

## Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum

### Meeting with Durham University

27 March 2018

**Durham University:** Matthew Wright, Ian Ramage and Faith Folley (DPP)

**NPF:** Peter Jackson, John Ashby, Sue Childs, Ann Evans, John Lowe, Ros Ward

1. The **purpose** of the meeting was to discuss Durham University's comments on the consultation draft of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.
2. **Nomenclature:** It was agreed that the University should be referred to consistently as "Durham University" (DU in these notes). The term "Higher Education Institution" should be used for more general comments. The text should make clear whether the term "college" refers to DU residential accommodation or to a FE college.
3. Some sentences in the text portray an **overly negative perception of DU**. It was agreed that JA and MW would revise these sections.
4. Sometimes the text uses **incorrect names** for DU sites. It was agreed to correct these.
5. **Policy G2** of the draft plan designates some DU land as part of a Local Green Space on **Observatory Hill**. The relevant part is identified on Map 6. It was agreed to review and reconsider this proposal.
6. **Policy G3** includes several DU sites as part of the proposed Emerald Network. It was agreed to delete the relevant parts of the **Howlands Farm** and the **College of St Hild and St Bede** residential sites identified on Map 7.
7. DU put forward the argument that **Policy G4**, supported by paragraph 4.86, about **developments in the Green Belt** is contradictory. NPF representatives acknowledged that there are difficulties with this policy and it will be revised in consultation with Durham County Council (DCC). The revised version will be checked with DU.
8. At this point it was clarified that **targeted consultation** with relevant parties would be carried out where there are significant changes to the draft plan before it is submitted to DCC.

9. It was agreed that **Policy E1** would be revised to include educational uses for the **Upper Mountjoy** site.
10. The requirement for a 15m buffer of tree planting on the **Upper Mountjoy** site came from DCC. This will be clarified with the DCC.
11. The NPF is happy to agree to the proposed **re-wording about families etc in Policy E2.2**. This also applies to para 4.114.
12. DU objected to the emotive language regarding the **masterplan**. NPF agreed to re-word this, but the plan does need to reflect public opinion.
13. There was considerable discussion of the proposed amendments to the Interim Student Accommodation Policy concerning **HMOs** put forward in **Policy D2**. DCC agrees that their interim policy needs strengthening and that their database of council tax exemptions is incomplete. However, DCC is willing to share this database with developers considering HMOs and also to explain its methodology to them. The reason for suggesting the 20% population limit is to take account of neighbouring PBSAs, but it is difficult to determine exactly how to measure this. The NPF is still in discussions with DCC about this policy and will keep DU in the loop.
14. **Policy D3** concerns **PBSAs**. It was agreed that the criterion of “consultation with the relevant education provider” (**D3.1.3**) should be strengthened, though perhaps the word “priority” is too restrictive.
15. It was agreed that **D3.2.1** should be re-worded as DU suggested to avoid the double negative.
16. It was agreed that **D3.2.2** should be re-worded to avoid unintended consequences for the **Hill Colleges**.
17. It was further agreed that **D3.2.2** should be re-worded to clarify the meanings of “adjacent” and “college” (see Note 2 above) in this context. PBSAs need to be in sustainable locations and qualitative judgements made about them.
18. DU has put forward a number of **additional sites for student accommodation**. The NPF is pleased to accept these subject to the standard evaluation to be carried out by AECOM.

- 19.** The draft plan expresses concern about the impact of DU expansion on **GP surgeries**. The NPF has consulted the CCG but had no response. It is understood that the Claypath surgery is willing to expand.
- 20.** **MW** agreed to update DU's **growth forecast figures**.
- 21.** **Policies C3 and C6** relate to **community and health facilities** and state that development will not be permitted in the Green Belt. The NPF accepted that the tests for development should be aligned with the NPPF.
- 22.** The NPF will be delighted to include an explicit reference in **Policy C1** to DU's provision of **cultural facilities** to be shared with the community.
- 23. Project 2 Reconversion of HMOs:** DU argued that it should not have to contribute to the costs of this in the same way as developers of private PBSAs as there are additional costs associated with developing and operating college accommodation. The focus should be on building up a regeneration fund from S106 contributions. The NPF will give further consideration to this project. Projects will not have the same statutory status as policies; they are aspirational.
- 24. Demolition of non-designated heritage assets:** the draft plan proposes a target of "zero" in the implementation section (p.122). DU proposes that this should be qualified by adding "unless there are circumstances where the benefit clearly outweighs the scale of the loss". The NPF will give further consideration to this.
- 25.** **MW** agreed to update all **student numbers** for the plan.
- 26.** The NPF will decide its future work programme at the working group meeting on Tuesday 10 April. It will have to consider the implications of the creation of the City of Durham Parish Council that will hold its first meeting on 10 May. It covers the same area as the Neighbourhood Plan.