

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum  
Working Group Meeting, 14 March 2017, Miners' Hall**

**Present:** John Ashby, Pippa Bell, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Mike Costello, Ann Evans, John Lowe, Matthew Phillips.

**Apologies:** Adam Deathe, Carole Dillon, Karen Elliott, Peter Jackson, David Miller, Kirsty Thomas, Angela Tracy, Ros Ward.

### **1. Notes of 28 February**

- The notes were agreed. John L thanked John A for acting as secretary during his absence.
- Sue explained that she had referred to the Saved Local Plan with regard to protecting views rather than consulting the York plan.
- It was agreed to meet with Historic England at 9.30 on Friday 24 March. **John A** to book a room at the Miners' Hall.
- Roger reported that he and Sue had secured new grant funding.
- **Roger** will write to the Local Access Forum to thank them for their encouraging comments on our draft plan.
- John A reported that he had attended the NORA AGM which had been addressed by a senior DCLG official about neighbourhood plans.

### **2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

A general discussion was held to try to determine the correct template to use. All agreed that the task was difficult and made more difficult by a lack of clarity about, or perhaps confidence in, a suitable template; several were on offer and colleagues had tried different approaches.

It was agreed that it should be broader than the Historic England requirements. It was also agreed that we should not engage a consultant as this would result in too great a delay, but we urgently needed advice from Ros and DCC.

It was accepted that a Sustainability Appraisal (covering economic and social impacts as well as environmental impacts) was broader than an SEA but that it was recognised as good practice to do this and that it suited the scope of our plan.

We have to assess our policies against the sustainability criteria we have derived from our consultations and from national and local policy documents. We also need to take account of the Historic England requirements.

**It was agreed that John A** would write to Carole and Claire to urge them to attend our next meeting to ensure we are on the right track. Meanwhile, **Sue** would prepare a revised template using work she had already done plus material prepared by John A and John L. This would take the Housing theme as an example. She would send this to Carole and Claire in advance of next week's

meeting.

### 3. Future Meetings

The next ordinary meeting will be on **Tuesday 21 March at 9.00** to discuss the SEA.

There will be a special meeting on **Friday 24 March at 9.00** to meet Jules Brown and Barbara Hooper from Historic England. They are due to join us at 9.30.

Both meetings will be in the Miners' Hall.

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### Presentation by Durham University

After the working group meeting we had a presentation from Barry Frost and Kayleigh Dixon about the university's plans for developments at St Mary's Field, Lower Mountjoy, and Maiden Castle. (Harvey Dowdy sent her apologies). The university intends to seek planning permission for these developments in mid-May, though an earlier application will be made for preliminary work on pitches at Maiden Castle.

The development at **St Mary's Field** is a large new teaching and learning centre. It will comprise two large lecture theatres (500 & 250 seats) and other spaces on three floors. There will be no parking provision except for disabled access. Service access will be via the existing road leading to Teikyo University.

Concerns were expressed about the loss of trees and the large volume of pedestrians.

The development at **Maiden Castle** consists of new all-weather pitches and substantial new build in the Green Belt to provide indoor tennis, badminton, squash, basketball and cricket facilities. In one new hall there would be bleacher seating for up to 2000 spectators.

Concerns were expressed about increased floodlighting, new building in the Green Belt, the amount of public access to the facilities, and the difficulties of providing parking and public transport access for large numbers of players and spectators.

It was noted that both sites are in heavily congested areas and the developments will add considerable pressure for pedestrians and road users.

The plans will be on display at the Palatinate Centre on Thursday 16 March, 12.00 – 7.00. This event will be open to key stakeholders who have been invited from 11.00.

Details will also be available on the university's website from 16 March:

<http://www.durham.ac.uk/about/strategy/masterplan>