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Dear

Durham City Green Belt

Widespread concern has been expressed in the press and at public meetings about the County Council's plans for the development of Durham City. In response, residents from the Durham City, including members of St. Nicholas Community Forum and Crossgate Residents' Group, wish to promote an alternative vision from that of the County Council.

Durham County Council has set a target for 5,000 new homes by 2030 and sites have been identified. These sites include land at Sniperley, near the Arncliffe Centre, near Sherburn Road Estate and land at Mount Oswald. Aykley Heads is to be turned into a business hub. Development on this scale will lead to an outward expansion of the city's boundary into the Green Belt.

The setting of the World Heritage Site of Norman Cathedral and Castle in a green landscape bowl is protected by Green Belt, which forms a buffer against urban sprawl. Durham City is the region's most important tourism and heritage asset and should be protected against over-development, thus retaining the integrity and character of a small historic city.

We would like to see the extraordinary assets of Durham City promoted more vigorously and particularly the tourism and cultural potential enhanced. Development should be limited to brown field sites, of which there are several, before any expansion on Green Belt is considered. Since so much housing in the city centre is student accommodation and only occupied for six months in the year, an increase in purpose built blocks for student accommodation would release housing for families.

We, the undersigned, endorse the protection of Durham City, its environs and sense of place, from over development, so that future generations can enjoy the unique heritage of a small historic city. We hope that you will join us in objecting to the present policy of the County Council, unwilling to consider an alternative vision for Durham.

Yours sincerely