

**MINUTES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM MEETING
ON THURSDAY 11 JULY 2013**

Item No.	Discussion
Present	Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (RBW) Nick Rippin (NR) Muriel Sawbridge (MS) Gordon Cessford (GC) Jonathan Elmer (JE) Ann Evans (AE) Kirsty Thomas (KT) Roger Cornwell (RJC) Sue Childs (SC) Ian Forrester (IF) Frank Newton (FN)
1. Apologies	Laura Watson, Alan Hayton, Norma Hayton, David Hook, Johnson Dent, Malgorzata Bialek, Mike Costello, Ruth Chambers, Teresa Hogg, Malcolm Smith
2. Previous Minutes	All present were given copies of the previous minutes to read.
3. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes	No issues from previous meeting, but the issue of attendance was raised. RBW stated that we have the officers who will drive this forward. RJC moved the minutes as a true record.
4. Submitted Documents	<p>RBW explained how this group are the pioneers in Durham County, as all other applications to the local authority have been from Parish Councils. No problems with application at the moment, but hopefully something back before next meeting. This will allow the group to draw down some funding.</p> <p>RBW raised the question as to whether any of the group knew of someone with useful expertise that may wish to assist the group.</p> <p>RBW then ran through the documents and discussions were had about the amendments. It was noted that all amendments had been agreed by the Forum. AE asked what the timescale would be for a response from the local authority. RBW said that she would chase them for a response.</p> <p>FN asked if the local authority officer would be present at this meeting. RBW explained that there were a number of stages to go through before the Forum was ready to engage with the local authority, and she expected this meeting to place in the Autumn. There is work that the group can undertake in the meantime.</p> <p>MS explained that she had some experience in dealing with the local authority, and she was pleased with the quality of the documents that had been submitted. RBW stated that she was keen to move to the planning stage in September. It was noted that all were happy with the documents, and this timescale.</p> <p>RBW asked that all present sign their Code of Conduct Documents, which reduces the follow up that is needed.</p>

	<p>Discussions were had around the need to focus on the primary task – that of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. RBW stressed that the Forum did not need to get sidetracked into commenting on every single planning application.</p> <p>ACTION: NR to contact all members not present to obtain signed Code of Conduct.</p>
5. Officer Positions	<p>RJC explained that he felt it made more sense to not include the Assistant Secretary on the list of Officers, but include the ability for Officers to co-opt another two other Officers if necessary. It was therefore agreed by the Forum to co-opt AE to the position of Assistant Secretary. AE will take the minutes at the next meeting of the Forum.</p>
6. Next Steps	<p>Discussions were had around how much influence the Forum could have on the County Durham Plan. FN expressed concern that the local authority could ignore the Forum. RBW explained that it is important that the Forum moves forward quickly and looks at relevant points of the plan. She stressed that we can only address issues that relate specifically to the area that the Forum covers, but even if a plan is not completed by then, there is no reason the Forum cannot offer alternative suggestions to the County Plan. RJC outlined that the final draft of the preferred options plan – due in June/July 2014 – is the key document to offer comments on.</p> <p>RBW outlined her views on the next steps for the Forum. This included the Forum meeting again in September for some training that needs to be organised in the interim. There are not many adopted plans with the complexities of Durham City Centre, and it was felt that improving our expertise would be of benefit. RBW went on to say that the Officers would need to meet with the Durham BID group, as they would need to work closely with us. Formal links would also need to be formed with the City Economic regeneration group, and the City Centre Management Group.</p> <p>Discussions were had around the role of the AAP. RBW felt that they may be interested in what the Forum is doing, but didn't want to get into the position where another group steers the direction of the Forum. There are more pressing concerns for the Forum, and these are discussion to be had further down the line. RBW was concerned that the Forum did not become something it isn't, and that we focus solely on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Forum could set some dates for training in September; look at the relevant parts of the proposed County Durham Plan, and investigate how to draw down some money from central government.</p>

	<p>FN suggested contacting the press to advertise who we are. RBW explained that a formal launch would be needed, but after the group is formally recognised by the local authority.</p> <p>ACTION: NR to e-mail everyone with a link to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>
7. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed by the group that all members would e-mail to NR the dates that they were unavailable in September so training could be organised to maximise attendance. It was suggested by members of the Forum that it may be useful to offer two dates for the training to give the opportunity to attend to as many members as possible. RBW said this would be investigated.</p>
8. Any Other Business	<p>RJC pointed out that on Wed 11 September 2013, the local authority cabinet will discuss the County Plan. This means we will know what is to be in the Preferred Options by Thurs 5 September 2013. RBW suggested attending the meeting to let the Cabinet know we are a properly constituted group. It was agreed that MS would attend, assisted by either RC or FN.</p> <p>ACTIONS: RBW and RJC to draft statement to local authority cabinet. MS and NR to attend cabinet meeting, possibly with RJC or FN.</p>