

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM MEETING  
ON TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2013**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Present	Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (RBW) Nick Rippin (NR) Muriel Sawbridge (MS), Sue Childs (SC), Jane Arthur (JA), Ruth Chambers (RC), Frank Newton (FN), Malcolm Smith (MS), Ian Forrester (IF), Gordon Cessford (GC), Roger Cornwell (RJC), Mike Costello (MC), Jonathan Elmer (JE)
1. Apologies	Laura Watson, Teresa Hogg, Alan Hayton, Norma Hayton, David Freeman, David Hook, Johnson Dent, Malgorzata Bialek, Ann Evans, Kirsty Thomas, Colin Wilkes, Sonali Craddock
2. Previous Minutes	All present were given copies of the previous minutes to read. RJC moved the minutes as a true record.
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	<p>No issues from previous meeting. RJC explained that he was present at Cabinet Meeting that was to discuss Durham City Regeneration Masterplan. This was withdrawn due to lack of consultation with councillors. RBW suggested that the Neighbourhood Planning Forum (NPF) write to Stuart Timmiss at Durham County Council (DCC) to ask for consultation on document, and that she would also raise this with DCC in her meetings.</p> <p>Concern was expressed about how quickly this plan appeared and how local councillors were not consulted. RBW will ask DCC that the Forum should be consulted on this plan.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NPF to write to DCC to ask for consultation on Durham City Regeneration Scheme</b></p>
4. County Hospital Development	<p>RBW pointed out that it would be difficult for the group to argue against Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) as the Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum (B&amp;SC) argued for this type of development previously. RBW also pointed out that she had met with Signet and she felt they were actively looking for engagement with the community.</p> <p>RBW explained that she expressed concerns about the scale, massing and design of the development and Signet wanted to make the design more acceptable.</p> <p>RJC felt differently, after the Crossgate Community Partnership (CCP) met with Signet. At this point they suggested the idea of luxury flats, but this now seems to be off the table. RBW explained that PBSA is the preferred option now. She went on to say that</p>

	<p>Durham County Council have gone back to Signet to explain the design is not acceptable and that they know that they need engagement with the community.</p> <p>RBW explained that, given the lack of a County Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, this was likely to get planning permission. RBW suggested forming a group from the NPF to meet with Signet to engage with them. Following this meeting, the engagement group could feed back to the Forum and agree a formal response to the plans.</p> <p>FN asked if these applications were a sign that the University was intending to expand indefinitely. MC raised the fact that 5 years ago, the University said there would be no expansion.</p> <p>RJC suggested that Signet have been told by Durham County Council and English Heritage that the development is of an unacceptable design. RBW agreed that this was the case.</p> <p>RBW explained that she has a meeting arranged with Chris Higgins, Vice-Chancellor of the University to discuss the increase of student places. RBW would also outline the importance of University engagement with the NPF.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Sub group to meet with Signet and feed back to group. NR to arrange meeting.</b></p>
<p>5. Sheraton Park Development</p>	<p>RBW explained that she will be meeting with residents to discuss the plans and it seems that the Residents' Association are not set against it.</p> <p>SC said that if the University was to continue expanding then it may also need to provide more teaching and office space.</p> <p>JE suggested that the needs of local residents should be considered as priority. RJC suggested that management of sites was key – would one warden be enough for hundreds of students?</p> <p>Members raised the issue of parking on the site. RBW explained that Alumno said they would put in place a no parking rule for students.</p> <p>MS suggested that, if the University believed that these developments will release housing stock in the City for residents, we can't assume that this substitution of families for students will necessarily happen.</p>
<p>6. Neville's Cross Club</p>	<p>RJC explained that residents of George Street were not happy about the proposal. At the moment the 'drinking establishment' in the plans was not explained, and this would need to go before the</p>

	<p>licensing panel, when more detail would have to be provided.</p> <p>RBW said that, although University Colleges mix residential areas with drinking areas, this is a small facility to have its own bar. MC suggested that this was an expansion too far, in an area that so far has not been studentified. This is a totally new development in an unsuitable area.</p> <p>RBW suggested looking at the Council policies to see what objections can be raised against this, especially as this was outside of an area normally associated with students. FN suggested that the mix of students in the area is not as great as others, and doesn't fit an acceptable pattern of expansion</p> <p>JE suggested sending the minutes of the NPF meetings as a formal objection to this scheme. RBW said this was creating a new student area when this should not be the case, and a letter to DCC would</p> <p>JA asked why these schemes did not fall under the Durham County Plan. JE and RBW explained that at the moment there is no plan in place, and this was still in the consultation period. At the moment the local authority is relying on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which includes a presumption towards sustainable development. This is a tricky situation, due to presumption of development built into NPPF.</p> <p>RBW said that it may be useful for the NPF to meet to discuss in detail the impact of the County Plan. There will be negative impacts of the Plan, and these will also need to be examined to put together a submission to DCC.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to examine policies to indentify grounds for objection to Neville's Cross Club development.</b></p>
7. Lettings Boards	<p>RBW provided an updated version of the Voluntary Code of Conduct on lettings boards for the Forum to look at. It was suggested that this item be put back onto the next agenda. MC asked about reporting breaches of the code. It was agreed to look at this in the next meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to e-mail all members a copy of the Voluntary Code of Conduct.</b></p>
8. Forum Registration Update	<p>RBW explained that Durham County Council are being very slow in dealing with the application, and that getting basic information has proved difficult, and that the council came back with some queries on the application.</p> <p>Durham County Council are now almost at the stage of going to the six week consultation. During the six weeks the NPF will be</p>

	<p>able to submit an application for funding and training. There is a maximum grant of £7000 potentially available for NPFs to draw down.</p> <p>FN asked if the Cabinet were aware of the group. RBW explained that, in fairness to the planning department, they are now looking at more complex planning issues, but with fewer resources. This will only increase</p> <p>MS explained that some time had also been spent on getting the representation on the Forum correct.</p> <p>RBW went on to explain that the NPF would now need to work on a community engagement strategy that is costed and timetabled (see item 9)</p>
9. Community Engagement	<p>The forum discussed the need for a community engagement strategy that was fully costed, and that once this had been done, funding could be applied for to carry this out (see item 11). It was agreed that a sub group of the committee would be formed, and that, as Chair, MS would take the lead in community engagement.</p> <p><b>ACTION: MS to identify members to formulate a community engagement strategy.</b></p>
10. Training Update	<p>RBW explained that an application can be made to Locality for training once the local authority begins the six week consultation period. An application is ready to be submitted once this begins.</p>
11. Finance	<p>As per item 8. RBW explained that funding was available for NPFs and an application would be made in due course. A bank account will need to be set up to arrange this.</p>
12. Date, Place and Time of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting will take place on <b>14 November 6pm-8pm</b>. The venue was to be confirmed.</p> <p>RBW suggested that the new members and business representatives be contacted to see if an evening meeting was suitable for them.</p> <p><b>ACTION: NR to contact new members/ business representatives to check their availability.</b></p>
13. Any Other Business	<p>The group discussed the issues around a balanced community in Durham. The issue of the Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum (B&amp;SC) was raised, and RBW explained that the NPF was created out of the B&amp;SC, as this group would be more formally recognised, and with a greater ability to influence decisions. The issues around balanced communities were central to what the NPF will be looking at.</p>

The group discussed the idea put forward by JE that the Residents' Associations in the area covered by the NPF formulate a standard position on the issue of studentification. It was agreed that it was not a matter for the NPF to determine the position of Residents' Associations and that the NPF would consider any document from them outlining basic principles along with any other principle documents that may come from other sections of the NPF.

RBW also pointed out that she had written to Cllr Simon Henig and Stuart Timmiss, Head of Planning and Assets on the delay in an Article 4 Direction for Durham, and mentioned progress made in other cities.

RBW went on to explain that the University stopped attending B&SC meetings as they set up their own community liaison meeting. It was suggested that a letter be sent to the University to ensure representation on the NPF, and to find out when they intend to hold another community liaison meeting.