

Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group Meeting, 12 April 2016, Redhills

Present: Pippa Bell, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Adam Deathe, Karen Elliott, Ann Evans, David Hook, Jonathan Lovell, John Lowe, Nigel Martin, David Miller, Matthew Phillips. Kirsty Thomas.

In attendance from Durham County Council: Jeanette Armin, Sarah Billingham, Gavin Scott, David Sparkes.

Apologies: John Ashby, Sue Childs, Angela Tracy-Smith, Ros Ward.

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly our colleagues from the Council.

1. Inset areas and city centre projects

David Miller explained that it would be helpful to identify specific areas of the city such as the viaduct area, the city centre and the riverbanks, that might require distinct actions, not just the application of general policies. We need information from DCC about their initiatives so that we can collaborate with them. During the discussion that followed it became clear that we needed to identify key areas of land use. DCC has use classes on GIS. The Durham City local plan has identified primary and secondary retail areas, the World Heritage Site (WHS) and conservation and character areas. It is important to have a general policy to protect green areas as it is not always possible to identify them all individually. It is legitimate for our plan to require any new green spaces to complement existing spaces. The forthcoming County Plan will not get down to that level of detail. Gavin Scott urged us to “be bold” in stating our policies. John Lowe referred to a paper prepared by Angela and Sue about Green Infrastructure that dealt with this issue. It complements the Council's policy. It is attached with these notes.

David Sparkes noted that the recent conservation area appraisal is the best starting point for identifying specific areas. It contains a wealth of evidence that we can reference. Some boundary anomalies are inevitable and we need to be flexible.

Jeanette Armin summarised the various city centre projects currently being undertaken by the Council, sometimes in partnership with developers:

- **North Road regeneration:** revised proposals will be brought forward in the autumn in response to the recent consultation. They will include improvements to pavements and shop fronts.
- **The Gates:** Work is due to start in June and is expected to take two years. It will co-ordinate with North Road regeneration.
- **Pavements:** These will be improved on Elvet Bridge, Owengate, and North and South Baileys
- **Lower Claypath:** Work is due to start on the new student block in the summer and improvements to the pavements will follow. It is intended that the Council-owned property on the corner of Millennium Place will be leased to a hotel developer and that there will be a green wall in Millennium Place.
- **Freeman's Reach:** This development has been completed and the Passport Office will shortly transfer. It is intended to improve the connectivity between Millennium Place and Fowler's Yard.
- **Milburngate House:** The planning application has not yet been made.
- **Signage:** It was recognised that signage needed to improve throughout the city, especially to

the Passport Office.

- **Arts Centre:** There was strong support for an arts centre in the city and various ideas were suggested, not least the Old Elvet swimming baths.
- **Old Elvet swimming baths:** Because of flood plain issues, these have to be re-developed rather than demolished.
- **Riverbanks:** The Council is seeking to establish a stakeholder group to develop proposals.
- **Bus Station:** The Council is close to reaching agreement with the bus companies. There will be a further consultation on the revised plans. **Matthew Phillips** will pursue issues about cycling routes as cycling organisations do not appear to have been included in the current round of consultation.

Jeanette will supply website links to all the above projects and **Gavin** will supply Roger with detailed maps.

2. County Durham Plan

We now have the Council's timetable for re-submitting the plan. The NPF has to avoid clashing with policies in that plan and we need to work closely with the Council. **Gavin** urged us to press ahead with our ideas and offered to work with us to avoid clashes.

3. Drafting the Neighbourhood Plan

David Miller emphasised the need for urgency in starting to draft our plan. He referred to his paper *Scope, form and content of Durham Neighbourhood Plan* which is attached with these notes. It was **agreed** that an editorial group would be set up consisting of the theme convenors and Ros. **Gavin** noted the need for design policies for the non-conservation areas and stated that he was very willing to offer advice. David Sparkes urged us to make use of published guidance such as the *WHS Management Plan* and the Council's *Statement of Community Involvement*.

4. Feedback from Residents' Associations

We need to complete this exercise. **Sue** was asked to check the responses received so far and chase up the remainder.

5. Feedback from Convenors

Adam reported that the survey of businesses had been completed

Kirsty reported that the Heritage group had held a number of meetings with stakeholders.

David Miller noted that the transport consultancy being undertaken by the Crossgate Community Partnership should also be of use to the neighbourhood plan. He had drafted a paper on transport infrastructure that he gave to Karen and Matthew who welcomed it. It was noted that it provided a useful structure for all themes.

6. AOB

It was agreed that Trevor Armour, the university's designated representative, should be invited to join the working group meetings. **John** will invite him.

Roger thanked colleagues from the Council for their helpful and positive contributions. We look forward to further fruitful collaboration.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 3 May in the upstairs room at Redhills at 10.00 am. The agenda will include:

- Matters arising
- Timetable and structure for drafting the plan
- Please make further suggestions for agenda items directly to Roger