

Durham Pointers' committee would like to endorse Policy C2 of Durham City Neighbourhood Plan: Information Hub

Durham Pointers was founded in 2011 as a volunteer group of mobile 'signposters' following the closure of the Tourist Information Centre. Pointers stand primarily at the map in the market place where they welcome visitors, hand out free city maps and deal with a wide range of enquiries. Examples include: directions to the Cathedral, Castle and Passport Office, location of toilets, advice on the Park and Ride and city shuttle bus systems, walks around the city, dog-friendly eating establishments, special events taking place in the city, places to visit around County Durham, and many, many more. We keep ourselves informed about the major City attractions and pass on this information, together with advice on how best to access the main sites.

Many visitors express their surprise that a cathedral city like Durham lacks an easily accessible central hub of information for visitors. We are very conscious that less well known, or attractions away from the centre, are not adequately promoted and we do our best to advise visitors and residents about events and attractions both within the city and across the County. In our experience, day or short stay visitors are rarely prepared to use the telephone service to 'This is Durham'. Indeed this facility no longer operates at weekends.

The proposed central hub offers the potential to provide a much needed central information point which could hold and disseminate information on local and county attractions and community events. We believe any such provision should embrace all modern media methods for the distribution of information but should also be a place for face-to-face encounters. Our experience has demonstrated that the majority of older visitors to the city prefer personal contact. Remote access can also prove challenging for those with physical or learning disabilities.

Additionally, if the Hub were located in the Town Hall with public access encouraged, the historic interior could be an added visitor attraction.

Durham Pointers would welcome the opportunity to work ever more closely with trained professional staff dedicated to improving the experience of all visitors to our city. We will actively pursue links with the parish council, when it is operational, and other associated bodies with a view to having input into further discussions and plans.

If you require any additional information, please contact us at: info@durhampointers.co.uk