, which encourage driving, (2) selecting, and integrating, housing and other development along lines suggested in Option B.

All the listed options for reducing private car use seem worthy of support. Other measures not listed in the CS document, but of which the Highways Department of DCC will of course be aware, are: the development of more car clubs, recently the object of targeted Coalition Government support; consciousness-raising exercises to make motorists more aware of alternative to private car use, such as the very successful ‘Sustainable Travel Towns’ scheme in which Darlington participated a few years ago. (Car trips were down 11%, a result better than many achieved by road-building schemes).

The Jacobs study of 2008 highlighted the effectiveness in Durham City of a scheme that combined road user charging with the subsidy of bus fares. If road pricing of some general kind is inevitable over the longer term period covered in this plan (without its isolating Durham City as the sole area of charging) then would this not represent genuine and sustainable progress? The Jacobs traffic study of 2008 concluded that “only reducing fares will effect any appreciable mode shift to public

transport, the congestion charge in itself is not an effective tool to encourage mode shift” (Durham TIF Study, DT7, p.46)

Two final points. The question of student cars in Durham City has never been properly tackled. A car is hardly a requisite, since Durham is a ‘walkable’ city. The contribution of student cars to congestion and parking problems is immediately evident during vacations. More Park & Ride schemes, located further from the centre, could be considered.

Question 41. With the demise of the RSS, Trustees would urge DCC to adopt protection of the Leamside line.

Question 63. All of the Potential Options are important, but Trustees would delete “including new roads” from Option G.

Question 64. Trustees have insufficient information to comment at this stage, but would wish to return later if and when greater detail is available.

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