

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group
27 March 2018, Miners' Hall**

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: John Ashby, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Ann Evans, Peter Jackson, John Lowe, David Miller, Matthew Phillips, Ros Ward.

Apologies: Pippa Bell, Angela Tracy,.

2. Notes of 27 March 2018

The notes of 27 March were agreed and **Sue** will post them on the website.

It was **agreed** that our meeting on 10 April would address our future work programme.

It was also **agreed** that instead of inviting representatives of the Faithful Durhams to the DCC workshop on the Community theme, we would arrange a meeting with them as they are only concerned with one particular issue. The meeting would be attended by **Roger, Peter and John L.** **Sue** will arrange it.

3a. Categorisation of Theme 1 Sustainability - for review and endorsement

John L had prepared the categorisation table and he presented the list of issues he had identified:

- Need to review the introductory words of S1 and S2
- Place more emphasis on accessibility
- Strengthen and make consistent references to environmental aspects, e.g. Biodiversity
- Make references to protecting the green belt more local
- Check that we have included possible measures to improve air quality
- Ensure that objectives and policies are aligned
- Consider the suggestion of adding a Masterplan policy (development brief?)

John L will prepare the “issues for consideration” table and review “green” categorisations. **John** will work with **David** on this. The categorisation was endorsed.

3b. Categorisation of Theme 2b Green Infrastructure - for review and endorsement

Sue had prepared the categorisation table and took on board Matthews comments.

Policy G1: it is mainly a matter of getting the correct wording. **Sue** will work with **Ros** on this.

Policy G2: we need to discuss with DCC the criteria for the designation of local green spaces. It is OK to include spaces that are in the green belt. During the SA process we need to consider whether the riverbanks should be included as local green spaces. Perhaps they are sufficiently protected by policy G1.

Policy G3: The Emerald Network is not designated as a local green space. We need to consider its relationship to DCC's trail. Public rights of way need showing on the map. Accessibility needs improving on some of them.

Policy G4: This policy about enhancing the green belt is the most problematic. We need to elaborate our understanding of “development” and to consider local proposals for different parts of the green belt.

The categorisation was endorsed.

4. Workshop with DCC Officers on Theme 3 Economy

We were joined for this workshop by:

DCC: Carole Dillon, James Cook and Zoe Thirlaway

Durham BID: Adam Deathe

The responses were considered policy by policy.

Policy E1: Larger Employment Sites

Aykley Heads: Since the policy was drafted DCC has produced a Masterplan and this will be included in its *Preferred Options*. DCC and the police are the only landowners so can control usage of the site. There is a limit to what a policy could specify in terms of users. Perhaps the site should be mentioned in the text but not in a policy. However, we do need to take account of what has been said by all respondents.

Mountjoy: Durham University wants the usage to be widened to include educational uses. We are meeting them this afternoon to discuss their responses. There should be no problem with this.

Policy E2: Other Employment Sites

We need to be clearer about the proposed uses for these sites. DCC advised that we do not need to allocate land for the new County Hall; there are already procedures in place to deal with this as a city centre site. **Carole** will inform us if there any issues we do need to address about it.

Policies E3 and E4: Retail Development and Primary and Secondary Frontages

The proposed boundaries need reviewing. Working group representatives, including **Peter** and **John A**, will meet **James** and **Adam** to discuss this. It was emphasised that retail is a fast-changing business and flexibility is required if premises are not to remain empty.

Many responses had raised concerns about imbalance in the city with too many drinking establishments and food take-aways. This is difficult to deal with through land-use policies. The decision-making process has to try to ensure the right mix. **James** will provide us with DCC's town centre study for Durham City.

The importance of BID in improving the city was highlighted. **Adam** was asked to check Appendix A and Table E3 of the draft plan to see whether more could be said in this regard.

The eventual decision about the bus station will be critical to the regeneration of North Road. This is still under consideration by DCC. The Neighbourhood Plan does not contain a policy about it.

Other points:

- Should we do more about tourism? There are projects in Appendix A and it is also relevant to Theme 6. Craig Wilson (Visit Durham) will be at that workshop and the topic will be best considered then.
- **Carole** will check whether there is any available information about proposed uses for the DLI building.

Members of the working group thanked Adam and DCC colleagues for a very helpful workshop.

5. Any other business

Roger asked whether we wanted him to continue printing the full set of “issues for consideration”. It was **agreed** that he should.

Roger was asked to check whether Locality had phoned about technical support.

Dates of Next Working Group Meetings

Tuesday 3 April after 9.00 am Forum meeting: **Sustainability and Green Infrastructure** workshops.

Tuesday 10 April after 9.00 am Forum meeting: ordinary meeting, to include consideration of our future work plan.

Monday 16 April at 9.30: **Community** workshop.

All meetings at the Miners' Hall