

## NewcastleGateshead One Core Strategy

### Concerns raised by the Tyneside Committee October 2011

- It is considered that there is a need to re-assess the population growth forecast especially in light of the current economic stagnation and the reality that the calculated demand for the number of homes specified may not actually be required in the Newcastle location. The Committee noted that a key rationale for the strategy linking Newcastle with Gateshead was the aim of achieving a city region approach to creating a sustainable development plan. The Committee took the view that a proper city region approach would embrace a wider locality such as areas adjoining the river Tyne, from Newcastle city to the coast embracing the neighbouring areas of South Shields and North Tyneside. This would allow a co-ordinated growth strategy embracing much redundant brown field sites on both sides of the river with a better relationship with existing urban centres. It would also enable an effective integrated transport strategy and use of local services and infrastructure without fundamentally eating into the countryside and in consequence destroying parts of the green belt.
- A suburban strategy for growth in Newcastle is considered to be an outdated approach to sub regional planning and hardly meets a criterion of sustainable development. The specific proposals would create large new neighbourhoods remote from the main core of Newcastle thus creating accessibility difficulties for less mobile groups such as older and younger people and people with disabilities.
- The proposed suburban growth strategy would require expensive new social and technical infrastructures unable to exploit the benefits of those which exist in more central locations. Further, in this age of austerity it is unclear where the funding will come from to support these new services. New peripheral neighbourhoods would require facilities such as health centres and GP surgeries, etc and with the current financial pressure on resources it is questioned how this new investment will be funded.
- In the current economic climate it is doubtful whether the mere allocation of additional land for housing in these locations will actually result in the housing being brought on stream. Younger people especially are unable to raise deposits for mortgages and consideration needs to be given to land already with the benefit of planning permission and which may be held in builder's land banks.
- It is considered that the proposals will have a seriously damaging effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural landscapes which define the present built up limits of the city of Newcastle and establishes a sense of urban familiarity. Indeed, instead of on-going creeping suburban development at the city edges, emphasis should be given to new structural planting to reinforce the existing land use pattern and its relationship to the countryside. Indeed, such an approach would be consistent with the existing green belt which seeks to give long term protection to the current limits of the built up areas.
- The Committee joins others in expressing its strong objection to development at Gosforth Park which would seriously harm and erode the ecological significance of the locality and do immeasurable harm to the Gosforth Park Nature reserve. In no calculation can these proposals either be considered as being consistent with the underlying rationale of the green belt and the sustainable use of natural resources including the protection of our important wildlife and their essential habitats.