

FOREWORDS

The final document will have forewords by Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods, Member of Parliament for the City of Durham, and by Councillor Elizabeth Scott, Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council. It is expected that they will commend the Neighbourhood Plan for the area covered by the City of Durham Parish Council. Residents, businesses and visitors have expressed themselves on what they considered needed to change to make Durham City a better place. One of those changes was that Durham City should have its own elected voice. It is a major step forward to now have the City of Durham Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan, which sets out to provide the detailed local planning policies for enabling appropriate development and protecting the City's wonderful heritage and its green spaces.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The most important feature of a neighbourhood plan is that it is prepared and agreed by local people. The work is normally carried out by a parish or town council on behalf of its local community. However, until April 2018 Durham City was 'non-parished'. In order for the local community's wish in 2012 for a neighbourhood plan to be prepared, the County Council enabled the setting up of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

1.2 The Forum adopted the name 'Our Neighbourhood' for the area covered by the Plan, which is shown on Proposals Map 1. Work on the Plan began in 2014 and provided the opportunity for continuous consultation throughout. These consultations enabled the Forum to find out what people who live and work in the area, and those who visit, think of the policies and proposals as the Plan developed (see para. 2.17 to 2.19). The City of Durham Parish Council now (since May 2018) has responsibility for the Plan.

1.3 There are four matters to be borne in mind when reading and using this Plan:

- Its policies, when adopted, will have statutory force, i.e. they will be relevant in the consideration of planning applications by the County Council, and they will need to be in compliance with the current adopted development plan, which at the time of writing (March 2019) is the set of "Saved Policies" of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 as assessed by the County Council in 2015 for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Quite early in the lifetime of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan a new Statutory Local Plan - the County Durham Plan - will be adopted. The Neighbourhood Plan policies will then need to be reviewed, and if necessary changed, to bring them into compliance with this new County Durham Plan. It has been possible to seek to future-proof the Neighbourhood Plan by having regard to the emerging County Durham Local Plan. At the time of writing (March 2019) the new County Local Plan has reached the stage of a Pre-Submission Draft Plan consultation held in February and March 2019;
- The Neighbourhood Plan should be read as a whole - the planning policies all relate to one another even though they appear under different themes, so common aspects only appear in one policy to avoid repetition;
- As well as this document containing the Neighbourhood Plan for Durham City, a companion document has been prepared - 'Looking Forwards: Durham as a Creative and Sustainable City' (Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Working Party (2019a) - which presents an opportunity to go beyond the planning policies in identifying the actions and initiatives for statutory, community and other bodies in furtherance of the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4 It is hoped that the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will prove to be effective and truly representative of the wishes of local people for a sustainable future for this beautiful and historic City.

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