

4.6 THEME 6: A CITY WITH AN ENRICHED COMMUNITY LIFE



4.6.1 Vision and Objectives

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Vision

Promoting a proactively supported community life, including health and well-being, with an enriched artistic and cultural life for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Residents will be supported and encouraged to be active citizens with a keen interest in their neighbourhood and how it develops.

4.213

Objectives

1. To encourage and promote the provision of a range of the highest quality health, educational, artistic, cultural, social and general community facilities to meet the needs of the residents of Our Neighbourhood and visitors to it;
2. To retain and improve existing artistic, cultural, social and community facilities, including open spaces, within Our Neighbourhood;

3. To improve the built environment in order to increase community participation in generating and experiencing the arts;
4. To ensure that residents and visitors can access information about the City in an accessible, central location.

4.6.2 Context

4.214 Details of the social profile of Our Neighbourhood is available in Section D1 of Appendix D. Appendix E, Table E3, provides details of public and community services and facilities in Our Neighbourhood.

4.6.2.1 Cultural activities and facilities

4.215 Durham City has a strong cultural identity. The City is rich with cultural activities such as the annual International Brass Festival, the Durham Miners' Gala, the Book Festival, Durham Streets Summer Festival, the Folk weekend and the biannual Lumiere light festival. In terms of infrastructure the City has one large, two small theatres and an open air stage in Wharton Park. It has a cinema, (soon to be three), small gallery spaces in different locations across the City, and a small number of art and crafts courses in local community association buildings. Residents and visitors have access to some University facilities, such as The Oriental Museum, Palace Green Library, and The Wolfson Gallery. The Cathedral is used on a frequent basis throughout the year for cultural events and now offers the new Open Treasure Gallery as well as the World Heritage Site visitors centre.

4.216 There are many visual artists creating ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, video and filmmaking. Most work from home. A small number have studio space (e.g. in Fowlers Yard) but most have no ongoing commercial outlet. There also many residents and visitors who take great interest in experiencing the range of visual arts.

4.6.2.2 Health and social care facilities

GP Practices:

4.217 There is currently only the Claypath surgery in Our Neighbourhood available to permanent residents. Most of the students are registered with the University Health Service, which is part of the Claypath and University Medical Group and has separate premises in Green Lane. With the University planning to expand student numbers by 5,700 over the next ten years it seems reasonable to infer that some expansion of the University Health Service will be necessary.

4.218 There is the possibility, outside Our Neighbourhood, of large housing developments on what is now Green Belt land. Were this to happen then surgeries might alter their catchment areas to accommodate these new residents, and exclude Our Neighbourhood or parts of it. However, all surgeries in and around Durham City are accepting new patients.

4.219 There is an urgent care centre (previously known as a GP out-of-hours centre) at the University Hospital of North Durham This is close to the A&E department.

Dentists:

4.220 As opposed to GPs, most of the dentists in the wider Durham area are in Our Neighbourhood, so it is reasonable to infer that they draw their clients from further afield. While not all dentists accept NHS patients, and of those that do several do not take all classes of patient, there are practices in Our Neighbourhood that are accepting all classes of NHS patients. There is anecdotal evidence that many dental surgeries are on upper floors and only accessible via stairs.

Hospitals:

4.221 The University Hospital of North Durham is an NHS hospital situated towards the north of the Our Neighbourhood. It was opened in 2001 as a replacement for Dryburn Hospital. There are no private hospitals in Durham City.

4.222 The University Hospital of North Durham handles emergency trauma surgery and other major surgery and hosts specialist services in dermatology and plastic surgery, as well as treating patients from Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead. The hospital has an A&E department that is not large enough to meet current demand. There are 22 wards (including maternity and neonatal), four outpatients, and a number of other services. However patients may be treated at other local hospitals if they specialise in their condition, and similarly patients may come to The University Hospital of North Durham for its specialist services.

4.223 The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust also provides community-based services (some covering mental health) as well as the hospital services noted above. Mental health services are also provided by the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust whose main County Durham site is Lanchester Road Hospital just outside Our Neighbourhood.

4.224 The NHS is producing Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) which will result in a massive reorganisation and contraction of health services. North Durham, including Durham City, lies within the Northumberland, Tyne, Wear and North Durham STP Footprint. The effect this will have on health care services within Our Neighbourhood, and accessibility to services outside Our Neighbourhood, is currently unknown.

Nursing homes and residential care homes:

4.225 Statistics obtained from the website of the Care Quality Commission show that there are three nursing homes in Our Neighbourhood with a combined capacity of 207 people. There are no residential care homes, but in the nearby Newton Hall and Framwellgate Moor there are three care homes which can cater for 133 people.

4.6.3 Justification

4.226 This justification refers to the Community theme as a whole. Additional, specific justification for each community policy is given with the policy itself.

4.227 The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014) has two aims for County Durham: (i) An altogether better place, (ii) Altogether better for people. There are five priority themes and high level objectives. The ones relevant to this theme are:

- **Altogether better for children and young people** - Children and young people realise and maximise their potential; Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life; A Think Family approach is embedded in the Council's support for families
- **Altogether healthier** - Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life; Reduce health inequalities and early deaths; Improve quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions; Improve mental and physical wellbeing of the population; Protect vulnerable people from harm; Support people to die in the place of their choice with care and support they need
- **Altogether safer** - Reduce anti-social behaviour; Protect vulnerable people from harm; Reduce re-offending; Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction; Embed the Think Family approach; Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism; Reduce road casualties.

4.228 The Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014c) has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this theme are: Ensuring services are in place including schools, health, and security.



4.6.4 Planning Policies and Proposals for Land Use

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- Policy C1: Community Arts Facilities
- Policy C2: Information Hub
- Policy C3: Provision of New Community Facilities
- Policy C4: Protection of an Existing Community Facility
- Policy C5: Protection of Open Spaces
- Policy C6: Health Care and Social Care Facilities

Policy C1: Community Arts Facilities

Development proposals to create community arts facilities will be supported either on an appropriate site or through the conversion of an existing building. Any site should be well related to public transport, walking and cycling routes and should be accessible.

4.230 The Forum is in the first stage of identifying sites or buildings that have potential for accommodating community arts facilities. This policy could include a single large building or a range of smaller facilities. Land and buildings are in short supply in the City Centre. Discussions have taken place as to whether a new build should be proposed or whether we use an empty existing building or buildings. The Forum believes a more sustainable option would be to renovate an existing empty building. Our preferred option therefore is the former DLI Museum and Art Gallery. Other possible options include the old Miners' Hall in North Road.

4.231 The Forum is aware of the great sadness in the community when the DLI Museum closed and the DLI collection was moved to storage in Spennymoor, as well as having some exhibition space in Palace Green Library. The building was a valuable resource for the community and used by the young and older people, but the County Council has made it clear that the collection will not return to the building which will be considered for a range of alternative uses. Durham City Conservation Area Appraisal identified the DLI Museum as a non- designated heritage asset/building of local interest:

While not possessing sufficient interest to be listed as of national importance, such buildings add to the general architectural richness and character of the area and it will be important that careful consideration is given to any development proposals that are likely to affect such building. (Durham County Council, 2016e, Character Area 2: Framwellgate p.36)

4.232 The Neighbourhood Planning Forum is presently looking into the possibility of bringing the DLI building back to life as a community asset. This policy links with green infrastructure Policy G2 which includes the designation of the DLI grounds as a Local Green Space.

4.233 The Forum is aware that the design of such facilities needs to be flexible to meet the needs of diverse audiences, changing patterns of use and demands of different art forms. There will be a need to ensure the proposal is deliverable and to establish arrangements for managing the facility over our Neighbourhood Plan period. Policy Implementation Project 3 in Chapter 5 indicates how this policy could be taken forward.

Justification

4.234 In 2014 the Arts Council England published 'The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society.' The report outlined a range of benefits that can be observed at individual, communal and national levels. Their findings concluded that arts and culture can:

- illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world;
- boost local economies by attracting visitors, creating jobs and developing skills; attracting and retaining businesses, revitalising places and developing talent;
- impact positively on our health and wellbeing;
- contribute to community cohesion and reduce social exclusion and isolation;
- improve educational outcomes.

4.235 The Forum's priority survey with the community (Durham City Planning Forum, 2015) and its more recent detailed Arts and Culture Survey of local arts facilities (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning forum, 2017) reveal real gaps in facilities for the arts. For example, the only art gallery, together with the DLI Museum, was closed in 2016 and to date there are no plans for an 'equivalent alternative facility,' as is required in the saved policy C9 from the Durham City Local Plan (City of Durham Council, 2004; Durham County Council, 2015a). Durham City with a population of 47,785 must be one of the few Cities in the UK without an art gallery or community arts centre or facilities.

4.236 The following gaps in provision have been identified at public events and in questionnaires:

- a lack of community arts facilities, including studio space for artists that can be hired at reasonable rates, rooms for courses and rehearsal space, arts and crafts workshops for residents of all ages, and rooms for meetings of art organisations;
- the need for a City Art Gallery, including gallery space for permanent and temporary exhibitions by national and local artists;
- a lack of a City or County Museum;
- lack of a central 'information hub';
- potential for local artists to use empty shops;
- need for a creative business centre for local artists and/or more independent shops to help small creative businesses to sell their products, build a consumer base and give local artists more exposure.

4.237 National and local policies and strategies also promote the importance of the cultural sector. The NPPF recognises the importance of the planning system in creating

accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its cultural well-being (paras 7 and 17). It states (para 70) that policies should:

plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments

4.238 The Culture White Paper (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2016, p.34) states: "Greater local and national partnerships are necessary to develop the role of culture in place-making. We will require national institutions to back local vision".

4.239 'The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030' (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20) states that a high level objective to achieving its 'Altogether Wealthier' vision by 2030 is a "Thriving Durham City ... To deliver the cultural and tourism ambitions for the City which benefit the entire County. Through a variety of approaches, specifically the County Durham Cultural Programme we will improve the cultural offer within the county and increase opportunities for people to experience and take part in cultural activities."

4.240 Durham County Council's Service Plan, Neighbourhood Services, 2016- 2019 (Durham County Council, 2016j, p.18), itemises actions to achieve the 'Thriving Durham City' objective, including: "Identify new visual art space(s) within Durham City centre and the wider county" and "Review service format and future approach of the DLI Museum and gallery".

4.241 On the 'Arts development' section on the Durham County Council website, the Council lists the following aims:

- to support great art: encouraging and supporting arts activity that is both innovative and excellent
- to increase the opportunities for people to take part in arts activity
- to support arts activities that help to deliver the council's vision of an 'Altogether Better' Durham

4.242 ixia (a public art think tank) organised three free briefing events on 'public art, cultural well-being and the National Planning Policy Framework' in 2012. John Holden (2012) in his presentation spoke of how:

The built environment can promote a rich cultural life for a community, but that environment needs to be animated in the right way, if it is to increase the cultural capacities and cultural well-being of individuals and communities.

4.243 He suggests that the elements needed, so that a community can both generate and experience cultural well-being, should include:

- buildings of various sorts in both the public and commercial sectors for professional and community performance and display (such as village halls; art galleries; music venues that range from opera houses to pubs);
- buildings that enable creative practice (for example artists' studios, rehearsal rooms);
- buildings for cultural education and learning (including archives, libraries);
- cultural / commercial spaces (small scale retail used for cultural purposes, and food outlets as well).

Policy C2: Information Hub

Development proposals to create an Information Hub in the City Centre, for the benefit of visitors and residents alike, will be supported. Any site should be well related to public transport, walking and cycling routes and be accessible.

4.244 The Hub (possibly to be named 'Love Durham') would act as a portal, signposting residents and visitors to what the City has to offer (attractions, retail services and facilities, services from statutory bodies, community groups and classes, events (ranging from small-scale to large scale)) and also to attractions outside of the City Centre. This Hub would house the function (and appropriate staff expertise) to obtain / link to / keep up to date all the necessary information and make it available via all types of media (print, Web, mobile devices, interactive screens throughout the City, mass media etc.) and via the Durham Pointers. The staff would advise providers of attractions, services and events on how to set up their own high quality information sources, so such sources can be automatically harvested. The Hub could incorporate, depending on funding and size, bookable rooms for meetings. Potential locations for the Hub could be the Town Hall or the City Public Library. Policy Implementation Project 4 in Chapter 5 indicates how this policy could be taken forward.

Justification

4.245 Information for residents and tourists is scattered in physical locations around the City and on a variety of websites (with their own social media connections). There is no central focal point for information, for residents and visitors. The Tourist Information Centre, which previously provided an Information Hub for tourist attractions and 'what's on' in the City, was closed by the Council in 2011. The results of the Forum's priority survey (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015) showed that residents wanted the Tourist Information Centre to be restored, in a central location, but for its remit to be extended to cover general local information. They thought such a centre would provide the information to encourage visitors to stay longer in the City. Durham County Council aims to encourage visitors to stay longer and this policy would support that aim – all information would be in one place and made accessible by a variety of methods. Such a facility would foster greater local community activity and support the success of local events: a common reaction from residents is 'we didn't know it was on!'



Policy C3: Provision of New Community Facilities

Development proposals for the provision of new community facilities (e.g. community centres, youth centres, village halls, sports fields and pitches, libraries, post offices, public houses and places of worship) or for extensions to existing facilities will be permitted, provided that such a proposal:

1. is not in the Green Belt, except for the exceptions listed in paragraph 89 of the NPPF; and
2. is well related to residential areas and local facilities; and
3. is, wherever possible, of a flexible design which could serve more than one use; and
4. would not adversely affect the amenity of occupiers of nearby or adjoining land or property; and
5. allows access to people with disabilities; and
6. does not create or contribute to a traffic hazard; and
7. is accessible to users of all modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking.

Policy C4: Protection of an Existing Community Facility

Development proposals which would result in the loss of an existing community facility identified in Policies C3 and C6 will not be permitted unless it has been demonstrated that:

1. The facility is no longer financially viable; or
2. There is no significant demand for the facility within that locality; and
3. An equivalent alternative facility is available nearby to satisfy the needs of the local community.

Policy C5: Protection of Urban Open Spaces

C5.1: A development proposal of 0.4 hectares or 12 housing units (or equivalent), or greater, will be supported if:

1. it provides additional good quality urban open space on site for new and existing residents' needs; or
2. the provision of urban open space is appropriate to the context, having regard to the landscape, townscape and ecology of the locality and where appropriate the setting of heritage assets, and is well designed, or
3. it addresses deficiencies of urban open spaces within Our Neighbourhood.

C5.2: A development proposal that would result in the loss of existing urban open spaces will be refused unless:

1. the affected site or feature or asset does not have a significant recreational, cultural, ecological, landscape or townscape value; or
2. the affected site or asset can be demonstrated to be surplus to local requirements (with e.g. reference to the current Open Space Needs Assessment); and
3. a compensatory amount of urban open space of an equivalent or better quality can be provided within easy walking distance.

Justification for Policies C3, C4 and C5

4.246 Urban open spaces include civic spaces, such as market squares, hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, open areas within a development, play grounds and outdoor sports facilities. This policy complements green infrastructure Policy G1 which covers green open spaces as a green asset. The NPPF states the importance of open space of public value as it provides health and recreation values to people living and working in the vicinity, and to visitors (NPPF para. 70, 73 and 74; PPG ID: 37, para. 001 to 003, 014). Saved policies of the City of Durham Local Plan are also relevant (City of Durham Council, 2004; Durham County Council, 2015a: E5, Q8, R1). The County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b) recommends that existing public open spaces should be protected, new development should contain sufficient open space for new and existing residents' needs and open spaces should be of good-quality, attractive and functional. A key document is the 'County Durham Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment' (2016b; currently being updated - previous versions Durham County Council, 2010a,b). This document assesses open space, sport and recreation facilities in County Durham by: identifying local needs; auditing local provision and assessing this against quality, quantity and access standards. Public open spaces are used by a range of different people for different purposes. A well-designed open space should be located near to the community it serves, have connectivity, be accessible, flexible in meeting different needs, adaptable to meet future needs, welcoming, safe and secure, clean and well maintained. (CABE Space, 2007) CABE, The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, was the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space from 1999 to 2011.

4.247 The complementary 'Playing Pitch Strategy' (Durham County Council, 2011a, 2012c) contains an audit of provision and aims to ensure that the quantity and quality of playing pitches and accessibility of playing pitches meets the needs of the local population now and in the future. Policy recommendations for the Durham City Area Action

Partnership (which is wider than Our Neighbourhood) include:

- Safeguard existing playing fields: as there is an overall sufficient supply of pitches in Durham City decisions must be made about which pitches to safeguard
- Obtain contributions towards off site or on-site provision of playing pitches from all housing developments: As, in general, supply is good, but quality is poor in Durham City, this contribution could be in the form of investment in the existing stock (i.e. off site contributions)
- Secure community use of educational facilities
- Develop new, and support existing, multi pitch/ multi sport 'hub' sites
- Improve the quality of pitches

Policy C6: Health Care and Social Care Facilities

Proposals for the development of Health Centres, Surgeries, Clinics, Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes will be permitted provided that such a proposal:

1. is not in the Green Belt; and
2. is well related to residential areas; and
3. is located close to public transport routes and is accessible by a choice of means of transport; and
4. would not have a detrimental affect upon the amenity of occupiers of nearby and adjoining properties or on highway safety; and
5. allows level access for pedestrians and people with disabilities.

And in the case of Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes, in addition:

6. Is well related to shops, community and social facilities; and
7. both the location and the form of the development itself provide satisfactory standards of amenity and open space for the residents; and
8. does not detract from the character or the appearance of the surroundings or from the amenities of existing residents.

Justification

4.248 With only one GP practice within Our Neighbourhood many residents are having to travel some distance to see their GP. This is a particular problem for older people who may not have access to a car and whose journey may involve a change of bus. We would therefore welcome a further GP practice within Our Neighbourhood, which would also meet the needs of a growing population. An obvious solution would be to bring St Margaret's Health Centre back into use as a regular GP practice: Policy C4 will prevent this facility from being converted to another use unless an alternative in the same general

area is provided in its place. This policy will also support the extension of the University Health Centre or the building of a satellite health centre for students in a different location.

4.249 While there does not appear to be a shortage of dental surgeries, this policy will ensure that any new or relocated surgeries are appropriately situated with proper access.

4.250 In the following text, 'care homes' means both nursing homes and residential care homes. Both are regulated by the Care Quality Commission and offer care and support throughout the day and night. In addition nursing homes have 24-hour medical care from a qualified nurse.

4.251 It seems reasonable, given the existing location of care homes, to consider the provision within Our Neighbourhood plus the electoral divisions of Belmont and Framwellgate and Newton Hall as a whole. At the 2011 census there were 3,180 people aged 75 and over living in this wider area, 1,020 of whom live in Our Neighbourhood. There are currently places for up to 340 people in the care homes in this wider area. As a rule of thumb, then, we can say that there is a requirement for one place in a care home for every 10 people over the age of 75.

4.252 It is predicted (for reasoning see Appendix D) that there will be approximately 500 more people in Our Neighbourhood aged over 75 by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. This equates to a requirement of an extra 50 beds in care homes, just to cater for residents of Our Neighbourhood, with a possible further 100 for the wider area. To meet this need it will be necessary either to expand existing care homes or to build new ones.

4.253 Access to shops and community facilities is more important for people living in residential care homes rather than nursing homes, as it enables them to retain contact with the local community. Satisfactory access to public transport for staff and visitors is essential.

4.254 Care homes must relate well in scale and appearance to adjacent development; careful design and generous amenity space will often be required to prevent large institutional buildings from dominating their surroundings. Areas of amenity space are similarly essential for the well-being of residents, to provide private sitting out and walking areas as well as pleasant surroundings. Care homes require satisfactory access and adequate parking in order that they do not impinge upon the neighbouring areas. Similarly, proposed extensions should not result in the over-development of sites. Sites suffering from high levels of noise or pollution, from traffic or other sources, are not suitable for these uses.

4.255 In addition we consider that our Neighbourhood Plan should support people who wish to make modifications to their houses in order to let them continue to live there rather than go into care homes. This is addressed by housing Policy D4 which covers housing for older people and people with disabilities.