

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group  
16 April 2018, Miners' Hall**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

**Present:** John Ashby, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Ann Evans, Peter Jackson, John Lowe, David Miller, John Pacey, Angela Tracy

**Apologies:** Pippa Bell, Sue Childs, Matthew Phillips, Ros Ward.

**2. Notes of 10 April 2018**

The notes of 10 April were agreed and **Sue** will post them on the website.

**3. Draft Agenda for Forum Meeting on 19 April**

The agenda was **agreed**.

**4. Northern Heartlands Event**

It was **agreed** that we should seek places for Pippa, Roger, Angela and Peter. **John A** will make the arrangements.

**5. Theme 6 Community Workshop with DCC and Visit County Durham (VCD) Officers**

We were joined for this item by Carole Dillon and Zoe Thirlaway from DCC and Craig Wilson from VCD. We discussed the issues policy by policy.

**Policy C1 Community Arts Facilities**

- Angela acknowledged that the references to the DLI are now outdated by DCC's proposals for Mount Oswald House. No sites will be specified in this policy.
- General site criteria are set out in Policy S1 (though this is subject to revision), but specific criteria might be needed for arts facilities. Some specific criteria for community facilities are included in Policy C3. The issue of criteria in Policy C1 needs reviewing in the light of these other policies.
- It might be too restrictive to limit the scope of the policy to "community arts" facilities. The University is interested in promoting an arts venue and there are commercial providers who might also come forward. The policy will have to be capable of dealing with this range of applications. We need to consider merging this policy with C3 which also deals with community facilities and some of the examples given are commercial premises.
- The key question to ask when reformulating the policy is whether it will help or hinder the kind of provision we want to happen.
- We have no specific policy on promoting tourism, but the provision of arts facilities is important to promote tourism and this is particularly important in the face of the current retail decline. Craig distributed copies of VCD's *Durham Tourism Management Plan 2016 – 2020*. This is not yet included in our references to the evidence base. Tourism is meant to benefit Visitors, Environment, Residents, Business (VERB).
- We need to explain what we mean by "accessibility". In this instance it means that the

interior of a building will be accessible by people with mobility difficulties. This is distinct from being able to reach the building by various means of transport.

### **Policy C2 Information Hub**

- Angela explained that it is not intended to be a Tourist Information Centre but an information service for residents and visitors alike. She acknowledged that we need to give more prominence to VCD as a stakeholder in this service.
- Craig explained why VCD had changed its methods of providing information to visitors, both before and during their visits. Moving to online provision gave best value and provided the information to people where they are and when they need it.
- However, it is important to attend to the evidence from the Pointers about the value of a face-to-face service for many people.
- Much of the discussion concerned the practical issues of providing an information service, but the focus of the policy was enabling and supporting such a service. The implementation was dealt with briefly in Section 5.2 of the plan: Policy Implementation Project 4.
- More thought needed to be given to the distinction between community information services and the promotion of tourism.
- Again, it is important to be clear when reformulating the policy to consider whether it will help or hinder the kind of provision we want to happen.
- It was agreed that we would not advocate naming any such service “Love Durham”.

### **Policy C3 Provision of New Community Facilities**

### **Policy C4 Protection of an Existing Community Facility**

Both policies needed re-wording in the light of the comments.

### **Policy C5 Protection of Urban Open Spaces**

- Zoe pointed out that we need to identify and assess urban open spaces as OSNA does not cover them. DCC has no objection in principle to this policy, but it is difficult to put into practice.
- We need to check the links between this policy and our sustainability and housing policies.

### **Policy 6 Health Care and Social Care Facilities**

- DCC had suggested splitting the policy. Roger explained that this policy had originally been two policies, but this had led to too much repetition. It dealt with all facilities covered by the Care Quality Commission.
- The wording of the criteria needed reviewing.
- We have tried more than once to contact the Clinical Commissioning Group about this policy but without success. We need to record this.
- There are some significant housing developments in Our Neighbourhood so there will be an increase in long-term residents as well as students to cater for.

Craig, Carole and Zoe were thanked for their very helpful contributions.

## **6. Any other business**

We held a brief discussion about the meeting held on 12 April at the Radisson Hotel to consider residents’ views about the University’s expansion plans. We noted that the University and DCC

were holding an event at the Palatine Centre on Thursday 26 April, 12.00 – 7.00 to publicise their plans for developments at Mountjoy and some infrastructure improvements. Details are attached with these notes.

## **7. Dates of Future Meetings**

**Thursday 19 April at 6.00 pm: Monthly Forum “Wrap-up” meeting.**

**Tuesday 24 April at 9.00 am: Weekly Forum meeting followed by working group meeting.**

Weekly Forum and working group meetings will continue on Tuesdays thereafter.

These meetings will all be held in the Miners’ Hall.