

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum
Working Group Meeting, 1 March 2016, Redhills**

Present: John Ashby, Pippa Bell, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Ann Evans, David Hook, Jonathan Lovell, John Lowe, Kirsty Thomas, Angela Tracy-Smith, Ros Ward.

Apologies: Adam Deathe, Karen Elliott, Nigel Martin, David Miller, Matthew Phillips.

Notes of 2 February 2016: These were approved and **Sue** will post them on the website.

1. Matters Arising:

a. Funding for 2016-17: **Roger** will make enquiries about this at the neighbourhood planning roadshow on Thursday. John L reported that the amount available to each forum had increased to £9k.

b. Availability of Part 2 of the EiP Library: Roger and John L have been in correspondence with the council who are reluctant to restore the link. It was noted that Part 2 contains important corrections and additions to core documents in Part 1 and that they are essential for the historical record. **Sue** will draft a letter for **Roger** to pursue this with the council.

2. Scope of Theme Groups: Each group presented an update on the scope of their work. **All convenors** will email their notes to **Sue** who will update the website. What follows in these notes are just some highlights.

a. A beautiful and historic city: Angela reported on their research and the compilation of the evidence base and links to official policy documents, including the new management plan for the World Heritage Site. The work of the group is dealing with two main elements: green infrastructure, with clear implications for sustainability, climate change and health; and heritage preservation and enhancement. It was agreed that they should include the Neville's Cross battle site in their work. One issue which arose was the need to determine character areas for design criteria in addition to those included in the council's conservation area assessment. These would need to be consistent across all theme groups, especially housing, as appropriate.

b. A city with a diverse and resilient economy: Pippa also reported on her evidence gathering and outlined the main objectives to support businesses and economic growth in the city. It will be important to identify land for businesses and start-ups and to take steps to improve the communications infrastructure. There is also a need to improve walking routes around the city to improve the connectivity of businesses. Parking is an important issue for city centre businesses and both of these have obvious implications for a sustainable transport strategy. It is beyond our scope to draw up an economic strategy, but we must align with it. Pippa also reported that she had completed her survey of young people's views about the city.

c. A city with attractive and affordable places to live: Sue reported that their work was very much as described on the website. Sue and John A had produced a very thorough document setting out the rationale, issues and options for this theme. One key issue is the need to recover HMOs for family housing, possibly via the use of CIL funds. It was good to note that the new Vice Chancellor was concerned about the lack of family homes for university staff in the city. Another key matter related to the university is the uncertainty about student growth plans; these are under active consideration at the moment and the VC has agreed to be responsible for liaison with the Forum over strategic matters. He is also talking to the Durham University Residents Forum.

d. A city with modern infrastructure: Neither convenor was able to attend because of work commitments. It was agreed that **Pippa** would include issues to do with communications infrastructure within the economy theme.

e. A city with enriched community life: Roger noted that both education and health provision exceeded the boundaries of our area: for instance, there is only one GP practice within our boundary and many people use a practice at Framwellgate Moor. It is clear that if the population increases there will be a need for increased health and education facilities.

f. A city that is adapted to climate change: John L explained that this theme had the same status as the others but was different in that it cut across them; in that sense it was not a theme in its own right but would be incorporated into the others. He gave some examples: for instance, the energy efficiency of homes would be an important aspect of the housing theme. He also noted the significance of local official documents concerning sustainability and climate change. In view of the importance of this theme it was agreed to add a sentence to our Vision: "It [i.e. the city] will be resilient to climate change."

3. **Statutory Consultations:** Ros reported that she had not had a response from Gavin Scott. **Ros** would pursue this and also ask him for some large printed maps of our area. Roger said that he had set up a website containing useful maps and further maps could be added on request from Theme Groups: maps.durhamcity.org.uk
4. **Arrangements for the AGM:** This will be held on Friday 18 March at 6.00 pm in the Committee Room at Redhills. All on our mailing lists had already been notified. **John L** will prepare an agenda for distribution 7 days before the meeting. The meeting will include the election of officers and people will be invited to submit nominations. **John L** will also draft the annual report. **Pippa** will invite the press. **Ros** will invite Gavin Scott and Steven Ragg. **Roger** will invite the relevant county councillors.
5. **New Planning Guidance:** John L reported that he had distributed by email (25 Feb 2016) very recent updates to the Planning Practice Guidance concerning the evidence required for neighbourhood plans and also the relationship between neighbourhood plans and local plans. See <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>
6. **NECA Transport Manifesto:** It was agreed that we did not need to respond to this.
7. **Consultation updates:** Colleagues had previously distributed reports of their meetings with various groups and individuals. These were:

Durham University (Roger): Roger had met the new VC with Roberta. The VC had agreed to liaise with the Forum about strategic matters while Trevor Armour would deal with other matters.

Banks Group (Sue and John A): Banks had made the very helpful offer to provide free information about the ownership of sites using a specific database.

Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (Sue): They have an interest in a site at Whitesmocks.

Quarry House Lane Environmental Association (John L)

Transition Durham (John L)

The Springfield Centre (Pippa)

Dr Dorothy Hamilton (Heritage Group)

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday 5 April in the upstairs room at Redhills at 10.00 am. The agenda will include:

- Matters arising
- Any matters arising from the AGM
- A consideration of the County Plan (Might be available by then!)