Draft response from Belper Town Council to consultation from AVBC preparation for Local Plan.

We have prepared a separate document because we found in the reports and data offered so far there is insufficient detail on which to complete the questionnaire in a fully informed way. It was also under some headings e.g. Option 4, not possible to use the electronic replies. We have made some general observations and then further points specifically regarding Belper

It is good to see that on the data submitted AVBC expects to have a 7+ year land supply for homes and a surplus of employment land. There is still however reference to a possibility of needing to respond under the "duty to co-operate" to any additional housing supply required by Derby City Council HMA. We hoped this issue had been resolved. It does need to be clarified as it may make a material difference to the final numbers so we reserve comment until that is confirmed.

We have a number of general points needing clarification;

1.The 2 main reports from BE group on identifying future employment land and the SHELAA report identifying housing sites take radically different assessment approaches which means it is difficult to make a coherent response to the Spatial Strategy Review .

2.The BE group have used a scoring points system and the SHELAA report have not and have relied on subjective criteria. Was there a reason for this? Is there an overarching live/work strategy, and if not, why not?

3.The 2 separate reports differentiate clearly between housing and employment land but seem to have discounted sites identified as far back as 2006 as "mixed use sites" of which Belper has a number. These were assessed by independent AECOM reports and deemed viable as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Is there to be a further report on those sites explaining the recommendation?

4.There is no review of brownfield land within AVBC to support the consultation. There should be at least a review of the current register of brownfield sites. This means there is no proactive identification of potential sites. Is this intended? Is there an alternative plan for these sites?

5. The most recent Greenbelt Review published March 2019 is not available in the supporting documents. Can this be reissued particularly as a future review of green belt is mentioned as being needed if at least 2 potential options are to be chosen. Is this a realistic option, being mindful of the concerns raised in 2019?

6.Most crucially how are the now 13 made Neighbourhood Plans in AVBC being used to inform the Local Plan? There appears to be no reference to their content; either those who identify sites, like Belper, Ripley or Crich or those that develop themes e.g. aging population,

specialist housing needs, potential for small sites integrated into the existing built framework, identifying self-build sites. It is clear from the NPPF update in July 2021 references paras 2 /12/21 and 127 that consideration should be given of made NP's when preparing the Local Plan. This confirms previous NPPF guidance about integrating NP's and their role in the emerging Local Plan.

Particular reference is made in Annex 2 "Neighbourhood Plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides the neighbourhood plan should not be made." It's clear that it is expected that made NP's will inform and underpin any emerging Local Plans but there is no evidence of this.

7.The call for sites in 2020 provided a very short window for response (6 weeks) Only landowners listed in 2016 were contacted. It is not clear what public authority landowners, apart from the County Council were contacted. How will new potential sites be identified and assessed which may come forward?

Points directly relevant to Belper.

The BE report on Employment land

1.Recommendation that the Bullsmoor allocation continue to be protected does not reflect clarification of the requirement to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World heritage Site by UNESCO in 2016 and in the Derwent Valley Mills Management Plans of 2014 and 2020.

2. Scoring of the "The Site Conditions-Environmental Setting" gives the highest score to Greenfield sites and the lowest to brownfield. Why is this? This is ignoring the AVBC and Belper Neighbourhood Plan policy and stated preference for using brownfield sites first .It is also contrary to NPPF para 119 which states policies and decisions "set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs in a way that makes as much use as possible for previously developed or "brownfield" land" and Para 120 also "give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land "

3.The Bullsmoor site average score is skewed by a flawed scoring process. The environment score of 10 is due to it being a Greenfield site, is this intentional? (See above). The growth prospects score of 10 is due to there being development partners rather than the use by an adjoining specific business site (which of itself would be welcomed) but would otherwise attract a score of 2. BE regard this as the most likely outcome which does not explain the low score.

4. Scoring of "Sustainability and Accessibility "gives high scores for access to roads but has no assessment for cycling or walking. This gives no acknowledgement to the Belper Neighbourhood Plan NPP16 to support local working and reduce commuting, nor of AVBC's own declaration of a climate emergency.

5. It is clear that employment land development is to be focused on Kilburn and Denby (Parkhall/Cinderhill) but in other parts it is referred to as Belper, which is a separate parish. In Appendix 7 (Employment area maps) it doesn't appear at all. Please clarify.

The SHELAA report on Housing

- In the Clearlead report, option 3 which refers to the "villages of Alfreton and Belper" where growth is to be concentrated outside the green belt, when both are surrounded by greenbelt. How will this be delivered?
- Specific brownfield sites identified in the Belper NP which have been fully supported by a government inspector as sustainable development are not considered or even subjected to the NPPF test of being "achievable, available and deliverable." This needs updating as 5 of them, Abru, Belper Lane, Milford Mills, the Old Library and North Derwent St are currently being built out. Ada Belfield site and Dalton Fuchs have live planning applications.
- The East /North Mill is undoubtedly the most complex site but has live planning discussions ongoing. Of the other sites West Mill is dormant but will have huge potential for the town and the NHS site of Babington Hospital will need timely intervention if it is not to become another derelict blight. A Masterplan is needed to coordinate the development of the significant brownfield site of South Derwent St. All of these are potential sites for consideration in a Local Plan.

   SUMMARY
- We appreciate that the spatial strategy options consultation is intended to be high level at this stage, looking generally at the options for additional housing and employment land with broad principles for its dispersal across the Amber Valley area. However, it is extremely difficult to select any of the options when the information available on which to make an informed judgement is unclear, incomplete, or contains contradictions. We urge AVBC to use our observations constructively and pay particular notice to the NPPF and Planning Practice guidance on the role of Neighbourhood Plans in forming part of the overall development plan for the area. This seems to be missing from the approach demonstrated so far in developing the Local Plan.
- We would expect this response to the current consultation will form part of the consultation response record which will in turn form part of the future examination in public of the draft Local Plan. In the meantime we would be pleased to receive a response to the points we have made.