

Ref: Core Strategy Preferred Options Proposals (Consultation)

22nd September 2010

All North Tyneside Councillors

Dear Councillors

RE: CONCERNS NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATION WITH ITS RESIDENTS AND ALSO RE NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY PROPOSALS SEPTEMBER 2010

The report written and supported by the Holystone Action Group concerned at the Consultation Process around the Council's Core Strategy Proposals, as well as the Core Strategy Proposals themselves, follows on from this page.

Yours sincerely

Holystone Action Group

Enc

**CONCERNS REGARDING NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL'S COMMUNICATION WITH ITS
RESIDENTS ALSO REGARDING NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY
PROPOSALS - SEPTEMBER 2010**

May we bring to your attention our **concerns regarding the seriously ineffective consultation being carried out by North Tyneside Council** and also our concerns regarding the Core Strategy Proposals themselves. It is a general concern that sufficient residents are simply not included in Council Consultation (we can evidence this through Council's own figures from the North Tyneside Residents' Survey 2010 where:

'... a stubborn third of the population still maintain that the Council rarely takes residents' views into consideration when making decisions that affect them).'

There is clearly an issue with external communication within the Council – as the Audit Commission Report (September 2010, paragraph 173) states:

'...enquiries were rarely resolved at the first point of call – many enquiries are passed to other agencies or departments, or require call-backs.' and ...

*'The last residents' survey found that customer's experience when contacting the Council has deteriorated', with 'only 66% [of customers] finding it easy to get hold of the right person', 'only 54% were satisfied with the final outcome' and '**Customers may not receive the advice or help they need.**'*

Community consultation by North Tyneside Council is historically weak: only 69 persons responded to the Issues and Options (2006) consultation; only 124 responded to the Green Space Strategy (2008) consultation (of whom only 115 were residents of the borough); only 22 responded to the Statement of Community Involvement (2010) consultation – this last one being perhaps the ultimate irony!! – and of those 22 there was one community group and ONE SINGLE RESIDENT. This is from a population of 192000 in 2001 and 196000 in 2010 (official figures).

We have **specific concerns** over the Consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2010 (SCI) and the Core Strategy Proposals.

1. SCI

As stated above, only 22 respondents (out of a population of 196000) had their views included into the SCI (2010) document. The period for this consultation was from 4th February 2010 until 19th March 2010. The Council claims a press release in the News Guardian. This is a publication which is not delivered in any of the areas negatively affected by the Core Strategy Home-Building proposals (Station Road in Wallsend, Scaffold Hill and Northumberland Park/Shiremoor/Backworth, i.e. areas adjacent to sites 71, 72, 73, 107, 65, 77).

The Council further claims a press release on its website. However, the Council's own figures (Residents' Survey 2010) show that only half the homes in North Tyneside have broadband internet access.

Further, the figures also show that, whilst 35% of residents (56% for internet users) have visited the Council website, no information is available for how many have visited the consultation area or accessed the press release. The only figures available are that for February 2010 93277 individuals visited the website of which 15171 (16.3%) visited the media/press releases, which would be 7.7% of the 196000 residents of the borough had it been just residents. However, it must be assumed that many of those visits would be from media organisations or students, and not residents. The figures for March 2010 are that 96250 individuals visited the website of which 16218 (16.8%) visited the media/press releases, which would be 8.2% of the 196000 residents of the borough had it been just residents. However, it must be assumed that many of those visits would be from media organisations or students, and not residents. These figures are actually 'best-case' scenario (for North Tyneside Council) – if the same person visited the NTC Planning Page every day for a month, this would count as 30 unique visitors, and if another person visited three times a day, that would count as 90 unique visitors.

Further, due to the wide range of press releases/media on (and thus reasons for visiting) the website, it **must** be assumed that the percentage of residents involved in the SCI Consultation via the website is extremely low, **perhaps to the extent of being statistically insignificant?**¹ The Audit Commission Report (September 2010) (North Tyneside Council Strategic Housing Service) confirms that:

*'Community engagement is developing but is not yet effective'².
It is not always easy to access Council services'³.*

and *'...community engagement is recent'⁴.*

2. Core Strategy (CS) Proposals

a. The 'Consultation'

This **consultation has been seriously ineffective and flawed**. The Council has used the News Guardian for press releases. This publication is not delivered to any of the households in the areas negatively affected by the CSPO proposals (areas adjacent to sites 71, 72, 73, 107, 65, 77) ⁵.

- i. The Council's website is visited by only 35% of residents of North Tyneside (Council's own figures). During the consultation period (July- September 2010) an average of 80820 different people per month visited the website. Were these just residents, they would represent 41.2% of the population of the Borough. However, it must be assumed that significant numbers of these visitors would have been business or commercial users. Of the average 80820 visitors, an average of less than 6.5% (5253 visitors) visited the Planning Department pages.

There is no way of assessing how many of these visitors were residents, or how many were visiting to view the CSPO proposals, but even if they were all residents, and all viewing the CSPO proposals, this represents only 2.6% of residents. These figures clearly prove seriously ineffective and flawed communication of the CSPO proposals ⁶.

- ii. The Council will claim that large numbers of residents have attended the community consultation events. However, the number of residents attending these events has only been achieved due to the involvement of community groups or representatives (who only found out about the CS Proposals themselves by chance and good fortune). These consultation events have, in fact, not been a consultation but have been information ‘roadshows’. No Council representatives/employees have taken notes of questions asked or replies given. Councillor G Brett at the Council meeting on 9th September 2010 asked Mayor Arkley,:

‘When residents are attending Consultation events, they report that they are being made aware of the benefits of the proposals, but their concerns are not noticeably being recorded. Will you look into this?’ Mayor Arkley states, in a response to that question ‘Yes, I certainly will and I will take the issue up with the Chief Executive.’

- iii. We are doubtful as to the response as the SCI (2010), section 5.1 does not require any notes to be taken or records to be kept at such events⁷. No persons from **Adult Literacy** were present at the roadshows. In a borough where there are significant Adult Literacy issues, it is **astonishing** that no one was present to support people with understanding the difficult and inaccessible language of both the Core Strategy proposals and also the documentation being handed out to the public⁸. I cite question 1 in the Council questionnaire which talks about ‘Spatial Strategy as just the first of (nearly all) the questions in the questionnaire as being inaccessible. Unless you are able to refer it to the brochure and then work out what it is, then the question (as well as the rest of the questions) makes no sense at all⁹.
- iv. The Council claim that residents were informed about the CS proposals through the Widening Horizons magazine. However, almost all residents in the areas negatively affected by the CS Building proposals (areas mentioned above) state that they had not received this magazine¹⁰. Where those residents had seen the magazine, they had **either not seen the article or had been misled** by the pictures and heading used into believing it was a New Plan for the Coast.

It is clear that the language used for the heading, together with the choice of pictures used, was ‘hiding’ the real content of the article¹¹. The Council’s own figures from the Residents’ Survey 2010 show only 37% of residents read all or nearly all of the magazine. Presumably, that’s 37% of those who actually receive it?

- v. For those who have attended the roadshows and have then tried to use the **Council’s website** to voice their concerns, the website itself keeps ‘crashing’, thus preventing residents from leaving their views, opinions and concerns. This issue was eventually accepted by the Council itself when – at the end of the first full week in September – Council added a note to the website asking people to inform them of any difficulties experienced. After some nine weeks of this ‘consultation’ period, this is too little, too late¹².
- vi. The **initial timing of the CS Proposals Consultation Period** was - by the Mayor’s decision to extend it by four weeks in response to residents’

concerns - clearly set at an inappropriate time.

Many residents were/are on holiday during the Consultation Period thus preventing them from attending the roadshows.

Any adults with Literacy or Information Technology issues would not have been able to access any support since most Adult Literacy or IT classes are not held in the school holidays¹³. This entire section of society was therefore being prevented from participating in the consultation process - did the Council even considered adult Literacy/IT support sessions over this when the schools returned¹⁴?

- vii. Further, with the Council's own figures (Residents' Survey 2010) showing only half of residents having broadband internet access (and the Council's admission that this figure is significantly lower for older residents and those of lower incomes), this shows a massive section of North Tyneside residents are being excluded from the consultation process¹⁵.
- viii. The inappropriate timing of the CS Proposal's Consultation process is compounded by removing the ability of parents at the school gates to voice and share their concerns with each other at the school gates, except in the latter stages of the consultation period and only then due its being extended. There are very real concerns surrounding the CS Proposals and schools, which parents may well have wished to discuss. Again, only when the Mayor was challenged by residents on the timing, did the consultation period become extended. We applaud the Mayor's intervention but a more robust piece of planning by the Planning Department (no irony there, then) would have ensured this intervention was not needed¹⁶.
- ix. Many **residents believe the entire CS Proposal consultation is a sham** and that protestation is futile. This has been compounded by the attitude of some Council employees at some of the roadshows and in other responses which have left residents with the perception that it is all a done deal¹⁷. Residents themselves have noticed that the cycle of the CS Proposals, right through to granting of planning/building permission starts and finishes with the Planning Department and the recommendations of its Planning Officer(s)¹⁸. Further the political leaflet 'In Touch' held a heading which claimed the Green Belt had been saved, thus giving the impression to anyone who just skims the headlines (and we believe that is a significant proportion of the populus) that the CS was already in place, a done deed¹⁹.

This is further supported by the Audit Commission's Report (September 2010) which states (paragraph 148, final sentence):

' although it has included plans for a site of nine pitches in its core strategy.'

– note the lack of the words 'proposals' or 'preferred options'²⁰.

The Council documentation claims to have consulted since 2007 with '**interested parties**' yet does not seem to deem residents in the areas negatively affected by the CS Proposal to be 'interested'!²¹ This is, at best,

incredible. The Audit Commission Report (September 2010) repeatedly mentions that community engagement is not effective or even embedded.

It also states quite clearly that:

'Unless all partners and stakeholders feel engaged the priority objectives in the new housing strategy may not reflect the wishes of some partners and some groups of residents'.

- x. The Council's own Statement of Community Involvement (2005), since updated by the 2010 version, considers 'Notification to local interest or community groups' as a method of consultation or engagement. The Council officers have admitted that, whilst they did send details to 3, Whitley Road, Holystone, (an address held by the Council referring to a previous Action Group in Holystone) they do not have a named contact. No Notice was pinned on the Community notices, or on the community noticeboard at ASDA (surely the hub of local community interest?)²².
- xi. Communication from certain officers of the Council has been patchy. Whilst some officers have responded quickly and effectively to queries, others have failed completely to respond and answers have only been elicited following the intervention of elected Councillors²³. Certain key Officers and Managers in the Planning Office were 'Out-of-Office' on holiday for significant lengths of time during the consultation period²⁴.

We have concerns over many of the proposals and also over much of the documentation which informs or supports those proposals:

3. Core Strategy Issues and Options – November 2006

Page 4 claims an opportunity for anyone interested in the future of the borough to express their opinions. In view of the small sample of the populus to whom this document and its 'consultation' was made available, the Council cannot justify this comment²⁵.

Section 1.3 claims careful consideration of feedback, but the feedback is from an unrepresentative number of respondents²⁶.

Section 1.4 hopes for a wide range of individuals – as this did not include residents of the affected areas mentioned previously, this did not happen²⁷.

Section 1.6 seeks a balance – the final destruction of the wildlife corridor (on top of all the other, previous, house-building) does not allow this balance. Simply leaving other, distant areas unaffected does not promote this balance, nor does it allow it²⁸.

Section 1.7 claims concern for future generations, yet the CS proposals drive a wedge through this²⁹.

Section 1.8 claims planning to now be a democratic and consultative process. The way the Planning Department through certain of its officers and officials has conducted the

consultation shows this to be far from the case³⁰.

Section 1.14 defines a sustainable community as ‘WELL RUN – with effective and inclusive participation, representation...’. The CS proposals have not included effective and inclusive participation. The Residents’ Survey 2010, as well as the Audit Commission Report (September 2010) evidence the ineffectiveness of Council communication and thus prove *ineffective* and *non-inclusive* participation³¹.

Section 1.14 further requires sustainable communities to be providing places to live that are ‘considerate of the environment’. Destroying a wildlife corridor goes against this requirement³².

Section 1.19 requires ‘environmental considerations’ as well as ‘protection and enhancement of the environment’. Destruction of green spaces goes against this requirement³³.

Section 2.7 States ‘Open spaces and country parks will be available to all’, yet proposed developments at Scaffold Hill (107) would reduce this availability to current residents³⁴. It further requires residents to be environmentally responsible. We fully agree with this requirement, yet we consider the CSPO proposals contravene this. If Councillors (who are also residents of the Borough) accept the CSPO proposals in their current form, we believe that they would be acting against this requirement³⁵.

Section 3.5 causes many issues in terms of the CSPO proposals and the responses of certain officials and representatives of the Council:

- a. It expresses the challenge to ‘improve the quality of the environment’ yet the CSPO proposals would have the opposite effect. It further comments about an approach ‘with a sensitivity to needs of people’, again the attitude of certain officials and representatives belies this³⁶.
- b. It aims ‘To create safer places and spaces for children and young people’. Increased traffic from the developments proposed would make access to the Rising Sun Country Park more difficult, thus making places and spaces less safe (in terms of access, at least)³⁷.
- c. It aims ‘To reduce use of the car and increase use of public transport’ – many of the proposed sites would have the absolute opposite effect due to their location and lack of proximity to frequent public transport³⁸.
- d. It aims ‘To ... help increase people’s involvement in decision making...’ – responses from certain officials and representatives of the Council make this much *less* likely³⁹.
- e. It aims ‘To reduce the fear of crime’. Many of the CS proposals have actually *increased* the **fear** of crime⁴⁰.
- f. It aims ‘To identify what can be done at a practical level to reduce the impact of climate change in North Tyneside’ yet within the CS proposals is proposing social housing within new developments which only reach minimum standards (Level 3)⁴¹.

Section 3.7 states “The core strategy ... will take full account of community needs and

aspirations at both Local and Borough-wide level”.

The proposals simply do not do this, so how can the finalized document? ⁴²

Section 4.1 states the draft objectives include:

- a) *‘Focus the majority of new development on previously used land’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴³.
- b) *‘Retain ... areas of safeguarded land and open space provision’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁴.
- c) *‘Ensure that transportation ... including reducing adverse impacts on the environment’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁵.
- d) *‘Contribute to a reduction in the impact and causes of climate change, including the maintenance and enhancement of natural habitats’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁶.
- e) *‘Minimise ... and deal with waste in a sustainable way’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁷.
- f) *‘Ensure that the recreational needs of the Borough’s residents are met and that access to them is facilitated’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁸.
- g) *‘... increase public involvement / participation in plan formulation’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁴⁹.
- h) *‘To protect and enhance the biological and geological diversity of the borough’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁵⁰.

Section 5.3 requires *‘development concentrated within the town centres of North Shields, Wallsend and Whitley Bay’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁵¹.

Section 5.5 states there is *‘a presumption against development, not only within the designated area, but also within areas of safeguarded land that adjoin it’* ⁵², and that *‘The implication for North Tyneside is that the attainment of such [development] targets will not require encroachment onto Green field sites or land allocated for other purposes in the UDP’*. CSPO proposals go against this statement ⁵³.

Section 5.7 states *‘... it is likely that land to satisfy the borough’s needs, especially in relation to housing and employment, will be largely met from previously developed or current provision. It is also likely that there will be a presumption in favour of proposals which contribute to the regeneration of the town centres and the Wallsend / North Shields waterfront’*. CSPO proposals go against this statement ⁵⁴.

Section 5.8 cites *‘Minimising traffic generation...’*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement ⁵⁵.

Section 6.4 states *‘Planning permission for a major residential development on land allocated for employment use in the UDP was granted in 2006 for the development of some 1200 residential units at Smith’s Dock, North Shields’* – Is this development happening and is it included in the delivery of existing planning permissions? (CSPO 10.2.6) ⁵⁶.

Section 6.5 asks for reconsideration of the role of the river and its waterfront and suggests *‘...other uses such as housing and leisure may be appropriate’*. CSPO proposals ignore this request ⁵⁷.

Issue 7, point b) reinforces Sections 6.4 and 6.5. CSPO proposals ignore this⁵⁸. Section 6.11 cites the requirement of Policy 30 of the regional Spatial Strategy:

'The policy requires that by 2008, 60% of housing to be developed on previously used land or through the re-use of existing buildings, with an increase to 65% by 2016'.

CSPO proposals go against this requirement⁵⁹.

Section 6.17 report: *'The government's stated presumption in favour of the development of previously developed (brown field) land is amplified within the policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy'.* It further states *'In general terms, there would be no need to encroach onto the green belt or into other safeguarded areas to meet this target'*⁶⁰

Section 6.23 states *'Major traffic generating uses should be located within town centres...'*. CSPO proposals go against this statement⁶¹.

Section 6.24 states that *'Given the emphasis on the use of sustainable forms of transport and public transport in the policy documents referred to above, this suggests that questions, some of them difficult, will have to be addressed in the Core Strategy'.* CSPO proposals seem to largely ignore this⁶².

Section 6.30 cites the requirement (Government Policy) to *'Stimulate patterns of land use which reduce the need to travel by unsustainable modes (e.g. by car or aviation)'*. CSPO proposals go against this requirement⁶³.

Section 6.31 reinforces this by citing the government requirements, including *'Reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2010 (from a 1990 baseline) and by 60% by 2050'* and including *'Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5% by 2012 (from a 1990 baseline) and by 15-30% by 2020. CSPO proposals go against this requirement'*⁶⁴.

Section 6.33 requires waste minimisation and only *'...disposing as a last resort'*. There is no mention of the alternative facility of graphite Resources in Blaydon due to the date of this document, but it is not mentioned in later documentation either⁶⁵.

Section 6.35 expects *'...the Borough to provide adequate facilities to manage its own waste as far as possible'*. The Blaydon facility would mitigate this requirement⁶⁶.

Section 6.40 states *'This means creating well integrated developments which avoid segregation and include well planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation'.* CSPO proposals go against this requirement⁶⁷.

Section 6.41 states PPS1's requirement *that 'In particular, good design should: ...Consider the impact on the natural environment'.* CSPO proposals go against this requirement⁶⁸.

Section 6.42 supports this *with 'The management and accessibility of green space, and the provision of increased opportunities for physical exercise and recreation, are important community considerations'.* CSPO proposals go against this statement⁶⁹.

Section 6.43 states *'The protection and enhancement of the existing green*

infrastructure can be important to conserve natural assets, protect local distinctiveness and minimize habitat fragmentation'. CSPO proposals go against this statement⁷⁰.

Section 6.44 refers to the checklist for '*... the protection and enhancement of the populations and habitats of priority BAP species*' and also '*Maintaining, restoring or adding to networks of natural habitats and other landscape features essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species*'. CSPO proposals ignore this statement⁷¹.

Section 6.46 states that '*Given the current development land requirements of the regional Spatial Strategy and known pressures for development, the evidence base suggests that there is no current justification for the release of safeguarded land for development*'. CSPO proposals go against this document⁷².

Section 6.54 cites '*Ambitions For the Future*', including 'Healthier lifestyles and longer and happier life expectancy' and '*The creation of a cleaner, more sustainable Borough*'. CSPO proposals go against these ambitions⁷³.

Page 34 leads with the headline '*YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT*'. The lack of proper consultation, with no notes being taken at the roadshow events, belies this statement⁷⁴.

4. Core Strategy – Issues & Options Report, Consultation Responses March 2007

This document is based on just 69 written responses. Even if these responses were all from residents, we must make the following comment: In terms of their representation of residents of the borough where 192000 people (2001 Census Data) or 196000 people live (2010 Audit Commission Data), this can, at its highest figure of 0.036 % (that's a THIRD OF A PERSON for EVERY THOUSAND RESIDENTS), be completely dismissed as a statistically significant sample – or in real terms it is completely unrepresentative⁷⁵.

Section 3.0 claims: '*Other appropriate groups and individuals were also consulted*'.

Unfortunately this included NO ONE from the areas adversely affected by the proposals for the sites of Station Road (Wallsend), Scaffold Hill, and Backworth/West Allotment/Shiremoor⁷⁶.

Section 3.0 also specifically EXCLUDES any of the areas surrounding sites in Station Road, Scaffold Hill and Backworth/West Allotment/Shiremoor from accessing copies of the Core Strategy Issues and Options unless they travelled to Wallsend Town Hall or further⁷⁷.

Despite the fact that the Issues & Options Report, Consultation Responses March 2007 is based on the written responses of just 69 respondents, the Council uses percentage figures of respondents to inform arguments in the consultation document⁷⁸.

Due to the insignificant numbers of respondents, and the fact that no views from residents in the areas negatively affected appear to have been considered, there should be caution about making any further comment about this document. However, as the Council has used this document to inform future documents including the Core Strategy Preferred options proposals, the following comments must be made:

'30% of consultees thought the vision statement needed to be more comprehensive.'

'The draft objectives were generally accepted as being a comprehensive list'

– the small number of respondents denies this statement validity. This statement is also contradicted by the following sentence which states:

'There were, however, a number of consultees (57%) who suggested they would benefit from a number of amendments and additional objectives'⁷⁹.

'Objective 8: It was widely suggested that ...' – widely by less than 69 respondents.

'Issue 3 The checklist was widely accepted (63%)....' That's 43 respondents, then.

'Amendments, Factor 3: Should note the strategic importance of wildlife corridors for biodiversity within the urban areas of North Tyneside, and the need to maintain and improve the quality of these corridors.' The CSPO proposals will destroy some of these corridors, including the main two corridors linking the Rising Sun Country Park with the outside world⁸⁰.

'Issue 4 – 92% of consultees supported the regeneration of Wallsend, North Shields, Whitley Bay and the Riverside as its number 1 priority' – they do not list destruction of green field sites as a priority⁸¹.

'b) Should new development be concentrated on previously developed land within the built-up area? 81% of consultees agreed with this strategic priority...' The CSPO proposals go against this⁸².

'c) Is the retention of the Green Belt and Safeguarded Land (as defined in the adopted UDP) a strategic priority? A large majority of consultees (86%) agreed that the retention of the Green Belt and Safeguarded Land should be a strategic priority.' The CSPO proposals go against this⁸³.

'e) Should any other strategic development priorities be included? Respondents recommended a number of additional priorities for development: The need to protect and enhance local landscape character, and the need to maintain and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation resources.' The CSPO proposals go against this⁸⁴.

'Issue 5, b) How should they be dealt with? Consultation with business and local interest groups.' The consultation as identified in this and other community consultation documents (Green Space Strategy 2008, SCI 2010) and the Audit Commission Report (2010) all show consultation to be inadequate and not-inclusive of relevant residents and groups having local interest⁸⁵.

'Issue 5, c) ... Consultees emphasised that this would encourage the beneficial reuse and redevelopment of vacant and underused brown field land across the borough, ..' This has this not been pursued in the CSPO proposals⁸⁶.

'Issue 6, b) It was generally felt that there was an image problem of North Tyneside (62%), which needed to be addressed in the Core Strategy. Consultees felt that the coast line dominated the image within the region....'
The CSPO proposals do nothing to change this perception, and are missing a major

opportunity⁸⁷.

'Issue 8, b) Green infrastructure has a role to play in terms of improving the quality of the area, quality of life, providing spaces for access, recreation and encouraging community involvement in social and voluntary activity including management of open space by and for the local communities.' The CSPO proposals go against this as they will destroy much green infrastructure⁸⁸.

'Issue 12, a) Consultees considered the riverside area to be a suitable area for new housing development...' The CSPO proposals go against this by not pursuing this with sufficient vigour⁸⁹.

'Issue 14, c) It was felt that the Core Strategy should ... encourage increased cycling and walking through provision of safe and user friendly cycle and footpath routes linking residential, ... and recreational areas...' The CSPO proposals go against this and would make access more difficult and much less safe⁹⁰.

'Issue 17, a) There was strong support for waste management facilities to be located in sustainable locations away from designated wildlife sites and areas of locally important biodiversity.' The CSPO proposals, by including areas such as North Tyne Industrial Estate (opposite ASDA, Benton) go against this⁹¹.

'Issue 20, b) The importance of rights of way and open space networks was also emphasized across the countryside, ... areas, which encourage exercise, health, general wellbeing...' The CSPO proposals go against this by making access far more difficult⁹².

'Issue 26, b) What other possibilities should be considered? Strong 'green infrastructure' with high-quality green spaces connected by a series of well-maintained wildlife corridors.' 'Encourage ... environmental responsibility'. The CSPO proposals go against this as they would destroy two wildlife corridors and isolate the Rising Sun Country Park. The CSPO proposals themselves, therefore, will NOT encourage environmental responsibility⁹³.

5. Green Space Strategy 2008

This document clearly states 'Greenspace is a major contributor to the health and social, economic and environmental well being of local communities.' The CSPO proposals to destroy large areas of green space would therefore harm that very well being⁹⁴. Further, the document states, in its vision, that:

'... management should look towards the future as well as the present so that our open spaces can be enjoyed by all for generations to come.'

The CSPO proposals directly contradict this strategy⁹⁵.

The document describes the Rising Sun Country Park as an 'oasis'. The CSPO proposals would guarantee that it became a barren oasis by cutting the only two wildlife corridors that feed it, harming irreparably and for ever its biodiversity⁹⁶.

83% of respondents to the Green Space consultation rated Green Corridors as

important, with only 43% of respondents being satisfied with the existing Green Corridors. The CSPO proposals ignore this completely by proposing to destroy Green Corridors⁹⁷.

Section 10.2 reinforces the value of maintaining biodiversity. By plugging the wildlife corridors at Sites 71, 72, 73, 107, 65 and 77, the CSPO proposals will destroy the travelling biodiversity and isolate completely and permanently the Rising Sun Country Park⁹⁸.

This comment is supported by Section 14.2 which states that '*green spaces are not single entities and that they are part of a wider network of green spaces.*' The CSPO proposals do not recognise this statement.

Objective GS9 Connectivity/green infrastructure states: '*Current pedestrian, cycling and multi-use routes will be protected and improved in order to enhance the current network of green spaces throughout the borough.*' The CSPO proposals would prevent this protection and improvement¹⁰⁰.

Section 14.6 states '*Each green space should be part of a system of open spaces...*' It further states '*Ideally all green spaces will form an integrated network that allows people to move through towns in a peaceful manner away from busy roads and traffic.*' The CSPO proposals would prevent this possibility in the areas negatively affected¹⁰¹.

Objective GS10 requires green spaces to be '*...managed to deliver wildlife benefit, integrated habitat areas within the green space and its borders to allow the movement of plant and animal*' and further states it should '*Maximise the potential of the site to act as a wildlife corridor and aid the connectivity of green spaces*'. The CSPO proposals contradict this objective by plugging the wildlife corridors and isolating the Rising Sun Country Park¹⁰².

6. North Tyneside Local Development Scheme, Third Revision – Feb 2010

- a. **'Community and Stakeholder Involvement, 2.13** The early involvement of the community ... is a fundamental requirement'. Council's own figures show this did not happen properly, and insufficient residents were properly consulted (69 written responses for the Issues and Options Consultation 2007, with no demographic breakdown, and 22 written responses for the SCI Consultation 2010, of which there was only one resident and one residents' group)¹⁰³.
- b. **'Statement of Community Involvement LDD1, Resources and Management, Monitoring and Review** The document will be kept under review and amended if necessary should significant changes occur in the composition of groups to be consulted or in the techniques for engagement'. We believe significant changes have occurred and we should, as supported by over 3500 residents' signatures be, consulted.

Further, we have shown the techniques for engagement are ineffective and inadequate^{104 105}.

- c. **'LDD11 Design Quality SPD, Resources and Management**

Community/Stakeholder Involvement: The production of the document will include an extensive programme of consultation and liaison with relevant individuals, groups and organisations'. We look forward to being consulted and

liaised with¹⁰⁶.

- d. **‘LDD12 Transport and Highways, Community/Stakeholder Involvement:** The production of the document will include an extensive programme of consultation and liaison with relevant individuals, groups and organisations’. We look forward to being consulted and liaised with¹⁰⁷.
- e. **‘Section 4.21, Joint Working** There are no proposals for joint working with adjoining authorities at this stage.’ The authority should be working with adjoining authorities to explore alternatives for waste management, such as the Graphite Resources facility at Blaydon¹⁰⁸.
- f. **‘Appendix No. 1 – LDF Evidence Base** Planning Policy Statement 12 states that all LLDs should be based on a robust and credible evidence base. This should consist of research / factual evidence together with the views of the local community.’ The Council’s ineffective and inadequate consultation process has prevented the Council from fulfilling this obligation¹⁰⁹.
- g. **‘Appendix No. 1 – LDF Evidence Base** The evidence base for North Tyneside LDF as a whole consists of: ...The responses received from continuing engagement with the community and stakeholders on the content of each document.’ This has not happened. The documents are not accessible and can only be found on the Council’s website by considerable navigational skill^{110 111}.
- h. **‘Appendix No. 2 – Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan, UDP Refs** E3¹¹², E12/2¹¹³, E12/3¹¹⁴, E12/5¹¹⁵, E12/6¹¹⁶, E12/7¹¹⁷, E13¹¹⁸, E14¹¹⁹, E16/3¹²⁰, E21¹²¹, E21/1¹²², E23¹²³, E30/3¹²⁴, E30/4¹²⁵, H4¹²⁶, T8¹²⁷, T9¹²⁸, T10¹²⁹, R2/1¹³⁰, R2/2¹³¹, R2/3¹³², R3/1¹³³, R4¹³⁴.’ The CSPO proposals undermine and threaten the content of these policies.

7. **North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet, Date: 8th February 2010, ITEM 5(d)**

This document shows that Cabinet were made aware of the required community consultation for the SCI 2010 (LDD1). It further identifies the timescale for consultation on Waste Management (LDD6 Waste Management DPD) and states consultation is programmed for October 2010. It further shows LDD12 (Transport & Highways) was prepared for community consultation in January 2010. We consider the consultation so far to be weak, ineffective and flawed and wish cabinet to be made aware of this objection, with its full supporting reasons¹³⁵. We seek effective consultation on the LDD6 (Waste Management DPD) in October 2010¹³⁶.

8. **North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet, Date: 10th May 2010, ITEM 5(d)**

This document clearly shows its purpose is to advise the Cabinet of the proposed revision to the SCI 2010. Section 1.5.4 reports the need to comply with the public engagement procedures set out in the SCI. We contend that the Council has failed to do this due to the weak, ineffective and inadequate consultation, as evidenced by just 22 written respondents (with only one of those being a resident and one further being a community group – the rest being ‘corporate’, ‘business’, or ‘societies’). We wish cabinet to be made aware of this objection, with its full supporting reasons¹³⁷.

Section 1.5.6 claims ‘Extensive consultation was undertaken on the revised SCI...’. We

contend that this is not the case (as evidenced by just the 22 respondents) and we wish cabinet to be made aware of this objection, with its full supporting reasons¹³⁸.

Section 2.3.2 deals with external public consultation. It states that a press release appeared in the News Guardian and on the Council website. The News Guardian is not delivered to any of the areas negatively affected by the CSPO proposals (those areas adjacent to the sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73 or 107). Further, due to the low numbers of people visiting the Council's website (as detailed previously in these objections), the press release appearing on the website would not have been seen by sufficient residents to satisfy the demands of public consultation. We wish cabinet to be made aware of this objection, with its full supporting reasons¹³⁹.

9. Statement of Community Involvement 2010

“Public engagement on a review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) took place over February and March 2010. The revised SCI was approved by Cabinet in April and became the Adopted SCI in May 2010.”

quoted from Council documents in the public domain. We have already highlighted the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of this ‘Public engagement’ in the first part of these objections, with the Council's own documentation showing just 69 written respondents out of a population of 196000 residents¹⁴⁰.

- a. The SCI 2010 states (Section 5.3) its aim to ‘*place the community at the heart of making planning decisions.*’ The consultation eliciting just 69 written responses belies this¹⁴¹. The fact that the CSPO consultation document was not delivered to any of the homes in the areas negatively affected by the CSPO proposals (areas adjacent to Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107) show the North Tyneside Council SCI (2010) aims have not been effectively or properly communicated to those responsible for CSPO consultation, thus falling foul of Section 5.3's requirement that decisions are ‘sound i.e. based on robust, trustworthy evidence.’¹⁴²
- b. Section 5.6 states that ‘*Planning must recognise the needs of everyone, including groups and individuals considered ‘hard to reach’.*’ The evidence of weak and ineffective communication with residents puts virtually all residents in the category ‘hard to reach’¹⁴³.
- c. Section 5.7 mentions ‘*barriers to access*’ including ‘*levels of understanding*’ yet the language in the CSPO consultation document questionnaire is particularly high brow, completely inaccessible without the CSPO consultation document next to it – e.g. terms such as ‘Spatial Strategy’. CSPO proposals are thus inaccessible to much of the population¹⁴⁴.
- d. Section 5.13 asks for ways to better involve people from all groups. The Widening Horizons magazine which included the ‘New Plan for the Borough’ article was not transparent due to the Headline, and the chosen photographs which did not effectively show any of the areas (areas adjacent to Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107) negatively affected by the CSPO proposals¹⁴⁵. Residents from those areas felt it was an article, which was about the coast, not their areas¹⁴⁶.

Headlines with a map and stating ‘THESE PROPOSALS AFFECT YOU’ would

have been open and unambiguous and would have elicited greater community response and thus involvement¹⁴⁷.

- e. Section 5.16 asks for alternatives (Top Tip section). The answer is simple: Develop the brown field sites. Brown field sites in the Borough (West Chirton South and the Riverside) have more land mass than all the proposed green field sites put together¹⁴⁸. The only barrier to this is cost¹⁴⁹ (although we realise there would need to be biodiversity mitigation on those sites).
- f. Section 6.10 Deals with the Council's website. This website is poorly set out and inaccessible. Effective websites use their search box to find areas within the website. North Tyneside Council's website uses the Search box as a link to the Search Engine 'Google'. This makes access difficult and puts off any enquirers who are not particularly computer/internet literate. North Tyneside has a significant proportion of its population who are neither 'literacy-literate' nor 'computer-literate'¹⁵⁰.

10. SCI Community Consultation Responses Report May 2010

There are only 22 written responses from a (2010) population of 196000 people. This shows this report to be a completely worthless report. Worse, of the responses, ONLY ONE is from a RESIDENT, with one other being from a non-identified community group. All other responses are corporate/business/society¹⁵¹.

Despite the worthlessness of this Report, North Tyneside Council has used it to inform the SCI (2010)¹⁵².

11. Cabinet Report 14 June 2010

Section CAB9/06/10 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2010-13 reports the Overview and Scrutiny Committee making comments such as '...there were other examples where the effectiveness and accountability of public services falling under the scope of a Strategic Partnership had been weakened because of a lack of involvement from the communities the services were designed to serve¹⁵³.' This proves cabinet are aware of community-consultation failings. We therefore ask that Cabinet are made aware of this objection as it impacts on the Council's ineffective and weak community consultation¹⁵⁴.

Section CAB11/06/10 NORTH TYNESIDE CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTIONS reports that:

'The document was structured so that it: Suggested policies to produce a well designed and sustainable development, and to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment.'

The CSPO proposals will not conserve or enhance the natural environment of the areas negatively affected by the CSPO proposals (areas adjacent to Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107)¹⁵⁵.

Section CAB14/06/10 PROPERTY SURPLUS TO COUNCIL REQUIREMENTS reports 100 Council Housing Stock properties being surplus to requirements. This statement is either incorrect – in which case this should not have been approved or, the minutes should not have been agreed by Cabinet¹⁵⁶ – or there is no requirement to build further

social housing¹⁵⁷. Developing green field sites for social housing when there is a proven surplus of social housing is irresponsible and immoral¹⁵⁸.

12. The Key Housing Sites: Site Profiles document

- a. This document is, we believe, extremely flawed. On different sites, issues such as education or biodiversity have been left blank – e.g. 069 Education, 107 Education, 068 Education, 065 Education, 077 Biodiversity, Education¹⁵⁹ – or the information is, simply, not correct – 071, 072 Biodiversity,

‘The site is under intensive agricultural use and therefore has little valuable habitat’¹⁶⁰.

In terms of these particular sites, that information shows inadequate local knowledge as bats regularly forage over the field for food, as do owls¹⁶¹. Site 073 claims:

‘Nature conservation issues may reduce the developable area but are not to a degree to prevent development’,

yet there is no mention of the bats which roost at this location nor the owls which are often present – a clear lack of local knowledge¹⁶².

Sites 071, 072, 073, 107, 065, 077 make no mention whatsoever of the wildlife corridor which exists, allowing access to the Rising Sun Country Park to such wildlife as deer, including Roe and Red. Development on any of these sites would, simply, plug this wildlife corridor, isolating the Rising Sun Country Park from non-airborne wildlife and thus damage, irreparably, the Biodiversity and eco-systems of the Country Park¹⁶³. The Biodiversity Officer’s comments which were omitted from this particular document concerning site 73

‘There may also be good quality habitat adjacent to the railway line which would need to be protected and enhanced’

are of particular relevance. These comments would also apply to site 71¹⁶⁴. The railway line allows access for travelling species such as Red and Roe Deer to leave this end of the Backworth-Holystone (Scaffold Hill)-Rising Sun-Sites 72-3-East Benton farm wildlife corridor at its western end and head back north. There are no comments from the Biodiversity Officer concerning sites 65 and 77.

As the CS proposals are suggesting a change of use from the use as employment land previously agreed under the UDP this would have a direct affect on the ability of wildlife to continue to use this part of the corridor, the assumption being that the employment land would have been largely vacated at night when larger species such as the Red and Roe Deer tend to travel.

The Biodiversity Officer should have been involved to make relevant comments to inform this document and this clearly has not happened¹⁶⁵.

- b. In terms of Education concerning the above sites 069, 107, 068, 065, 077, there are serious local issues with regards to schools being full, without the capacity for them to be extended. This is, at best, 'glossed over' in this document¹⁶⁶.
- c. The document fails to mention the pill-box on site 107. This pill-box is part of our architectural heritage and was an important cog in the wheel of air-defence in the 1939-1945 conflict. Destruction would be contrary to Core Strategy Objective 9¹⁶⁷. Can Council give an indication if it has considered this piece of architectural heritage – unique in this area of North Tyneside?¹⁶⁸ Can Council state whether it is the intention to destroy this pill-box, or to have it preserved as part of our heritage?¹⁶⁹

13. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

This document has been produced by a company from Edinburgh and , with one has to presume, little or no local knowledge¹⁷⁰? The disclaimer at the start of the document clearly states the document was prepared within the general terms of the Contract with the client (North Tyneside Council). There is no expansion on this comment, so there is no open and clear identification of those terms¹⁷¹. The report focuses mainly on the relationship between North Tyneside's Coastal area and the Coastal area of Northumberland. The little amount of reference to other areas of the borough – almost exclusively restricted to mention of Strategy Objective 8 on page 37 of the report and mention of Section 9 on page 38¹⁷².

The Core Strategy proposals would not allow these areas (Objective 8 and Section 9) to happen and the HRA does not exploit this, thus supporting concerns regarding lack of local knowledge of the author(s)¹⁷³.

Thus, whilst this document looks to have considered habitats (and therefore wildlife in its wider context), it is actually very narrow and investigates only airborne, coastal species¹⁷⁴.

14. Core Strategy Preferred Options Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

This document is extensive (212 pages plus its introductory pages). However, its focus is on the sustainability of the housing and employment development proposals. It is a particularly flawed document due to this focus and its failure to **properly** address wider sustainability issues such as climate change, climate change mitigation, renewable, open space, health and well-being, and biodiversity¹⁷⁵.

What is **unacceptable** is the Council's admission (reply from Planning Department to specific question asked) that the Council's own Sustainability Officer was **NOT** involved in the appraisal or the production of the SA document¹⁷⁶. Again, one has to ask – and with particular reference to the vague answers given by three separate members of the Planning Department – just who did write this SA and what their qualifications are to write a report on Sustainability beyond just the sustainability of housing development or employment development¹⁷⁷? It is clear that it was not written with sufficient emphasis on, or empathy for, biodiversity in the areas negatively affected by the proposals¹⁷⁸. The document states in its early stages that:

'wording of the policies and also that of the Core Strategy text itself is unambiguous'

yet this document uses wording which is, in itself, unclear, ambiguous and inaccessible

to people not cognisant with Planning Department jargon¹⁷⁹.

The document makes reference to the

'Need to ensure that the community have opportunities to participate in the planning process and have an influence over development plans for the area'

yet the Council's methods of communicating the Core Strategy (CS) proposals to the community virtually excluded this – e.g. a Press Release in the News Guardian which is not delivered to any of the areas negatively affected by the proposals¹⁸⁰. The document states that:

'...sustainable transport policies will contribute to the overall reduction in carbon emissions.'

yet the public transport infrastructure is simply not there and the documentation accepts that car use is above average, which can, along with the emissions from the new homes, only lead to an **increase** in carbon emissions¹⁸¹. This is surely another example of the Council's disregard to the existing residents and workers within the borough¹⁸².

The Council's CS Proposals documentation completely disregards the new £50 million Graphite Resources facility at Blaydon which would – if used by the Council – remove the need to incinerate and would, potentially lead to zero landfill, provided the Council changed its 3-bin policy and just ensured residents separated fabrics and batteries for alternative disposal¹⁸³. The fact that the Council has not considered this facility in its documentation is completely unacceptable in the modern climate¹⁸⁴.

Preferred Option 8: The Urban Fringe (page 42) – the comments against SA objectives 1-4 are, simply, unsubstantiated¹⁸⁵ – and page 43, SA objective 12 completely disregards the people who actually live in the areas affected. It is certainly NOT 'broadly positive' for the hundreds, nay thousands, of residents in those affected areas¹⁸⁶.

Page 57, SA 15, Comment claims *'To achieve targets development would be required on green field sites'*. This is absolutely NOT the case. It could all be achieved on brown field sites if there was a) the willingness of the planners and politicians so to do¹⁸⁷, and b) the money 'earmarked' to deal with possible contamination on these sites¹⁸⁸. Clearly, Council considers that developers are more easily attracted to green field sites so do not have the political will or initiative to go for brown¹⁸⁹.

Page 60 gladdens our souls! SA objective 17 comment that *'Much of the borough suffers from surface water flooding, development could worsen this.'* At last we agree on something. However, this issue is far more of a problem on green field sites due to the nature of the land (top soil on a deep bed of clay) than it ever is on brown field sites where the nature of the soil has been clearly disturbed for decades.

Page 70, SA objective 7 – no, it won't, it'll just give a sense of living in urban sprawl. This comment is subjective and impossible to substantiate¹⁹⁰.

Pages 119 and 120, we agree with ALL the comments. However, the proposed mitigation is vague, woolly and ineffective. For example, SA 5, the, SA 10 it would be impossible to mitigate the loss of open fields with crops and horses grazing with layout of housing – what's proposed to mitigate it, a mural? SA 13 is clear tosh – how can reduction of designated open space be mitigated by the proposed mitigation? Pure gobbledegook¹⁹¹!

Page 121, SA 5, (as stated in previous paragraph) local school is full and has NO capacity to be extended¹⁹².

Page 122, SA 12 would lead to increased CO₂ production, which is against Local and National Policy. SA 15 the comment is valid but the proposed mitigation simply would not work¹⁹³.

Page 123, SA 15, comment valid but the proposed mitigation would not work as this site is part of an established wildlife corridor extending from East Benton Farm, through the Rising Sun Country Park, through Scaffold Hill, across the A19 and up to Backworth and beyond¹⁹⁴.

Page 131, SA 1, with thoughtful planning, employment area could be consolidated onto one part of the site, leaving the vast remaining area free for housing development. This is an area where schools have a known capacity to take in extra pupils. There is no mention of this, nor the good transport links and facilities such as shopping, leisure and entertainment facilities in the nearby locality¹⁹⁵.

Page 141, SA 5, there is no mention of the fact that some school places would be lost to the local, existing community, to allow places for those temporarily residing in the area. SA 7 does not make any mention of the locations and their possible effects¹⁹⁶. The only time this has been alluded to was in one written reply from a member of the Planning Department stating that such a site would not be suitable in Wellfield (Earsdon) due to the closeness of allotments – a comment which, surely, requires some degree of clarification¹⁹⁷.

Page 142, SA 10 proposed mitigation, how can any community – be it the local, existing community or the travelling community – do this if the Council point blank refuses to state areas it is considering¹⁹⁸ – and after so many years on the planning board, does the Council really expect communities to believe there are not specific site(s) in mind? Indeed, Mayor Arkley's response to Councillor C Croft's question (question (vi) at the Council Meeting of 9th September 2010) states:

*'It is my understanding that former Labour Cabinet Members, with officers identified all sites.'*¹⁹⁹

Page 186, SA 8, comment, true, proposed mitigation, how – specifically? SA 10, comment, true, proposed mitigation, how? The Council's own documentation – as well as the Report from the Audit Commission (September 2010) – accepts that Council is ineffective in communicating with the community²⁰⁰.

Page 192, SA 8, what about the policy of IMPROVING Health and Well-Being?²⁰¹

15. CSPO Consultation Document

Objective 8 states that the Rising Sun Country Park will be protected for its biodiversity value. The CSPO proposals to plug the wildlife corridors at Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107 will deny this objective²⁰².

Objective 10 seeks to 'make walking and cycling an attractive and safe choice for all.' The CSPO proposals surrounding access to the Rising Sun Country Park from Sites 71, 72, 73, and 107 will deny this objective²⁰³.

Section 6.1.2 Table 1 Option B completely ignores the fact that, save for the massive increase in new homes built in North Tyneside since 2001, the population would have actually **decreased**. Hence, the population drift from the North-East is reflected in North Tyneside and **there are NO new housing requirements, just desires by the Council to increase its revenue through increased numbers of homes subject to Council Tax**²⁰⁴.

Section 6.3.4 Table 5 considers land required for Waste Management. There is NO land required for Waste Management if the Council adapts its waste collection and management and uses the Graphite Resources facility at Blaydon²⁰⁵.

Section 7.0.6 proves the Council's inability to use plain English in its documentation:

'The Main Urban Area –further divided between the east and the west but essentially the remainder of the borough not included in an Area Action Plan or the Main Urban Area.'

According to this astonishing example of 'gobbledegook' the Main Urban Area is not included in the Main Urban Area. As stated, PROOF of inaccessible language in the CSPO proposals documentation²⁰⁶.

Option 12 (denigrated to option 2B in its own table presumably due to ineffective proof-reading by the publishers of the document) states reasons for Selection. We contend that it will not use or support existing infrastructure as this is already at capacity²⁰⁷. Further, it will not minimize impact on the road network as the Council has stated in its own documentation it would need to 'dual' Holystone by-pass. This impact would attract more traffic and lead to further congestion on Whitley Road and Station Road, as well as Great Lime Road, the Holystone/A19 junction (already overloaded at peak times) and through to Northumberland Park/Shiremoor²⁰⁸. Further it states it scores well on sustainability appraisal – we contest this assessment²⁰⁹. Further it states it has the potential to:

'keep green infrastructure ... and biodiversity.'

It will not as the Green infrastructure will be severely damaged by the plugging of the wildlife corridors at or adjacent to Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107²¹⁰.

Section 9.0.2 claims: *'Development will be directed away from ... land at risk from flooding.'*

Site 107 floods every time there is any significant rain²¹¹.

Section 9.0.3 Claims:

'A network of green corridors ... and greenspaces will be preserved and enhanced including strategic wildlife corridors along the ... A19 corridor ...'

The CSPO proposals will destroy the wildlife corridors by site 107 (next to the A19) and thus the CSPO proposals go against this section²¹².

16. Housing Targets and Planning UK Government Document (House of Commons Library) Standard Note SN/SC/3741

This document states that ‘Once land has been zoned for housing in that way, individual planning applications are much more likely to be approved.²¹³’ This proves our concern about the cycle of the Planning Department proposing the CSPO proposals and also being the body responsible for approving later planning applications.

We contend this is unethical government and thus makes any community consultation ineffective and irrelevant²¹⁴.

We therefore object to the CSPO proposals as this goes against the foundations of democracy²¹⁵.

Section 3 of this document states that the new measures will be:

‘... a permanent, simple, transparent incentive for local government and local people to encourage, rather than resist, new housing - of types and in places that are sensitive to local concerns and with which local communities are, therefore, content.’

Clearly, and from the number of petition signatures (in EXCESS of THREE and a HALF THOUSAND) against the CSPO proposals to develop at Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107, the CSPO proposals are NOT sensitive to local concerns, nor will the local communities be ‘content’²¹⁶.

17. Policy Exchange (the think tank for politics) ‘Think Tank on Planning’ Document, ‘Making Housing Affordable’, 31st August 2010

This document urges the Government to ‘adopt a system of “community-controlled” planning with housing schemes allowed unless 50 per cent of those directly affected by the proposals object by a ballot.’ We have shown – with the collection of 3500 petition signatures – that well over 50 per cent of those directly affected DO object. Thus community-controlled planning would reject the CSPO proposals for Sites 65, 77, 71, 72, 73, 107²¹⁷.

Further, this document states that a local authority would be able to designate up to 75 per cent of its existing undeveloped land as “off limit” to developers. We urge North Tyneside Council to be pro-active and progressive and adopt this document as Policy²¹⁸.

18. Minutes of Council Meeting 9th September 2010

Section C58/09/10 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS comment on the importance of the Council setting an example to residents in embracing the key concept of Big Society. The announcements clarify this by stating:

‘That would mean working in partnership with people and involving the public in what was being discussed and considered.’

We welcome this statement but are concerned that the Council’s weak record on effective community consultation will mean this aim is simply not delivered²¹⁹.

Further, the Mayor’s announcements state

‘... the key aspect in achieving this is by empowering the public to help shape decisions, ... and generally being more open for public scrutiny.’

We welcome this statement, too, but are concerned that the Council's weak record on effective community consultation will mean this aim is simply not delivered²²⁰.

This section of the document further reports:

'The Mayor was committed to ensuring that the Council did more to actively listen to residents and use their feedback to shape the Council's activities.'

The failure of Council staff at CSPO consultation events to make written notes of residents' concerns directly contradicts this commitment²²¹. Clearly, from Mayor Arkley's response to the question from Councillor Brett, she was neither aware of this, nor of the documentation (SCI, 2010) which fails to require such written notes to be made/taken²²².

In Mayor Arkley's reply to the question from Councillor M McIntyre, she states:

'I believe we have fully consulted and I am pleased with the response which stands at over 500 replies compared with the 69 responses which were received by the then administration.'

Apart from our objection to the constant political 'points-scoring' by North Tyneside politicians²²³ – when they should be representing their residents, not their political parties²²⁴ – we wish Cabinet and full Council to note our objection to this comment²²⁵.

It is absolutely clear that, had it not been for the active involvement of residents' groups (who found out about the CSPO proposals only by chance) the number of responses would have been as insignificant as in previous consultations by North Tyneside Council²²⁶. Indeed the consideration that North Tyneside Council has 'fully consulted' is an insult to the residents²²⁷.

Questions arising from the points raised in the text above (numbered to match the superscript numbers)

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6. How will the Council mitigate this?
7. What is the answer to this question?
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11. Can the Council respond to this question?
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20. Can the Council respond to this question?
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104. Will the Council accept we are a group who should be consulted?
105. Will the Council consult with our group on the Core Strategy, as it progresses?
106. Will the Council accept we are a group who should be consulted?
107. Will the Council accept we are a group who should be consulted?
108. How will the Council mitigate this?
109. How will the Council mitigate this?
110. Can the Council respond to this comment?
111. Will the Council commission a web group, with community involvement, to improve its website accessibility?
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Further Questions and Objections to the CSPO Proposals:

OBJECTIONS TO NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL'S LACK OF OPEN CONSULTATION ON CORE STRATEGY PROPOSALS

1. North Tyneside Council claims to have been consulting on the Core Strategy since work began on this document in 2007. The Council claims to have consulted with 'interested parties' from the very start. Why does the Council not deem the residents of North Tyneside worthy of the title 'interested parties'?
2. North Tyneside Council's public consultation was ineffectively communicated to its residents. Residents only found out about a) the Core Strategy, and b) the Consultation events through last-minute communication by some Councillors or by rumour. North Tyneside Council staff's assertion at Consultation events that 'it has been on the website' excludes all residents who do not have internet access, sufficient IT skills to access the information, or who simply do not regularly visit the Council's website.
3. Council staff stated at consultation events that all residents had received notification about the Core Strategy by distribution of the Widening Horizons magazine. Residents all report they have received no such notification. Why was the consultation document itself NOT distributed to all homes in the borough?
4. Consultation events have been completely one-sided, with Council staff taking no written notes of residents' concerns. It has been a 'this is what's proposed' approach. If people want to make comment, it has to be in writing either by using the Council's Questionnaire (which contains few 'open' questions and little opportunity for qualification of answers), or by comment on the Council's website. This takes no account of the low adult literacy levels in many parts of the borough and is therefore ***exclusive*** of large numbers of North Tyneside residents, contrary to the Council's own standards and requirements.
5. Due to the poor communication, many residents did not find out about the consultation events until the first or second week in August. Many residents were on holiday and would be unable to attend the few events being organised.
6. As the main time period of consultation was being held over the summer holiday, this prevented parents of school-age children – particularly the parents of the younger and therefore more vulnerable children – from meeting and sharing their concerns. This does not sit well with the Every Child Matters agenda, to which North Tyneside Council subscribes.
7. North Tyneside Council has a duty to give all its residents the opportunity express their views. By holding the consultation mainly during the school holidays (when Adult Literacy Classes and Adult IT classes also stop), this denied significant population groups (those mentioned in points 2, 4, 5, 6 above) from expressing their views.
8. Staff at North Tyneside Council have been tardy or have failed completely to respond to queries from residents concerning the Core Strategy and its proposals, thereby making it difficult to submit informed comment by the set deadline.

9. Other 'key' staff from the Planning Department have not been available – due to being 'out of the office' for extended periods – to reply to queries from residents concerning the Core Strategy and its proposals, thereby making it difficult to submit informed comment by the set deadline.
10. Certain Councillors have sought to seek political advantage by publishing and having distributed political leaflets with a headline claiming protection by their political party of green belt land, giving an impression that the strategy itself may be a fait-accompli, already decided upon and therefore the whole consultation process may possibly be undermined.

Objections to North Tyneside Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options Proposals

1. North Tyneside Council has taken an approach to development which focuses on green field sites and which would see the destruction of biodiversity on significant amounts of open land, including no less than three farms.
2. Development on green field sites implicitly demands infrastructure for education and medical facilities, as well as shops. In the green field sites identified, this infrastructure simply does not exist or is, at best, weak.
3. North Tyneside Council has permitted significant development on green field sites over a number of years and has thus fragmented biodiversity and therefore reduced the ability of the borough to sustain its wildlife, particularly wildlife which depends on 'corridors' to move from area to area. At a time when significant native bird species, for example, are in decline, a continuation of this policy has to be opposed.
4. In an age of Environmental Education, the model proposed by North Tyneside Council rejects the need for climate change mitigation and suggests to young people in education in the borough that environmental considerations are less important than the need for development. This contradicts the teachings of environmental education and devalues the need for responsible approaches to the environment, particularly the global perspective and the need to move towards One Planet Living. Again, the model prejudices the ethos of the Every Child Matters agenda.
5. The Core Strategy proposals ignore the requirement for North Tyneside Council to reduce its carbon footprint by 80% by 2050. Developing sites on green field sites will inevitably increase the Council's carbon footprint. North Tyneside Council has already shown questionable commitment to this national target with its movement to the Quadrant and the need to install external air-conditioning due to the lack of sustainability and internal climate issues of the Quadrant building.
6. North Tyneside Council is not considering the significant areas of brown field sites on the North Bank of the Tyne for housing which would allow regeneration as a thriving community, these areas themselves being greater in hectare than all the green field sites being proposed combined. Imaginative planning for these sites could provide a mixture of executive, luxury, modest, affordable and social housing which would provide a genuinely diverse population which would be a model of excellence in social terms, and thus of great benefit to the Borough of North Tyneside.
7. Proposals for development for industry alone on the North Bank of the Tyne is an opportunity missed and it remains highly questionable whether sufficient industry of the types proposed could be attracted to the area and sustained.
8. North Tyneside Council has not prevented significant brown field (previously industrial) sites such as the site to the West of Norham Road (West Chirton South) from becoming derelict over a number of years. By identifying this area for Mixed-use development, the opportunity is being missed to provide significant numbers of new homes where there are identified spaces in the local schools (Primary and Secondary) and also other

infrastructure such as medical facilities, shops, and excellent public transport is already in place.

9. The identification of 'areas of search' for a) Waste Management, and b) a Gypsy and Travellers site is woolly and vague. After three years of working on this document, why has the Council failed to provide specific proposals?
10. Further, why is North Tyneside Council unable to guarantee any areas are excluded from such developments (Waste Management and Gypsy/Travellers site), with the exception of the coastal area, East Killingworth and the area between Monkseaton and Shiremoor?
11. Further, why has the North Tyneside Council deemed the coastal areas, East Killingworth and the area between Monkseaton and Shiremoor exempt from such developments (Waste Management and Gypsy/Travellers site) when these are sparsely-populated and many of the other areas are areas of significant population?
12. Reduction in the number of green spaces is potentially injurious to the health and well-being of future generations, particularly affecting young people and children which goes against the Every Child Matters agenda, particularly 'Well-being'.
13. Reduction in the number of green spaces reduces potential of residents to explore their environment, particularly affecting young people and children which goes against North Tyneside Council's sixth component of the Every Child Matters agenda 'Be Spirited'. This sixth component is exclusive to North Tyneside and is not part of the national Every Child Matters agenda. It was, however, adopted by Children's Services in North Tyneside as an extra component to the national agenda.
14. All proposed developments, being focussed on green field sites, and thus away from currently densely populated areas, ignore the need for the required level of regeneration of these housing areas. Housing proposals for these areas are inadequate and therefore the proposals are divisive and discriminate against residents in the current areas of high population.
15. North Tyneside has failed to demonstrate, to the satisfaction or understanding of residents, the need for the level of housing being proposed.
16. North Tyneside Council has failed to demonstrate, to the satisfaction or understanding of residents, the need for the significant levels of social housing when the known number of empty and boarded-up houses across the borough is so notable.
17. North Tyneside Council's claim that there is a need for further social housing (25% of all major developments) is contradicted by the fact that it was active in the destruction of significant numbers of social homes in the Battle Hill area over the past five years (homes which were only built in the last 30 years), with these homes being replaced by private homes, and also with the decision to 'offload' 100 Council-owned' homes.
18. The CSPO proposals do not clarify if the Borough's ten-year affordable housing need (3510 units) will be met entirely by the 4070 new homes on key housing sites (should the 200 unit per year social rented 'other initiatives' prove unsuccessful) or if any affordable

provision is included in existing planning permissions targeted at the 2600 backlog of socially-rented homes.

Objections to Core Strategy Proposals for Sites 107, 71, 72, 73, 65, 77

1. Holystone by-pass cannot support this extra development – at certain times it is already at capacity with extensive queues along its entirety.
2. Access to the proposed development at the South-Western end would require either a further roundabout or traffic-light control, leading to standing traffic and increased air pollution.
3. Dualling Holystone by-pass would – as highlighted in the Council's own proposals (Reasons for Selection/Rejection of Site) – cut off existing housing from access to public footpaths which lead across the proposed development into countryside areas.
4. Dualling Holystone by-pass would create bottle-necks at the junctions with Whitley Road / Great Lime Road as well as the Holystone/A19 junction roundabout causing standing traffic. Standing traffic would lead to more air pollution.
5. Dualling Holystone by-pass could lead to even greater levels of through-traffic which could lead to devaluation of properties, particularly those backing on to the by-pass.
6. Increased levels of traffic would cause traffic to divert and dissipate through Holystone village, leading to increased traffic through the village itself and west along. It would also cause more congestion running back through Northumberland Park to Shiremoor, through West Allotment, and West along Whitley Road to Station Road. This will lead to further danger to children crossing Whitley Road. Previous traffic-calming efforts have, simply, not worked (as evidenced by the Council's recent traffic-calming and –mitigating proposals). The recent traffic-calming and -mitigating proposals will not be sufficient to offset this increase in traffic. This is, again, in direct conflict with the Every Child matters agenda.
7. Increased traffic – moving and standing – would lead to greater levels of air pollution, potentially adversely affecting the health and well-being of existing residents; particularly children and the elderly. Adverse effects on Children's health and well-being is in contravention of the Every Child Matters Agenda, to which North Tyneside Council subscribes.
8. Increased traffic would lead to increased levels of noise pollution, thereby adversely affecting the quality of life of existing residents.
9. Holystone School is at capacity – it is already over-subscribed – and there is no nearby Primary School provision. Forcing young children to travel greater distances to school is potentially injurious to their health and well-being – in contravention of the Every Child Matters Agenda, to which North Tyneside Council subscribes.
10. The extension of the Holystone School catchment area, combined with the school's over-subscription and the further pressure any development would put on places could lead to siblings having to attend different schools. This would be a serious logistical issue for parents and is potentially injurious to the children's health and well-being – in

contravention of the Every Child Matters Agenda, to which North Tyneside Council subscribes.

11. The extension of the school catchment areas for Primary Schools in the Hadrian Lodge area, combined with the schools' over-subscription and the further pressure any development would put on places could lead to siblings having to attend different schools. This would be a serious logistical issue for parents and is potentially injurious to the children's health and well-being – in contravention of the Every Child Matters Agenda, to which North Tyneside Council subscribes.
12. There is also a lack of schooling for the proposed developments at sites 65 and 77. Existing schools are not big enough to support this development.
13. Secondary school provision is inadequate for all the areas mentioned above. Where there are secondary places in the Borough, there are few plans for development.
14. Local medical and dental services are already over-subscribed and there is no provision to cope with further population increases in this area.
15. Loss of the green fields open spaces would have a significant negative effect on biodiversity. Bats regularly forage across these fields. Declining species such as the hedge sparrow inhabit the hedgerows and these species would disappear from the area due to destruction of their habitat and proximity to human living and activity. Further, there are significant numbers of species living and thriving in these fields and these species would be lost forever.
16. Proposed extension to the Rising Sun Country Park would be of no benefit to the public as these areas would remain closed off and continue to be used for non-agricultural grazing and livery.
17. The loss of the green fields and the open space would negatively impact on the country feel of the area, thereby causing a detrimental effect on the general health and well-being of the many residents who access these areas of countryside.
18. The Rising Sun Country Park is a SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Interest) and is dependent on the biodiversity of surrounding land and fields to maintain its own breadth of biodiversity.
19. The proposed development would be building on land previously identified by the Council as forming part of the wildlife corridor. The proposed development would, effectively, destroy this corridor and therefore have a significant effect on the biodiversity of the area and the adjacent Rising Sun Country Park.
20. The need for housing in this area is, in itself, questionable, as evidenced by the time it takes to sell existing housing.
21. Holystone by-pass already suffers from significant flooding, due to the fields being incapable of absorbing more than light rain falls, and the road being lower than the fields. Reducing the area of land available for water-absorption would exacerbate this problem.

22. Holystone, Northumberland Park, Hadrian Lodge are areas of relatively low crime and disorder. Any of the proposed developments would put this at risk, thereby threatening the Council's own commitment to ensuring crime reduction for all areas.
23. Developing land at sites 66, 75 would be in contradiction of the UDP which identified this land for employment. This change of use would 'plug' the wildlife corridor for those animals which move/migrate at night – animals such as Roe and Red Deer. No Biodiversity assessment has been presented by the Biodiversity Officer to comment on this destruction.
24. Developing any of the sites 71, 72, 73, 66, 75, 107 would destroy a vitally important wildlife corridor and permanently isolate the Rising Sun Country Park, seriously affecting its biodiversity and preventing permanently its ability to support transient land-based species.
25. Developing sites 71, 72, 73 would decimate the population of bats and owls, which use these fields for foraging. Developing these sites would further remove their roosting habitats.
26. North Tyneside Council have not confirmed the percentage of affordable housing proposed for each of the key sites (CSPO option 14C). Given that need and viability are known, residents can't give the questionnaire informed consent with reference to the CSPO proposals, without knowing the actuality of the proposals.
27. North Tyneside Council have not confirmed the 'Preferred Housing Mix' proposed for each of the key sites (CSPO option 15). Given that need and viability are known, residents can't give the questionnaire informed consent with reference to the CSPO proposals, without knowing the actuality of the proposals.

Objections to Core Strategy Proposals - Waste Management

1. North Tyneside Council has not provided residents of North Tyneside with a sufficiently clear vision of its Waste Management Strategy.
2. North Tyneside Council's Area of Search for Waste Management sites is vague and too generalised, thereby preventing residents from making clear, informed comments about or objections to the proposals.
3. The possible identification of a site for Waste Management on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) would lead to an unsustainable level of heavy traffic throughout the already-congested Holystone area.
4. The possible identification of a site for Waste Management on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) would lead to potential Road Safety issues throughout the already-congested Holystone area.
5. The possible identification of a site for Waste Management on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) would be in direct contravention of other Council Policies and Strategies.
6. The possible identification of a site for Waste Management on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) would lead to increased air, noise and aromatic pollution.
7. The possible identification of a site for Waste Management on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) is not necessary as a brand new facility for processing and/or recycling all waste materials (except batteries and clothing) already exists in Blaydon. The Blaydon site has the capacity to take all of North Tyneside's Housing and Industrial Waste (except for batteries, clothing and certain hazardous waste products).
8. The possible identification of any site for Waste Management in North Tyneside is not necessary as a brand new facility for processing and/or recycling all waste materials (except batteries and clothing) already exists in Blaydon. The Blaydon site has the capacity to take all of North Tyneside's Housing and Industrial Waste (except for batteries, clothing and certain hazardous waste products).
9. The building of a Waste Management facility on North Tyne Industrial Estate in Benton (opposite Asda) would lead to potential infestation by vermin in an area close to housing but which also serves as a centre for food production.

Objections to Core Strategy Proposals re Gypsies / Travellers Site

1. The Council's refusal to specifically identify proposed sites has caused unnecessary stress and anxiety to residents.
2. Council activities should have a positive effect on residents' health and well-being, not, as is the case in this instance, a negative effect.
3. Council is stating that sites should be built where Gypsies / Travellers wish to be, yet there is no provision in Whitley Bay where camps have previously been established by the Gypsy / Traveller community themselves. Is it right, therefore, to identify the A19 corridor as the place for this site?
4. Increased traffic of heavy duty trucks and large caravans could cause further congestion when turning into/out of site.
5. Increased traffic of heavy-duty trucks and large caravans could cause further congestion, leading to a reduction in the safety of road users, particularly pedestrians and especially children.

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Signed:

Signed, on behalf of Holystone Action Group

Date: