

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM PUBLIC MEETING  
ON THURSDAY 30 JANUARY 2014**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Present	Muriel Sawbridge (MS), Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (RBW), Malcolm Smith (MSm), Ian Forrester (IF), Sue Childs (SC), Gordon Cessford (GS), Jonathan Elmer (JE), Cllr David Freeman (DF), David Hook (DH), Jonathan Lovell (JL), Frank Newton (FN), Nick Rippin (NR), Colin Wilkes (CW), Chris Plummer (CP), Terry Turrington (TT), Kevin Turrington (KTu), Cllr Nigel Martin (NM), Ann Evans (AE), Kirsty Thomas (KT)
Apologies	Mike Costello, Sonali Craddock, Matt Deakin, Cllr Richard Ormerod, Malgorzata Bialek, Angela Tracy-Smith
Chairs Welcome	The Chair welcomed all members of the Forum and members of the public to the meeting. Also in attendance were Gavin Scott and Michael Lowe from the Spatial Policy Team, Durham County Council. They were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair.
1. The Neighbourhood Planning Forum Role	<p>RBW spoke about the role of Neighbourhood Planning Forums.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Planning Forum (NPF) came about from the Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum, and gives local people the chance to have a say in where development happens in the City.</p> <p>It is for the Forum to decide on the length of the Plan, but would make sense to align with the County Plan.</p> <p>This process is a change in that people should not just consider what sort of development they don't want, but what sort of city we want to see.</p> <p>There are a lot of skills in the community in Durham and the Forum is hoping to utilize these skills in drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>The development of a Neighbourhood Plan is a long process, and it is imperative that the NPF start quickly. The next stage of the process is to draw down funding from the government.</p>
2. Durham County Council – Support and Communication	<p>Gavin Scott and Michael Lowe outlined how Durham County Council (DCC) will work with the Forum to develop a Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>DCC will take an advisory role in the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan will need to be in line with the County Plan, but if approved will become part of the formal</p>

	<p>planning process, and the planning committee will have to look at this document when determining planning applications.</p> <p>The County Plan does not contain a level of detail that was contained in the previous City Local Plan, and the Neighbourhood Plan can fill in the gaps.</p> <p>DCC will provide a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Forum, outlining timescales to provide information, points of contact etc. DCC will also be able to provide advice about how to gather the right information, and be able to provide draft questionnaires and other materials for consultation purposes. They will also be able to advise on whether the Plan is in line with local and national planning policies.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the Plan can also cover areas that people want to protect, and so a Neighbourhood Plan may contain policies on protecting wildlife areas, or the type of development that is suitable for conservation areas.</p> <p>It was suggested by the council officers that members of the Forum and the public look at what other Neighbourhood Planning Forums have produced from around the country, as this may be useful as a guide for Durham.</p> <p><b>ACTION: DCC to forward a copy of the SLA for the NPF to read and comment on.</b></p>
<p>3. Community Engagement and Working Methods</p>	<p>A discussion was had around the need for community engagement, and some basic principles were agreed on how the Forum would proceed.</p> <p>The Forum will utilise many different methods of communication, and it is important that communities and stakeholders are a part of the process of putting together a Plan.</p> <p>Initial consultation would be informal, and work on a broad base of what people think is important in Durham, what needs to develop, and what needs to stay the same.</p> <p>Different groups will be part of the consultation, including charities, businesses, residents and young people. It is important to consult hard to reach groups.</p> <p>It was agreed that consultation is critical to ensure that the Forum, and the Neighbourhood Plan are as representative of the whole Neighbourhood Area as possible.</p> <p>The Forum will soon produce a consultation method statement.</p>

	<p>Following questions from the public, it was agreed that the Forum would lend itself to a website, and it was suggested that DCC may be able to assist with the building of a website for the Forum.</p> <p><b>ACTION: A working group to deal with engagement strategy to be formed and meeting arranged.</b></p>
<p>4. Date, place and time of next meeting</p>	<p>It was agreed that the NPF would meet again soon, and this meeting would be arranged by NR. It was also agreed that the NPF would hold another public meeting in April.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Meeting of Forum officers to be arranged, and Council officers to be invited. Next meeting of the NPF to be arranged.</b></p>
<p>5. Any Other Business</p>	<p>Questions were taken from the public, and members of the Forum and Council Officers responded accordingly.</p> <p>A number of issues were raised around a potential Article 4 Direction for HMOs, and Council Officers indicated that the NPF could go some way to addressing this.</p> <p>It was outlined that a number of cities have moved to implement Article 4 Directions, but there was nothing in place in Durham, even though it is a uniquely historical city.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Neighbourhood Planning Forum should pursue the need for an Article 4 Direction with Durham County Council early in the process of forming a Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>It was asked whether the Neighbourhood Plan could deal with site allocations for different types of development. It was confirmed that any Plan put forward by the NPF can look at site allocations, and the emerging County Plan does not have much detail around this. A Neighbourhood Plan can fill in the gaps of the County Plan.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Forum contact Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets at Durham County Council to request that the planning applications for Sheraton Park and the former County Hospital site be considered by the same committee. It was agreed by the Forum that this request should be put to Durham County Council.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NPF to contact Durham County Council to request that Sheraton Park and County Hospital Planning Applications be considered together by the County Planning Committee</b></p>