

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM MEETING  
ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2013**

Item No.	Discussion
Present	Muriel Sawbridge (MS), Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (RBW), Roger Cornwell (RJC), Nick Rippin (NR), Sue Childs (SC) Gordon Cessford (GC), Kirsty Thomas (KT), Angela Tracy-Smith (AS), Jonathan Lovell (JL), Malcolm Smith (McS), Ann Evans (AE), Ian Forrester (IF), Mike Costello (MC)
1. Apologies	Frank Newton, Jonathan Elmer, Sonali Craddock, Colin Wilkes, Ruth Chambers, Chris Plummer, Jane Arthur, Cllr David Freeman, Cllr Richard Ormerod, Malgorzata Bialek, David Hook, Teresa Hogg
2. Discussion on Durham County Plan	<p>A discussion took place on the merits of the Pre-Submission Draft Durham County Plan. Members of the Forum raised several issues around the content of the plan. Primarily, they were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incursions into Green Belt Land</li> <li>• Development in the 'Northern Quarter'</li> <li>• Mount Oswald development</li> <li>• The proliferation of HMOs within Durham City</li> <li>• Transport Infrastructure</li> <li>• The 'character' of Durham City</li> </ul> <p>Concerns were raised around the need for housing for aged people, and the lack of detail in the plan around this. There is a strong focus on the development of tourism and retail and 'other' housing, but little on this.</p> <p>Mount Oswald was discussed. It was the belief of many members that this was a flawed decision to allow this development to progress, with further development in Browney inevitably having a knock on effect on the traffic infrastructure when viewed alongside housing development at Mount Oswald. It was also pointed out that developing housing on this site is in contravention of local saved policies. It was suggested that there is a case to be made for using some of this site for purpose built student accommodation, but there is no case for housing. A discussion followed about how this site is possibly also in contravention of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is also the only municipal golf course in the area, and would remove an important green space.</p> <p>Members of the group challenged the idea that the provision of executive housing would automatically lead to economic activity.</p>

	<p>Student numbers were raised as a potential issue. It was agreed that the University will grow, and so the key is to highlight that there should be an alignment with growth strategy and a plan to return housing to the market, as the University favours college developments.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Forum must focus on particular areas of concern, as the group is not anti-development, just against inappropriate sites. It was suggested that the group should e-mail NR with alternative sites for development, in place of the incursions into Green Belt Land. If the Forum could list another series of sites, this is a stronger argument than simply saying no.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Members to e-mail NR with suggestions of alternative sites for development of 40 houses instead of the Northern Quarter Green Belt</b></p>
<p>3. Agreement of Response</p>	<p>It was agreed that the Forum would focus on the key issues that were discussed at the meeting. Members would contact NR with suggested alternative locations for housing (around 40 houses that are proposed in the Northern Quarter). A submission will be made to Durham County Council from the prospective Neighbourhood Planning Forum that will highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mount Oswald contravention of existing policies, NPPF, and emerging County Plan</li> <li>• Incursion into Green Belt Land, and alternative sites</li> <li>• Lack of clarity around transport infrastructure</li> <li>• Importance of World Heritage Site</li> </ul> <p>The submission must highlight that the Neighbourhood Planning Forum welcomes some aspects of the County Plan, but that there are issues with certain areas.</p> <p>NR will draft a response and e-mail to members for consideration and alterations. The deadline for submission is 6 December 2013.</p> <p>It was discussed that the Durham City Regeneration Masterplan is also under consultation at the same time, and it was agreed that NR will also draft a response to this document and e-mail to members. The deadline for this document is also 6 December 2013.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to draft a response to Durham County Council on the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan, and the Durham City Regeneration Masterplan. This is to be circulated to members for comment, agreement and submission.</b></p>
<p>4. Any Other Business</p>	<p>A brief discussion was had around To Let Boards, and the continued need to monitor compliance of the Voluntary Code, but no other issues were raised.</p>

5. Date, place and time of next meeting	<p>It was agreed that the NPF would meet again <b>on 30 January 2014</b>. This gives Durham County Council time to consider the responses to the consultation on the NPF, and hopefully the group will be formally constituted by then.</p> <p>Members suggested that, if possible, this should be a public meeting, in the evening.</p>