

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum
Working Group Meeting, 16th January 2018, Miners Hall**

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Mike Allum (DCC) John Ashby (Chair from 10 – 11 am), Pippa Bell, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (assumed Chair after 11.00 am), Carole Dillon (DCC), David Miller, Ros Ward

Apologies: John Lowe, Peter Jackson, Matthew Phillips

2. Working with Durham County Council (DCC) to improve the plan and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA

- a) The County Council's offer of a workshop and possibly consultancy help to work on the SEA

John A asked for clarification of the offer of a workshop and consultancy assistance from the DCC. The NPF are looking for support in completing the SEA with regard to sense-checking and ironing out differences between the NPF and DCC in relation to the plan. He proposed that an early workshop around the SEA would be most beneficial following the analysis of the public's responses from the public consultation.

Carole suggested that the NPF use one theme as an example to create a methodology with help from DCC staff who have specific expertise in that field. This will ensure that the policies for that theme are robust.

There was a discussion about which policy would be most suitable to start the process and it was decided on Heritage as this theme had triggered the SEA. It was also agreed that Historic England would need to be involved in this process and **Carole** agreed to contact them to ask them to participate. If Historic England are not available to meet in the next few weeks then another theme will be chosen so that the process is not delayed.

John A enquired whether the group would need help from professional consultants and Carole replied that the process she suggested would help decide whether external consultants were needed.

Carole reiterated that the SEA will have to be written in tandem with the amended Plan. In essence the SEA is a mapping exercise and it may produce the same answer as before but it will show that the answer has been reached through a robust process. She also emphasised that the NPF have to ensure that the Vision and Objectives of the themes are played out in the policies. She recommended that the group look at the adopted Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan as an example of good practice. She suggested that it might be useful to contact the lead officer of the Great Aycliffe Plan who may offer advice to the NPF.

- b) Liaison with appropriate staff in doing the SEA/SA

John A asked what form workshops would take.

Carole suggested a half-day workshop for each theme working with a DCC expert from each department.

Carole will contact each department to ask for participation apart from Assets, which she suggested the **NPF** contact.

It was decided that the workshops would be held at the Miners Hall and **John A** would book the rooms when required.

Timescale

Carole is away for a week from 9th February so it would be ideal to start workshops before then.

Carole will check with Claire how long each workshop session should take and how many policies can be discussed in a session. This will be easier to ascertain after the first workshop is held. Workshops could be held on the same day each week to help scheduling but this will depend on DCC staff availability.

Revising the Plan

- c) Sue briefed the meeting on the format for recording the public responses to the policies, which will be tabulated using four columns; Comment, Response, Implication for Plan, Action. Personal details will be redacted and each individual respondent will be given an identification number and a code specifying the media through which they responded. This analysis will form the basis for the Statement of Consultation. A few examples will be given to DCC for a health check. Through the theme workshops Carole will inform context and help with language to make policies more robust. It was acknowledged that on some policy points the DCC and the NPF (acting on behalf of the public's wishes expressed through the public consultation) will not be in agreement.
- d) The analyses of the Regulation 14 consultations will be shared via the table as discussed in point c)
- e) Following the full NPF meeting on Friday 19th January all Forum members will be invited to form a working group to amend the Plan based on the responses from the Regulation 14 public consultation, with an SEA sub-group working alongside. Members of the working group responsible for specific themes will attend the workshops discussed in point b)
- f) Carole asked the group to create a timetable with regard to the workshops and themes to be addressed. As far as possible she will try and accommodate the timetable although this is dependent on colleagues availability.
- g) It was agreed that professional consultants would not be approached at this stage of the process.
- h) It is unknown how the formation of a Parish Council (PC) will affect the Plan process and who will ultimately take responsibility for the Plan. A likely scenario is that members of the PC will form a steering group from which a working group, and an SEA working group, will be formed. It was agreed that the NPF is unlikely to have a completed Submission Draft Plan to hand to the newly created PC in June. A more realistic option is to work through certain themes and present these together with an SEA and all documents relating to the theme, to show the work in progress.

Before the Submission Draft Plan is submitted to the independent examiner NPIERS offer a health-check for the Plan.

3. Briefing note for Forum meeting on 19th January 2018 - Roger assumes the Chair

The intention for holding a full Forum meeting and presenting the Briefing Note is to enable the Forum membership to become more closely involved with the preparation of the Submission Draft Plan, and to make all meetings visible, and to create a working model that the PC can take forward

Carole asked for an addition to point 6 of the Briefing Note to be included, which states the process for modifications following the independent examination. Any modifications suggested by the examiner will be discussed between the Council and the NPF and how to implement them. The NPF then modifies the plan. DCC has to produce a statement about why they're accepting or rejecting a modification.

A question was asked about whether a developer could make a representation during the Regulation 16 consultation, which would require a modification to the plan. Carole replied that this response would be bundled up with all other responses and sent to the inspector but it would not be possible to modify the plan at this stage.

Mike suggested a change to the wording of Point 8 in the Briefing Note omitting the words *working assumption* and replacing with *Discussions will be held with the Parish Council on how to take the Plan forward*.

When Carole was asked to give a realistic estimate as to how long it will take for the Submission Draft Plan to be adopted, she replied at least a year.

The timetable needs to be revised and extended in light of discussions about the process for finalising the Submission Draft Plan.

There was a discussion about how to get Durham University more fully engaged with the preparation of the Submission Draft Plan. The group would like to be given similar support from the university to that which they are getting from DCC and be given an opportunity to discuss issues. There was a discussion about the frustration in trying to engage with the university during the creation of the draft Plan, which included Harvey Dowdy's brief participation. The group noted their appreciation of Matthew Wright's recent involvement and hope this will continue.

Sue reported that other local groups have offered support through the Regulation 14 public consultation, including a local access group. **Sue** will draw up a list of these groups.

Sue reported that a draft document of all responses from the Regulation 14 public consultation will be in the public domain by next week.

Roger asked Carole and Mike whether every responder had to be sent an acknowledgement of their response. Carole said to aid transparency a standard response was emailed to respondents when their comments were put into the public domain.

The group agreed to formulate a protocol for analysing the responses following the end of the meeting.

At this point Carole and Mike left the meeting after being thanked for their attendance

4. Notes of 9th January

The minutes were agreed and it was noted in particular that John Lowe and Peter Jackson, who were absent, had sent their agreement.

5. Initial analysis of consultation responses: general comments and those outwith the scope of the Plan

Sue handed out the consultation response documents and explained the content. The first 104 pages are comments from the public through questionnaires, emails and web comments. Attachments to questionnaires came as paper copies, which have been scanned and included. The rest of the printouts are individual files and letters from statutory bodies and other groups, which will be available to the public as a PDF.

Each individual's name has been redacted and they have been given a unique identification code to protect their identity. The names of individuals who have replied on behalf of clubs and statutory bodies remain in the public domain. Sue has allocated a code for how each response was submitted so that they can be easily traced. These are as follows:

EQ -Electronic questionnaire

Q -Questionnaire

EM- Email

WC- Web Comment

Initially the group needs to go through the responses and winnow out those that are outwith the plan. All the responses are to be analysed by the individuals responsible for each theme and categories them either as noted (not a planning consideration) or as an amendment to policy, or a change to policy text.

It was agreed that after the meeting the group would go through a few pages of responses to establish a protocol for analysing the responses.

6. Any other business

Roger reported that he has received a letter from DPPPP development group concerning a pre-planning application for a 91bed hotel on the Milburngate House development site at block 1a, which is the nearest block to Milburngate Bridge. This has previously been considered for residential development. A hotel fits in with mixed-use development, which the site has planning for. The groups were shown images of the proposed design, which they considered to be unimaginative and adding nothing to the setting of the World Heritage Site. The group's response to the pre-planning application will be discussed at a future meeting.

7. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 23rd January 9 – 11am, at Miners Hall