

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group
10 July 2018, Antioch House**

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: John Ashby, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Peter Jackson, John Lowe, John Pacey, Matthew Phillips, Angela Tracy,

Apologies: Pippa Bell, Ann Evans, David Miller, Ros Ward.

2. Notes of 3 July 2018

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

3. Revision of Theme 4 Housing

John A and Sue had distributed 4 papers before the meeting:

- Revised Housing Theme
- Further revisions of policy D6
- Partial revision of Appendix D
- Questions to be discussed at this meeting

Policy D1: Land for residential development

- It was noted that the base date for housing numbers was 31 March 2018, the date used by DCC. It was **agreed** to ask the “Wrap-up” meeting of the Forum on 24 July to endorse this decision.
- It was **agreed** not to allocate sites that are already under construction but that the homes on them contributed to meeting the housing need. This was also the approach taken by DCC.
- It was **agreed** to retain sites that had not yet started and to keep these under review. For example, it was possible that the yield at the Milburngate House site could be reduced by 138 in the first phase.
- It was **agreed** that the possibility of housing on the Durham Prison site should only be mentioned in the text as it was unlikely to become available in the foreseeable future.
- It was noted that some sites are still awaiting final assessment by AECOM.
- Some problems using the SHLAA map and text were noted and **Roger** will address them.
- It was **agreed** that the quantum of housing proposed in *Preferred Options* was not an issue; it had been calculated using the new standard methodology, though it would need updating when new population projections are published in September. What do need scrutiny are the locations and types of housing proposed. Particular attention needs paying to the housing needs of the growing population who are elderly.

Policy D2: Student HMOs

- It was **agreed** that the policy needs to include reference to the number of residents in PBSAs and similar buildings when calculating the 10% proportion of students within the 100 metre radius.
- It was **agreed** to include unimplemented approvals when making this calculation.

- It was **agreed** that the “get out” clause allowing a family house to be converted to HMO (C3 to C4 or *sui generis*) was arbitrary and that hardship cases can be dealt with sensitively.
- Paragraph 4.134 of the revised text for Theme 4 is about the lack of balance between student and long-term residents. It was **agreed** to add John P’s evidence about the proportion of students to long-term residents, perhaps including some figures for other university towns for comparative purposes.
- It was **agreed** that it was not practicable to provide an alternative data source to the Council Tax exemption data.
- It was **agreed** that it would not be possible to fulfil the request from one respondent to include a map showing student housing density as it was 25 years ago, but we should certainly include one showing current density.

Policy D3: PBSAs

- It was **agreed** that we can delete sub-paragraph D3.2.2 which requires PBSAs to be “on or adjacent to” DU teaching sites as *Preferred Options* introduces sufficient safeguards.
- It was **agreed** that we should include a requirement for 20% affordability in PBSAs.
- It was **agreed** that we should include a requirement for them to be built with the flexibility to be suitable for young couples and other residents if not occupied by students.

Policy D4: Housing for older people and people with disabilities

- All that was needed here was to check the wording of sub-paragraph D4.2 to ensure it covers properly the need for suitable access to facilities as described in paragraph 4.159.

Policy D5: Meeting other housing needs

- It was essential to ensure consistency with the Economy Theme about the residential use of upper floors of retail/commercial premises. To that end it was **agreed** that the issue should be dealt with in Policy E4 (**Pippa**) and that it should permit such use in primary frontage areas so long as it does not have a negative impact on retail, commercial and tourism activities and on the general amenity of neighbouring properties. This was to give the flexibility needed in some circumstances to ensure the vitality of city centre premises.
- The definition of “affordable” housing is complex and it was **agreed** that we need to check the new proposed text (currently not numbered) that immediately follows the policy.
- It was **agreed** that if affordable housing is permitted to be built off-site it should be within the boundaries of Durham City and not further afield.

Policy D6: Design to the highest standards

- It was **agreed** to adopt Sue’s latest draft of sub-paragraph D6.2 dealing with *Building for Life* criteria. This would be in line with DCC’s SPD on the topic.

4. Review of References to Durham University

John P had distributed a paper that analysed DU's comments on the consultation draft of the plan and also suggested possible ways of responding. It was an extremely helpful model of how to respond to comments when revising the plan.

- It was **agreed** that the plan should positively acknowledge the contribution of DU to Our Neighbourhood and at the same time recognise the need to promote a balanced community. Our analysis needs to be factual and objective.
- John had provided some suggested wording for some parts of the text, but it was the responsibility of **theme convenors** to amend their sections as appropriate in accordance with John's analysis and suggestions.
- It was **agreed** that DU should be referred to as "Durham University" consistently throughout the plan.
- It was **agreed** that Chapter 5 should include recognition of DU's contribution to culture and creativity.

5. Any other business

a) "Wrap-up" Agenda for 24 July

- The agenda was **agreed**.
- **John A** is preparing a response to DCC's *Preferred Options*.
- The NPF no longer needs to comment on planning applications but should draw issues to the attention of the Planning Committee of the City of Durham Council.

b) Timescale for completing the Neighbourhood Plan

- It was **agreed** that it is our intention to complete the plan by the end of September.
- **Ros** will be asked to draw up a timescale for the completion of the remaining stages of making the plan and compare this with DCC's proposed timescale for the County Plan.
- It was noted that DCC has to comply with statutory time limits for dealing with the remaining stages of the Neighbourhood Plan.

c) Chapter 5 and Appendix A (Implementation and Projects)

We discussed the best way of dealing with the various components of the existing Chapter 5 and Appendix A as well as incorporating some new ideas relating to future opportunities. The following main points were **agreed**:

- With regard to the various projects currently included in Chapter 5 and Appendix A, we accepted John P's helpful distinction between existing issues that required better management and development projects or opportunities.
- Issues requiring better management that had been identified during the various stages of consultation would be listed in Appendix A.
- Chapter 5 would be recast as dealing with "Future Opportunities" which would be a hierarchy of projects that the Forum would suggest to the City of Durham Council and perhaps other bodies. The intention would be to ensure community involvement in the implementation of these projects through a "whole city" approach to creativity.
- There should be a new Chapter 6 on Monitoring.

- These ideas would be discussed further by the working group on **24 July**.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 17 July, after the 9.00 am Forum meeting at the **Miners' Hall**.