

I am completing this survey on behalf of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, which I chair. The Forum was designated by Durham County Council on 10 July 2013, and is working towards producing a neighbourhood plan for Durham City. There are more details on our website at [npf.durhamcity.org.uk](http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk) and in particular a map of our area of operation may be viewed at <http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/documents/map-of-forum-area/>

The answers provided can only relate to our area of operation. We do feel, however, that County Durham is such a disparate area that it is not possible for anybody to give answers that will apply to the entire area. We have also only answered those questions that are within our remit as a forum.

We have not filled out the online form, but we have answered the relevant questions below. The survey was considered by a working group of nine, including the City's MP and one of our County Councillors, at a meeting held this morning. We feel this gives our answers more weight than had the survey been completed online by one of us.

Roger Cornwell

**Were you sent the survey link direct from us or are you completing the survey on behalf of someone else who was sent the survey link?**

I am completing this on behalf of my organisation – the survey link was sent to a general/enquiries email address ✓

Please can you tell us which person or organisation you are completing this on behalf of?

Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Please provide the name and/or email address so we can update our reminder email list.

Details above and below.

**Which Local Authority areas do you work in?**

Durham County Council area

**Your contact details.**

Name	Roger Cornwell
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**Priorities**

**Q1a. Please indicate if you think the following are high, medium or low priorities for the Durham County Council area?**

	Low	Medium	High
Building homes to buy on the open market		✓	
Building affordable homes to rent			✓
Building affordable homes to buy (shared ownership, shared equity, starter homes, rent to buy)			✓
Building executive homes	✓		
Building properties designed for older people			✓
Building properties designed for people with specialist needs		✓	
Improving the quality of existing stock		✓	
Encouraging and enabling selfbuild	✓		

**Q1b. If you have indicated something(s) as a high priority at Q1a, what are your reasons for saying this?**

Both our public consultations and the experience of the elected members at national and local level show that there is a major problem in finding affordable homes to buy and to rent. The main cause is the level of student lets: a higher price is commanded by houses that could be let to students, and available rented property is targeted at the student market, with signs "to let to students" being common in the city streets. Local firms and the University are finding it difficult for new employees to find homes in the city.

The 2012 ONS subnational population projections predict that the number of people in the County aged 70 and over will rise from 70,600 in 2015 to 102,100 in 2030 and on to 117,300 in 2037. This is an increase of 46,700 whereas the population under 70 will fall from 449,400 to 439,500. The 2011 census recorded 1020 people aged 75 and over living in our area and on these trends we must anticipate another 500 in the next 25 years.

**Q2. Are there other key housing priorities for the Durham County Council area? Please provide as much detail as possible in your response.**

In Durham City we need more Purpose Built Student Accommodation managed by or on behalf of the University of Durham, and on or adjacent to an existing university or college academic site, or hospital and research site. We would like to see student lets (HMOs) returned to permanent residential use, but this will need significant work.

**Housing Market Demand**

**Q7. Is affordability an issue in the Durham County Council area?**

House prices vary considerably across the County. In 2013 the average house price in the Easington parliamentary constituency was £80,000 but in the City of Durham it was £123,750. Prices are much higher in the City itself which does put houses beyond the reach of many. 291 houses were sold in the DH1 postcode district in the first six months of 2015, at an average price of £219,000.

**Neighbourhood Planning Groups**

**Q50. If you are a neighbourhood planning group, do you consider there is a demand for any particular type of housing in your locality which is being met in relation to size, type, tenure or price and which has come to your attention through the neighbourhood planning process?**

The feedback from public consultations so far as housing is concerned is:

- Need to rebalance the community from an over emphasis on student accommodation back towards housing for permanent residents.
- Provide housing for a range of groups, i.e. families, young people starting out, older people.
- Need more varied mix of accommodation - affordable; special needs; elderly; range of household sizes;
- Houses should be homes not investments.
- Need powers to prevent houses becoming HMOs.
- Need policy and support for converting HMOs back to family homes/permanent residents.
- Housing needs to be of a consistently high quality, and in particular zero carbon and more generally following a green agenda.

**We normally provide summary responses in the main body of the reporting but we are asking you this question so that we can provide useful qualitative quotes to back up particular views expressed. The appendices to our reports also include all responses provided by all stakeholders but these are provided anonymised so that individuals cannot be directly linked.**

I am happy for anything I have said on behalf of my organisation, in my responses to this survey, to be used in the reporting. Please use the name *Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum* when attributing references to responses provided.