

DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM



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CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Our Vision:

“Durham City’s potential as a beautiful and historic City will be realised through policy and action to improve and protect its qualities and by creating a diverse and resilient economy with attractive and affordable places to live. It will be supported by modern infrastructure and enriched by community engagement in its future. It will be resilient to climate change.”

Who we are:

The Forum was officially constituted by Durham County Council in January 2014. The 32 members of the Forum are volunteers who live and work in Durham City. The Forum held meetings in March and October 2015 and the minutes are on the website. In order to make further progress developing the neighbourhood plan, a working group started meeting at least monthly in April 2015. In fact it has met 18 times since then. It is open to all Forum members to participate and minutes of all its meetings are also published on the website.

The officers of the Forum are:

	Prior to October 2015	: Since October 2015:
Chair:	Roberta Blackman-Woods	Roger Cornwell
Vice chair:	Roger Cornwell	John Lowe
Secretary:	Vacancy	Vacancy
Treasurer:	Sue Childs	Sue Childs
Engagement Officer:	Pippa Bell	Pippa Bell

On 15th December John Lowe was appointed Acting Secretary, with the intention that this appointment will become substantive at the AGM.

Ros Ward was appointed as Project Manager in November 2015. Ros is a member of the RTP1, and she is a very experienced and qualified planner who has specialised in producing structure and development plans. She works on a part-time voluntary basis.

What Durham City wants for itself

The Vision set out at the head of this report has been formulated as a result of widespread consultation. In June 2015 we posted leaflets through the doors of all the homes and businesses in our area. We also held two very well attended public meetings in the Town Hall. These

consultations asked the questions: What is good about Durham City centre? What is bad about Durham City centre? What needs to change? The responses were all carefully analysed and reported on the website which itself provides opportunities for people to express their views.

We have also started to use social media: Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/DurhamNPF/>) and Twitter (@DurhamCityPlan). In addition we have an email account npf@durhamcity.org.uk where people also contact us.

As a result of all the consultation we identified six themes:

- A beautiful and historic city
- A city with a diverse and resilient economy
- A city with attractive and affordable places to live
- A city with modern infrastructure
- A city with enriched community life
- A city that is adapted to climate change (a cross-cutting theme that will appear throughout the rest)

How we work:

Our key principle is that our planning must be based on clear evidence of what the residents and businesses of Durham City have identified as priorities. We also have to work within the parameters of national and local planning policies. We work transparently and publish all our documents on our website. We seek dialogue with groups and individuals in the city and we hold meetings with as many interested parties as possible. We also engage with the County Council officers who have a duty to co-operate with us.

What we will do next:

Our Project Manager has drawn up a programme. This involves continuing to gather and strengthen our evidence before a period of pre-submission publicity and consultation during May and June. The outcomes of this consultation will be used to refine our proposals and we hope to be in a position to submit them to the local authority by the end of this year. Of course, our timetable and proposals might well be affected by the re-emergence of the County Plan.

7 March 2016