

10 December 2017

Dear Madam,

**Durham City Neighbourhood Plan ("the Plan")**

Thank you for consulting Durham City Cricket Club in respect of the Plan.

The Club's Executive Committee considered the draft at its 4 December 2017 meeting and would comment as follows.

The Club welcomes the thrust of the Plan and supports its themes and objectives. In particular the Club welcomes its recognition of the need to embrace sustainability and protect a truly beautiful and historic city. Moreover it also specifically supports the need for a diverse economy and an enriched community life.

The Club was founded in 1829 and since that time has always played cricket on sites on the riverbank; initially the Racecourse ground and latterly its Green Lane ground where it is a tenant of Durham University.

In anticipation of the Club's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary we have prepared a Club Development Plan that we attach. "Development" in that context is primarily a reference to sporting and club development rather than built development as such. We are ambitious in terms of both coaching and on-field development of the Club. We also need to ensure that we are able to maintain the financial viability of the Club through use of the Clubhouse. As with all sports clubs we envisage the on-going need for small-scale, minor development (eg fencing and nets for example) that we accept must respect the sensitivity of the setting. In the longer term we do face the issue of the fitness for purpose of the clubhouse/pavilion as further noted below.

The green setting of the city, views of the World Heritage Site and the character and value of the riverside in particular are appreciated by the Club and the Plan's recognition of their value and need for protection are supported. The Club echoes the widespread support for the riverbank setting and riverside walks as an important attribute as to what is good about the City (paragraph 4.80.1). These are indeed factors and qualities that make our Green Lane ground one of the most attractive cricket grounds in the region. It is not by chance that the Club's address is Green Lane – the ground is very literally a Local Green Space that is deserving of protection.

We indeed consider that the Plan would benefit from making it explicit that the riverside setting includes adjoining playing fields. A wide interpretation should be given to riverbank and riverside setting.

We also expressly support the identification of notable viewpoints of the World Heritage Site as part of its inner setting as shown on map 3 (page 29). The map would perhaps

benefit from a clearer scale. One of the most notable viewpoints of the Cathedral is indeed from the Green Lane ground – enjoyed both by spectators and players alike.

In respect of Theme 6 “A City With an Enriched Community Life” we consider that community sporting facilities should be included within the cultural and community realm. Durham City Cricket Club is at the forefront of coaching of young boys and girls. During summer 2017 we were the most successful Club in the region in registering 75 children between ages 5 and 8 on a Sunday morning as part of the All Stars programme. Add to that the 30 or so 9-11 year olds taking part in our Comets programme and we had 100 youngsters on the field. The importance of the Club in making a real contribution to the local community should therefore be recognised in the Plan, for example at paragraph 4.6.2.1.

The inclusion of the “original cricket pavilion” in Appendix C’s list of Non-Designated Heritage Assets brings it within the terms of Policy H6. Instead of pavilion, clubhouse is perhaps a better term. The building as originally built in the 1960s was a pavilion in the sense of changing rooms and small social space. The building was extended in the 1980s as reflected now in its present form. The aspect and setting of the present clubhouse is perhaps more significant than its intrinsic architectural value. Indeed we note that it is a little tired and its facilities pale in comparison with more modern clubhouses. The Club can potentially envisage a day when substantial re-development or new build is required if the Club is to remain viable.

We therefore consider that policy H6 should be amended. The test of achieving “substantial public benefits” is high. For the avoidance of doubt we would ask that additional wording be considered importing the reference in NPPF paragraph 89 to “provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport” as being appropriate development in this context. Such reference should however be additionally constrained by reference only to existing community outdoor sports facilities.

We would therefore suggest that the policy H6:1 be amended to read “Non-designated heritage assets will be safeguarded from inappropriate development, and from demolition, unless it can be demonstrated that any substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh harm or loss *or that appropriate replacement, extension or enhancement of existing facilities for community outdoor sport is necessary.*”

Please do not hesitate to contact the Club if any clarification is required.

Yours faithfully



Frank Orr  
Secretary

To  
Ros Ward  
Project Manager  
Durham Neighbourhood Plan