



Durham Diocese Board of Finance (ID: 544992)
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Question 3 Do you agree that 38200 new houses is the correct Housing Requirement for County Durham to 2030 and that the County Durham Plan should identify specific sites for 29000 of these? If not can you put forward a more suitable alternative?

The Council have established a need for 38,200 new houses within County Durham during the Plan period and we support the level of development proposed. It is difficult to understand, however, how the housing land requirement has been translated into the housing distribution table (at Table 2). We would welcome further clarification on this.

Our particular concern relates to the housing allocation at Sedgefield. We note that Sedgefield is defined in the document as a 'secondary settlement' but, with a population of around 4500, a substantial town centre with an array of shops and services, two primary schools and a Community College and the settlement's strategic location adjacent to the regionally significant employment area at NETPark, Sedgefield is a substantial and self sustaining settlement and is not directly comparable to the other South Durham 'secondary' settlements of Chilton, Ferryhill and Willington.

We would strongly object to Sedgefield's inclusion within this group and, in particular, the Town's inadequate allocation of only 300 units within the Plan Period. This objection is made on the basis of the self sustaining and attractive character of the town, the ability of some of the urban fringe sites to deliver viable, high quality new housing, the settlement's strategic positioning in relation to NETPark (and the highly skilled employment opportunities that NETPark brings to Durham) and its ability to meet the housing requirements of such a highly skilled workforce.

Paragraph 4.43 of the Core Strategy document recognises that location is a key criteria when a highly skilled workforce - such as those working within NETPark - are seeking new housing. There is also an acknowledged preference within the document for new development of predominantly private housing within the suburbs. Sedgefield is well-placed to easily deliver this need and is capable of absorbing the overprovision within the main South Durham Settlements.

Overall, Sedgefield is settlement where there is likely to be high housing demand and a high level of market interest. There are available sites on the edge of the settlement which are comparatively straightforward to deliver and will be financially viable. We note that paragraph 4.42 of the Core Strategy seeks that deliverability is a key aspect of the Council's preferred strategy and that the Council will seek to direct new development to locations which are attractive to the development industry, particularly where there is sufficient value in the land to deliver affordable housing. The settlement of Sedgefield can serve to fulfil this requirement. We therefore seek that additional housing is directed towards the settlement within the Plan period.

Although not directly relevant to this Core Strategy Consultation, we also consider that there needs to be a more urgent timeframe to deliver housing within Sedgefield than has been suggested within the SHLAA. There are available sites within the settlement which are available and deliverable, with a level of market interest. We would welcome further discussion in respect of bringing forward the delivery of new housing on the south eastern fringe of Sedgefield in due course.

	● View consultation point Question 3 :
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