

THEME 6: A CITY WITH AN ENRICHED COMMUNITY LIFE



Vision

4.269 Durham City will have 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.

Objectives

4.270 The objectives of this theme are:

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 within Our Neighbourhood.

Context

4.271 Details of the social profile of Our Neighbourhood are available in Section C1 of Appendix C. Appendix D, Table D3, provides details of public and community services and facilities in Our Neighbourhood.

Cultural activities and facilities

4.272 The City has a strong cultural identity. It is rich in cultural events and festivals including Durham Book Festival, Durham Brass Festival, Durham Jazz Festival, the Durham Miners' Gala, Durham Folk Weekend, and the biennial Lumiere light festival.

4.273 Residents and visitors have access to Durham University facilities, including The Oriental Museum, Palace Green Library, with its Archaeology Museum, and other special collections. The Cathedral is used on a frequent basis throughout the year for musical events and exhibitions including those in the new Open Treasure Collections Gallery. Durham Heritage Centre and Museum is a small City museum run by volunteers

4.274 In terms of theatres the City has the Gala Theatre (with its Gala Theatre Stage School for young People), the small City Theatre in Fowler's Yard, which is owned by Durham Dramatic Society, and the recently refurbished Assembly Rooms Theatre, owned by Durham University. The City has two cinemas (in the Gala and in The Riverwalk) and Durham Clayport Film Club, a community cinema, in Shakespeare Hall. There are plans for another cinema as a part of ongoing developments in the City.

4.275 In terms of provision for children and young people, the County Durham Cultural Education Partnership (run by Culture Bridge NE) identifies needs and collaborative initiatives "to ensure all children and young people living in County Durham are able to access opportunities to engage with cultural activity."

4.276 Within the community there was a strong sense of loss when the DLI Museum and Art Gallery closed down. Since that time some of the DLI collection has been moved to Palace Green Library and a smaller art gallery, the Gala Gallery, has opened next to the Gala Theatre. In addition, there are small commercial gallery spaces in different locations across the City, commercial arts and craft studios at Fowler's Yard and a small number of arts and crafts courses and hireable event spaces in local community venues (Alington House and Shakespeare Hall). The Empty Shop, a non-profit arts organization, has provided a multi-disciplinary arts venue in the City since 2010, as well as utilising other venues and public spaces temporarily to provide accessible, temporary galleries and site specific events. This includes the TESTT Space, a temporary artist studio group and contemporary gallery, situated above the Durham Bus Station.

4.277 There are many visual artists creating ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, video and filmmaking. Most work from home. Only a small number have studio space and most have no ongoing commercial outlet. More detailed gaps in provision are identified in the justification for Policy C1.

4.278 Although there are various websites, advertising events within the City, there is at the present time no central facility for the sharing of information relating to all events, courses and services for residents and visitors.

4.279 Potential future developments include the re-purposing of Redhills, the headquarters of the Durham Miners' Association (DMA), as a centre of education, heritage, and culture. This is dependent on the successful raising of significant financial investment, and to this end the DMA has launched 'The Redhills Appeal'. In addition, Durham University (2017a, p.21) includes within their Strategy for 2017- 2027 an approach which "will secure the City's heritage assets, enhance the community cultural offer and wherever possible open up our facilities for collective use".

Health and social care facilities

4.280 More detail about these services is available online at:
<http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/themes/community/health/>

GP Practices:

4.281 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 Durham 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.

4.282 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 (information rechecked 20 August 2019).

4.283 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:

4.284 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. Many dental surgeries are on upper floors and only accessible via stairs.

Hospitals:

4.285 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.

4.286 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.

4.287 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.

4.288 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 unclear. Commissioning of health care services is carried out by two clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), one for North Durham (which includes Durham City) and one for Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield. These are going to be merged into one, the County Durham CCG.

Nursing homes and residential care homes:

4.289 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.

Justification

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

4.291 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 wealthier*** – delivering the cultural and tourism ambitions for the City for the benefit of the whole County via e.g. the County Durham Cultural Programme
- ***Altogether better for children and young people*** - by realising and maximising their potential
- ***Altogether healthier*** - enabling people to make healthy choices, and reducing health inequalities and improving health and well-being
- ***Altogether safer*** - reducing anti-social behaviour, and protecting people from harm.

4.292 The Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014) 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: (i) ensuring services are in place including schools, health, and security, and (ii) setting up facilities and activities to deliver more visitors, staying longer and spending more.

Planning Policies and Proposals for Land Use

4.293 The policies related to this theme are:

- Policy C1: Provision for Arts and Culture
- Policy C2: Provision of New Community Facilities
- Policy C3: Protection of an Existing Community Facility
- Policy C4: Health Care and Social Care Facilities



Policy C1: Provision for Arts and Culture

Development proposals for public art and for new facilities for arts and culture, or extensions to existing facilities, will be supported where it is demonstrated that they:

Public art

- a) enhance the area where they are to be sited.

New facilities for arts and culture

- b) meet an identified community need; and
- c) improve the range of facilities in the City; and
- d) do not harm the viability of an existing facility; and
- e) are not detrimental to the amenity of the area; and
- f) are of a flexible design to meet the needs of diverse audiences, changing patterns of use and demands of different art forms; and
- g) offer appropriate access for all people, including those with disabilities, both to and within the building; and
- h) provide space for vehicles to unload / load equipment.

And for extensions and conversions in addition:

- i) are of a scale and materials that enhances and complements the existing building; and
- j) retain any visual, architectural or historic interest intrinsic to the original building.

4.294 Because of the importance of such facilities to community wellbeing it is particularly important that other relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are adhered to, such as the use of design sympathetic to the character of the area, accessibility to users of all modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking, and access to nearby car parking provision.

4.295 Applicants should demonstrate community need and the support of the Parish Council would be a material fact in determining this. Objections from existing facilities as to the impact on their viability would also be a material consideration.

Justification

4.296 The City of Durham Local Plan (2004) has a saved policy, Q15 Art in Design, with a justification that noted that the incorporation of artistic elements into the design of buildings, spaces and landscapes can help to enhance design, creating an impression of social and cultural identity. Similarly, public art can also be an integral part of refurbishment and regeneration. It can assist in creating a sense of distinctiveness in a development particularly when local people have been involved in the process of design

and selection. It can also help support the development of a viable local artistic community. As a consequence public art has become a feature of Durham City in general, including in Our Neighbourhood, and this has been well-received. This Policy will provide continued support for public art when the City of Durham Local Plan is superseded by the County Durham Local Plan.

4.297 Gaps in provision for arts and culture in Our Neighbourhood were identified in the Priority Questionnaire and associated Town Hall open events (Durham City Planning Forum, 2015), an additional arts and cultural questionnaire and the pre-submission draft consultation held in 2017 (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning forum, 2017b,c).

4.298 The responses to the priority survey included the need for:

- a cultural heart to the City - an arts and cultural quarter
- a City centre art gallery,
- a larger theatre to attract larger companies
- a live music venue
- a City museum
- a central 'information hub' – ('no-one knows what's on')
- rooms for meetings, courses and workshops, including for arts and crafts workshops
- opportunities for small independent shops and galleries – an issue relating to high rentals.
- support for local artists and start-up creative businesses to use empty shops
- good leisure facilities for young people

4.299 Responses to the additional arts and culture questionnaire supported the above suggestions and also included the need for:

- an arts 'hub,' (or a network model) offering performance, as well as affordable exhibition spaces, a café, workshops, studio spaces as well as spaces for people to hold meetings, to attend courses, readings and generally socialise
- improvement to existing spaces such as Fowler's Yard and Millennium Square
- existing public buildings to be used to the full, such as the Town Hall and the Library
- opportunities for children to develop creative skills
- support for local artists, makers and creative businesses to set up start- up businesses and /or independent shops – to sell their products and build a consumer base.

In a nutshell, there is a lot of potential in the City – we just need imagination and enthusiasm to help the arts grow (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2017b, p.5)

4.300 Comments from the pre- submission consultation supported the above ideas, and additionally noted the need for:

- affordable and accessible arts facilities
- a modern museum for the County Regiment
- the development of a wide range of existing buildings for arts facilities
- the establishment of partnerships through which facilities could be identified and developed
- a more joined up, reciprocal and shared approach, acknowledging the contribution other organisations should be making

4.301 National and local policies and strategies also promote the importance of the cultural sector. The NPPF (para. 8) recognises the importance of the planning system in creating accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its cultural well-being).

4.302 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".

4.303 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, including enriching lives, boosting local economies, impacting positively on health and wellbeing, contributing to community cohesion and improving educational outcomes.

4.304 The Town and Country Planning Association (2013, p.15) good practice guide states that planners should provide opportunities for local culture and sports planning to work with local stakeholders and the community, to secure community involvement and consultation, to make the case for culture, arts and sport provision and secure this provision, to obtain developer contributions, and to support the growth of local tourism and cultural and creative businesses.

4.305 Durham County Council's Service Plan, Neighbourhood Services, 2016- 2019 (Durham County Council, 2016f, p.18), itemises actions to achieve the 'Thriving Durham City' objective for an 'Altogether Wealthier' Durham, including: "Identify new visual art space(s) within Durham City centre and the wider county".

4.306 The Durham Miners' Association has launched an ambitious fundraising drive to turn Redhills into a centre for education, practice and performance. The aspiration is for it to be the heart of a traditional and progressive cultural renaissance for the county. There are more details in 'The Redhills Appeal' Brochure.

4.307 Durham University's masterplan makes the case for the provision of a significant venue for music and drama performance to raise the cultural profile of the University and City, allowing it to make a strong contribution to the arts nationwide. The facility would

provide large scale performance and exhibitions spaces as well as facilities for music and drama practice and rehearsals.



Policy C2: Provision of New Community Facilities

Development proposals for the provision of new community facilities (both new build and conversions of existing buildings), or for extensions to existing facilities, will be supported where it is demonstrated that they:

- a) are well related to residential areas or local facilities; and
- b) are of a flexible design which could serve more than one use; and
- c) would not adversely affect the amenity of occupiers of nearby or adjoining land or property; and
- d) provide practicable access for all people, including those with disabilities, both to and within the building; and
- e) provide space for vehicles to unload / load equipment.

And for extensions and conversions in addition:

- f) are of a scale and materials that enhances and complements the existing building; and
- g) retain any visual, architectural or historic interest intrinsic to the original building.

Policy C3: Protection of an Existing Community Facility

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

- a) the facility is no longer financially viable; or
- b) there is no significant demand for the facility within that locality.

In the first case the applicant must also demonstrate that an equivalent alternative facility is available nearby to satisfy the needs of the local community.

4.308 Community facilities are facilities and uses generally available to and used by the local community at large, including children and young people, for the purposes of leisure, social interaction, health and well-being or learning. This will include, but not be confined to, community centres, historic and community public houses, premises for indoor and outdoor sport, leisure and cultural centres, places of worship, doctor's surgeries/ health centres, toilets, crèches, playgroups, youth clubs, libraries, schools, museums and art galleries, and other training and educational facilities.

4.309 Toilets, especially those for people with a disability, are a community facility that need to be available through the evening and not just in the daytime. This is particularly true in the City centre. They need to be well-signposted. Consequently proposals for better toilet provision and better signposting will be supported.

4.310 For Policy C2, because of the importance of such facilities to community wellbeing it is particularly important that other relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are adhered to, such as the use of design sympathetic to the character of the area, accessibility to users of all modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking, and access to nearby car parking provision. Where an existing building is being converted some compromises may be necessary, but imaginative and practicable solutions should be sought to minimise these.

4.311 For Policy C3, all routes to secure funding support / community takeover of the building should be explored before it is declared redundant. The availability of an equivalent nearby alternative facility is a relevant factor when assessing any proposals. Whether the alternative is suitable will depend on both its proximity to the building and the nature of the activity carried on there, and will depend on the facts of each case. (See also relevant initiatives in the companion document 'Looking Forwards: Durham as a Creative and Sustainable City'.)

4.312 One example of a much needed community facility in Our Neighbourhood is a City Centre Hub. Initially perhaps integrated into an existing facility, it would be the focal point for the whole community, including permanent residents, students and visitors. Such a facility would include an information sharing function, signposting residents and visitors to what the City has to offer, including attractions, events, courses, independent shops, creative workshops and services from statutory bodies.

4.313 In addition the City Centre Hub would provide meeting rooms to help form new support networks and to provide a place where people "can come together and address the issues that matter most to them" (Locality, 2016, p.5). This is covered in more detail in the companion document 'Looking Forwards: Durham as a Creative and Sustainable City'.

4.314 The community engagement vision described in the companion document suggests how partnership working between residents and local organisations could develop and improve the provision of community facilities and services through collaboration and innovation. The companion document lists a large number of initiatives that cover the issues identified by local residents as needing action, and lists the wide range of organisations and stakeholders that could implement such initiatives.

Justification for Policies C2 and C3

4.315 The justification for the provision of sports facilities is given in Theme 2b: A Beautiful and Historic City - Green Infrastructure (para. 4.93, 4.94).

4.316 The NPPF (para. 92) recognises the importance of planning positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services.

4.317 As part of the information-gathering exercise the views of young people aged 5-18 at four local schools were gathered. The resulting Young People's Consultation Report (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2016a) shows a need for more facilities where young people can gather and enjoy themselves without needing to spend money.

4.318 Between 2014 and 2016 the Department for Communities and Local Government working together with 'Locality' and partners, funded a project named 'Our Place'. At the heart of the Project was the development of community hubs:

where different local partners in a neighbourhood can come together and address the issues that matter most to them. Community hubs can therefore support a neighbourhood focussed community-led approach. (Locality, 2016, p.5)

4.319 In the priority survey and associated Town Hall open events (Durham City Planning Forum, 2015) there was a huge response for the need for a central facility for sharing local information and for the provision of meeting rooms. This suggestion also received much support in the 2017 Pre-Submission consultation. For example, the Durham Pointers committee wrote:

The proposed central hub offers the potential to provide a much needed central information point which could hold and disseminate information on local county attractions and community events. We believe any such provision should embrace all modern media methods for the distribution of information but should also be a place for face-to-face encounters.

4.320 The Forum acknowledges the work of the Visit County Durham strategy and associated websites which cover events across County Durham, including festivals and events at the main tourist spots in the City. Durham University, the Cathedral, the Gala and other smaller organisations advertise events on websites. Information for residents and tourists is also scattered in physical locations around the City. The information sharing function in the City Centre Hub would not replicate the function of Visit Durham but complement it by providing a truly local service, where local organisers can contribute. This will support the viability of small scale providers, as well as contribute to the local economy.

Policy C4: Health Care and Social Care Facilities

Development proposals for the provision of Health Centres, Surgeries, Clinics, Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes will be supported where it is demonstrated that they:

- a) are well related to residential areas; and
- b) are located close to public transport routes and are accessible by a choice of means of transport; and
- c) would not have a detrimental affect upon the amenity of occupiers of adjoining and nearby properties and businesses; and
- d) allow appropriate access for pedestrians, people with children and people with disabilities; and
- e) provide car parking facilities at the premises.

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

- f) are well related to shops, community and social facilities; and
- g) for both the location and the form of the development itself, provide good standards of amenity and open space for the residents, including avoiding sites where existing non-residential uses may be to the detriment of the residents.

Justification

4.321 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 C3 will prevent this facility from being converted to another use unless an alternative in the same general area is provided in its place. Policy C4 will also support the extension of the University Health Centre or the building of a satellite health centre for students in a different location.

4.322 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.

4.323 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.

4.324 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 provision of one place in a care home for every 10 people over the age of 75.

4.325 It is predicted (for reasoning see Appendix C, para. C24, C25) 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.

4.326 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.

4.327 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.

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