

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group: Housing Workshop  
9 March 2018, Miners' Hall**

**1. Attendance**

**Present:** John Ashby, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Ann Evans, John Lowe, Ros Ward.

**Durham County Council:** Carole Dillon, Debbie Shanks, Graeme Smith

**Durham University:** Matthew Wright

**2. Housing Theme Workshop with DCC Officers**

The following are the main points made during the workshop:

**Policy D1**

1. We still lack clear guidance on the calculation of housing need. Students will have to be treated separately.
2. Land supply restricts the number we can propose. We are suggesting the maximum in consultation with DCC.
3. The number of affordable homes and homes for older people will be in DCC's *Preferred Options*. DCC will share this information as soon as possible subject to confidentiality.
4. It has been suggested that we should include the possibility that the prison site will become available for housing, but this is not likely to happen soon; we just need to refer to it in the text. The County Plan will contain a policy for windfall sites.
5. We need to assess the sites put forward during the consultation: Lovegreen and five sites proposed by the University.

**Policy D2**

1. We need to discuss with DCC the possibility of amending the policy on HMOs. We might have to agree to differ, but this would not affect the plan going forward to examination.
2. Carole noted that getting the SA right is the key to meeting the Basic Conditions. Other issues would have to play out at the examination.

**Policy D3**

1. We need a similar discussion about the policy on PBSAs.
2. We need to consider the question of affordability within PBSAs.
3. Flexible uses should also be a possibility. See policy D5.

**Policy D4**

1. All our possible sites are relatively central so well placed for people with disabilities.
2. We are meeting the Durham City Access for All Group next week. Debbie to be invited.
3. We need to consider older people's needs for public toilets.
4. We need to consider the development of a dementia-friendly city.
5. We need to provide suitable housing to which people can move as they get older.

### **Policy D5**

1. Based on DCC's evidence we should increase the percentage of affordable housing to 20%. This will be confirmed in the *Preferred Options*.
2. We need to ensure D5.3 concerning residential accommodation in the upper floors of commercial properties is consistent with policies E3 and E4.

### **Policy D6**

1. D6.1 concerning the quality of design needs checking against the Heritage theme.
2. We need to check the regulations about room sizes
3. D6.2 should refer to Building Standards rather than Building for Life.
4. Debbie will check policies T3 and T4 with regard to parking for older people

We concluded with a discussion about the possibility of a cap on student numbers. This had to be done through the student accommodation policy, not an absolute cap. This policy needs more stringent monitoring.

Carole, Debbie and Graeme were thanked for their contributions to a very helpful and positive meeting.

Action points have been listed by John A in a separate document that will be circulated with these notes.