

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum Working Group
13 March 2018, Miners' Hall**

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: John Ashby, Sue Childs, Roger Cornwell (Chair), Ann Evans, Peter Jackson, John Lowe, David Miller, Matthew Phillips, Ros Ward.

Apologies: Pippa Bell, Angela Tracy.

2. Notes of 6 March 2018

These were discussed at the Forum meeting earlier and the following was noted:

With reference to item 4, “Categorisation of Theme 5 Transport - for review and endorsement”, Peter asked that it should be recorded that there remained a number of instances where he disagreed with Matthew's amended interpretations of respondents' comments. **John L** explained that he had sent out a short version of the notes in order to produce them in time for today's meeting. He will distribute a full version before 20 March. The notes of 6 March will be reviewed at that meeting.

3. Categorisation of Theme 2a Heritage - for review and endorsement

Ros had distributed the categorisation tables and thanked Matthew for his work arranging them. The responses showed strong support for the theme policies. The working group endorsed the categorisation and **Ros** will produce an edited version for the workshop next week. There was some discussion about the possible impact of the revision of the NPPF on the plan, but it was thought unlikely that it would have a significant impact on the heritage policies. In any case, we can only work in the light of current NPPF guidance and the examiner will be aware of the situation. We should avoid specific paragraph references if they are not strictly necessary.

4. Workshop with DCC Officers on Theme 5 Transport

We were joined for this workshop by Carole Dillon and Peter Ollivere. The responses were considered policy by policy.

Policy T1

T1.1.1 Need to clarify “infrastructure”

T1.1.2 The issue is wheelchair accessibility in the wider environment, not just at building entrances

T1.2.1 The user hierarchy needs specifying in the policy

T1.2.4 There is a need to clarify the criteria for segregated cycle paths. An earlier draft of the policy had been amended to place more emphasis on segregation in response to comments from the Local Access Forum, but it would not be appropriate to segregate cycles and pedestrians on residential streets. Peter O suggested that it is better to be general in the policy and consider issues on a case by case basis, with design guidance in the text rather than the policy. The assessments mentioned in paragraph 4.189 will not be required in every case; it will depend on route capacity and the extent of safety issues, especially for children.

T1.3 Durham City has a number of special factors to take into account in transport assessments. Compared to the rest of the County it is very walkable, more people cycle to work, and it suffers from poor air quality. Peter O noted that these matters will be dealt with in the forthcoming County

Plan, but it is OK to include in the Neighbourhood Plan issues that need more emphasis in the City: the “finer grain”.

Policy T2

T2.1 It was agreed that the requirement to use a particular design guide was a hostage to fortune. It is important to ensure high quality design and encourage developers to demonstrate best practice. The Welsh design guidance can still be mentioned as an example in paragraph 4.197.

T2.2 This sets out the principles of good design in a helpful way, but 2.2.4 needs checking for unintended consequences.

General issue concerning T1 and T2

A number of respondents raised concerns about conflicts between the interests of cyclists and those of pedestrians, especially where pavements and footpaths are designated for shared use. Walking is more important than cycling in our neighbourhood and improvements for cyclists must not be at the expense of pedestrians. DCC is preparing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan based on extensive evidence. Peter O agreed to share this with the NPF as soon as possible. It was confirmed that Maps 11 and 12 were included in the plan to provide a snapshot of the pedestrian and cycling issues that had been identified during the planning process. They would be moved to an appendix; they do not form part of any policy but are valuable as evidence of the current issues.

Policy T3

T3.1 The intention of this policy is to promote more housing in circumstances where there is low demand for parking. Peter O noted that the intention was good but the policy as it stands was too complicated, especially points 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

It was noted that PBSAs and other residential blocks do need some parking provision. Also, conservation and heritage issues need to be taken into account.

Policy T4

The proposals for storage for mobility aids had received strong support from respondents, particularly the Durham City Access for All Group. The proposed storage itself does not need to be at the front of buildings, but it must be accessible from the front. The City's higher proportion of elderly residents and its hilly nature require more mobility aids. We need to check what the NPPF says about storage as well as ensuring consistency with our own policies D4 and D6. More flexibility is required in the policy: for example, on-street parking could be provided for cycles. Garages need to be large enough to provide storage as well as parking. Peter O noted the importance of providing justification for this policy as it would not be popular with developers.

Note from John L: I'm afraid I found it difficult to identify very specific action points, but I have tried to identify issues that remain to be clarified and resolved in the policies. It was agreed that Peter O would meet (or deal by email) with Matthew, Peter J (as a representative of the Chamber of Trade) and Adam (as a representative of BID) to do this.

5. Dates of Next Working Group Meetings

Tuesday 20 March after 9.00 am Forum meeting, including **Heritage** workshop.

Tuesday 27 March after 9.00 am Forum meeting, including **Economy** workshop.

Tuesday 27 March at 1.30 – 3.30: consideration of the University's responses at the **Palatine Centre**

Tuesday 3 April after 9.00 am Forum meeting, including **Sustainability and Green Infrastructure** workshop.

Tuesday 10 April after 9.00 am Forum meeting: ordinary meeting!

Monday 16 April at 9.30: **Community** workshop.

All meetings at the Miners' Hall unless otherwise stated.