

THEME 4: A CITY WITH ATTRACTIVE AND AFFORDABLE PLACES TO LIVE



Vision

4.173 Durham City will have a range of housing types to meet the needs of a sustainable mix of local residents and students living in harmony.

Objectives

4.174 The objectives of this theme are:

1. To change the imbalance towards student accommodation back to a sustainable, balanced community;
2. To promote housing designed for the needs of older people and for people with disabilities;
3. To promote affordable housing for all sectors of the community, but particularly for families with children and young people starting out.

Context

4.175 Durham City's setting in a surrounding green bowl is of paramount importance. Development of all kinds should be encouraged up to its physical limits. Major physical constraints within the City include the River Wear, its floodplain and its gorge. The scale and design of new buildings need to respect the City's heritage and topography, especially

regarding the World Heritage Site and the two Conservation Areas. These special Durham factors require that the best use is made of every piece of land within the urban area and especially the development of 'brownfield' land and the protection of green and attractive open spaces. The over-riding consideration that applies to all development proposals in Our Neighbourhood, including all forms of residential development, is that there shall be no harm to the historic environment, most notably the setting of the World Heritage Site.

4.176 When work started on the Neighbourhood Plan there were sites within the urban area capable of providing over 1,500 additional dwellings. However, many of these have subsequently been approved for the construction of Purpose Built Student Accommodation. PBSAs comprise a number of cluster flats and/or self-contained flats. Each flat in a PBSA is counted as a residential unit. University colleges are PBSAs. Since 2012 a number of sites in Our Neighbourhood including several specifically identified at the time in the County Council's SHLAA that could have been for year-long residents have been developed as private PBSAs, i.e.:

- Elvet Studios (Green Lane) 112 studio apartments
- City Block (formerly The Village @ The Viaduct) (Ainsley Street) 223 beds, in cluster and studio apartments
- Ward Court (formerly Neville's Cross Club) 36 apartments
- Chapel Heights 198 beds
- St Giles Studios (110 Gilesgate) 109 studio flats
- New Kepier Court (Mayorswell Close) 214 rooms, a mixture of cluster apartments and studios
- Ustinov College at Sheraton Park (formerly Neville House and Sheraton House) 418 beds, in cluster and studio apartments
- Duresme Court (formerly Berendsen Laundry) 277 studio flats
- Rushford Court (formerly County Hospital) 363 beds
- Houghall Court, East Durham College's Houghall campus, 222 beds in cluster and studio apartments
- Dun Holm House, The Riverwalk 253 beds in cluster and studio apartments
- Student Castle, Lower Claypath 473 beds in cluster and studio apartments
- The Greenwell Building, Back Silver Street 56 beds
- The Three Tuns 168 beds, construction progressing

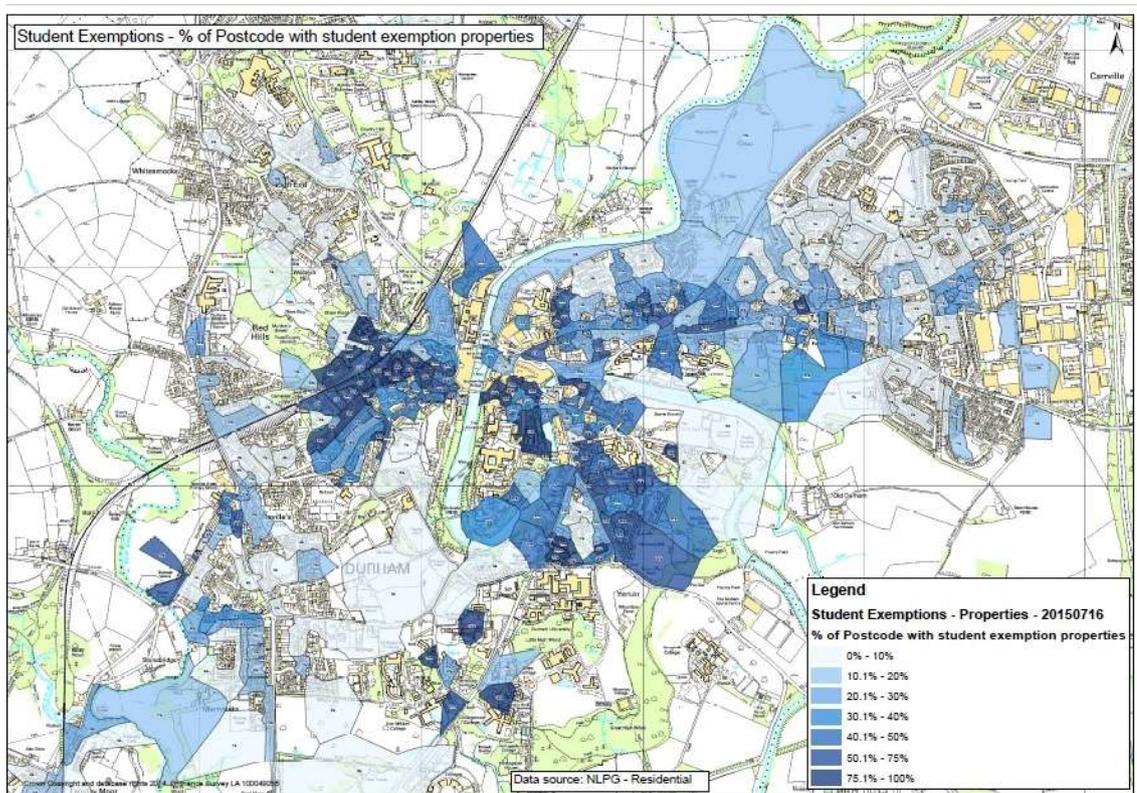
4.177 The few remaining areas of land potentially suitable for housing development are therefore extremely precious; it is imperative that the Neighbourhood Plan provides development policies that enable such areas of land within Our Neighbourhood to contribute as much as possible to the provision of appropriate new dwellings for Durham City as a whole.

4.178 One of the strongest concerns expressed in consultations has been the 'studentification' of former family housing areas of Durham; the NPPF (para. 62) expects planning policies to aim to create mixed and balanced communities and (para. 91) to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. The severe imbalance in parts of Durham City is damaging to community relations, to quality of life and to the future sustainability of

schools, shops and other services and facilities. In 2015 the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum collected data on residency in Our Neighbourhood (<http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/themes/housing/property-information/>). Most of the information was gathered from public sources, primarily the Valuation Office Agency and Durham County Council, plus estate agents and landlord websites. The database had 2,913 permanent residents' dwellings, 2,029 student houses and flats, and 1,644 other properties, making 6,586 properties in total. The 2,029 student houses and flats represent 30% of all residential properties in Our Neighbourhood, above the 10% figure for a balanced community. It should also be noted that a number of streets in the Viaduct and Crossgate area have student residencies of approximately 90+%.

Map 6: Studentification

Note: Map supplied by Durham County Council



4.179 The C3 planning use class covers dwelling houses for up to six people living together as a single household. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) are properties shared by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals and are planning use class C4; an HMO where more than six unrelated individuals are sharing is known as “Sui Generis” (of its own class). Enabling changes of use from an HMO to C3 will be a challenge as there is some evidence that students prefer HMO accommodation to PBSAs or college accommodation (Durham University, Geography Department, 2015).

4.180 An Article 4 Direction, requiring planning permission to convert a family home into an HMO, was approved for a large part of the centre of the City and came into force on 17th September 2016. A further Direction for much of Framwellgate and Newton Hall (outside Our Neighbourhood) came into force on 17th May 2017. In order to be able to resist the overspilling of HMO developments into the rest of Our Neighbourhood, a third Direction to cover the remaining part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area would be needed. This is an action which would be for the County Council to consider.

4.181 A further issue is that Durham University (2016) has adopted its Masterplan for the growth of Durham University over the next 10 years. This is helpful in displaying Durham University's aspirations for physical development. This growth will, however, further diminish the very limited availability of sites for various forms of residential development unless sufficient Purpose Built Student Accommodation, including new Colleges, is provided within the University estate. It is welcome therefore, that Durham University has identified land in its ownership for six new Colleges and PBSAs. However, as shown in Appendix C (para. C16 to C23), even if these are all built and are Colleges or University-affiliated PBSAs, meeting the aspiration of between 50% and 55% of students 'living-in' would require that all existing and planned PBSAs are given the designation 'University-affiliated'. This is not expected to be the case, and in addition student preferences are to live in HMOs. It follows that there may well be a demand for additional HMOs in Durham City which, if met, would further reduce the number of year-long residents and worsen the community imbalance. To avoid this retrograde scenario would require a reduction in the scale and pace of growth envisaged by Durham University, or for the University to require a higher percentage of students to live in College and University-affiliated accommodation.

4.182 The County Council has provided an estimate of the overall numbers of dwelling units required in Our Neighbourhood, but not for each kind of housing need. To be able to retain the long-term number of residents would need sites for at least 200 additional dwellings at the very minimum (from Appendix C para. C15). The County Council's estimate at September 2019 (which will be revised in due course) is that a minimum of 1,297 new dwellings are required, comprising 639 on sites now under construction, 120 with planning permission but not yet under construction, 488 with planning permission and included in the emerging County Durham Local Plan, and 50 on a proposed new site (details are in Appendix C para. C28). This requirement figure therefore will assist in re-balancing the permanent resident population of Our Neighbourhood.

4.183 The County Council's figure of the housing requirement for Our Neighbourhood is the current figure for how many new homes there is planning permission to build and is thereby automatically sufficient. Additional suitable sites would be useful in case of non-delivery of some of the approved sites and would provide flexibility and a contingency provision. Accordingly, further sites, however small, have been sought and these are included in Policy D1.

4.184 The Neighbourhood Plan does set out qualitative needs: the County's population age structure is projected to shift dramatically (Office for National Statistics, 2016b), with

the numbers aged 75 and over increasing by 67% from being 8.6% of the total population in 2014 to 13.3% in 2035 (in the 2016 household projections the figures are an increase of 58% from 8.7% of the total population in 2016 to 13% of the total population in 2035 (Office for National Statistics, 2018b)). This makes the provision of suitable accommodation for older people a particular priority. Nevertheless, there are other categories of provision that will be needed, including students, families with children, professionals and people starting out in the housing market (NPPF, para. 61).

Justification

4.185 This justification refers to the Housing theme as a whole. Additional, specific justification for each housing policy is given with the policy itself.

4.186 The results of the Forum priority survey looking at the public's views about what is good, bad and needs to change about the City (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015) emphasised housing as a key issue. In particular, the responses indicate that there is an urgent need to redress the huge imbalance towards student accommodation, and the various problems this causes and to provide more housing (e.g. affordable housing; housing for families of various kinds including families with children; older people; and young professionals). The particular importance of ensuring provision for families with children is in order to restore and sustain community balance, inclusiveness and sustainability, notably with regard to school places and children's and parents' facilities.

4.187 The NPPF (para. 67) states the need for the Local Planning Authority to identify a sufficient supply and mix of specific, deliverable sites (the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)). The NPPF's aims are to meet household and population projections, address the need for all types of housing including affordable housing, address the needs of different groups in the community (including families with children and older people), and contribute to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. However, the Local Planning Authority should also protect the Green Belt (NPPF para. 133 to 136) and encourage reuse of brownfield land (NPPF para. 117). These national planning policies apply not just to the Local Planning Authority but to all relevant plan-makers and decision-takers.

4.188 The White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2017a) and the Government Response to consultation comments (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018) aim to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market. The Government proposes to prioritise the use of brownfield land, incentivise housing for rent, encourage the smaller development firms, discourage 'land-banking' and promote good design.

4.189 The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014) has a section 'Altogether greener' with the aim of promoting sustainable design and protecting Durham's heritage.

4.190 The Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014) and its update (Durham County Council, 2016c) have a number of implementation projects and actions relevant to housing in Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan), i.e. ensuring services are in place including schools, and planning for housing allocations. The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key future activities. Completed projects include the introduction of an Article 4 direction and a policy framework with which to determine student accommodation proposals. Housing allocations are set out in the prevailing Local Plan, and the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to supplement these to provide flexibility and contingency in case of non-delivery.

Planning Policies and Proposals for Land Use

4.191 The policies related to this theme are:

- Policy D1: Land for Residential Development
- Policy D2: Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities
- Policy D3: Affordable Housing
- Policy D4: Building Housing to the Highest Standards

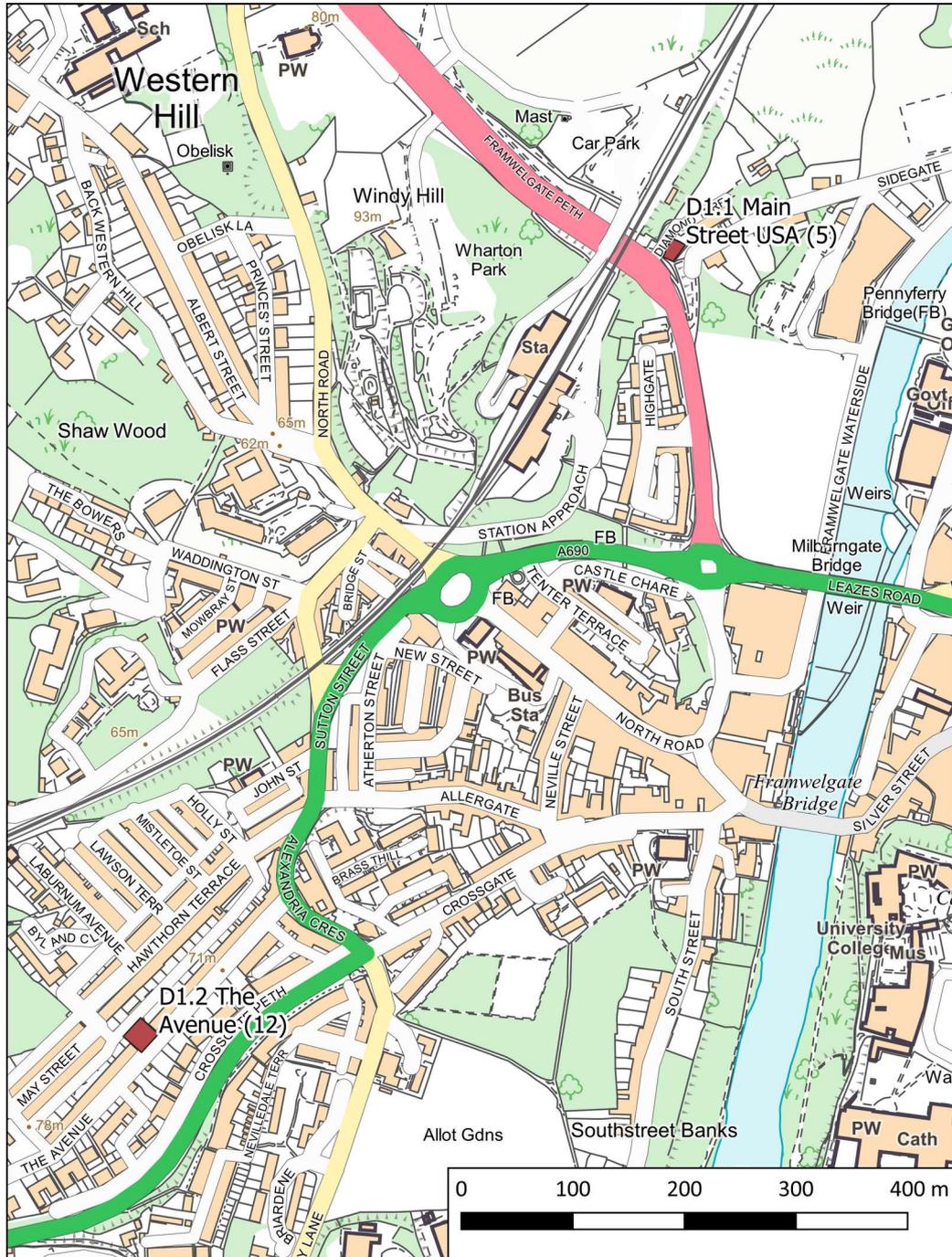
Policy D1: Land for Residential Development

Proposals for housing development on the following sites, as shown on Proposals Map 7, will be supported:

1. Main Street USA
2. The Avenue

The conversion of existing buildings for residential use will be supported.

Proposals Map 7: Housing Sites



An interactive version of this map is available at http://maps.durhamcity.org.uk/npf/Proposals_Map_7.php

4.192 Potential sites for residential development are listed in the SHLAA 2018 (Durham County Council, 2018d,e (See Appendix C, Table C8). The Neighbourhood Plan endorses these and in Policy D1 identifies two other sites. An Evidence Base note on the process through which the Neighbourhood Plan's housing sites were identified is available (City of Durham Parish Council, 2020, <http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Evidence-Base-Note-Housing-Site-Selections.pdf>). Sites that are now under development do not need to be identified.

4.193 The following notes provide additional information about the sites (shown on Proposals Map 7). The sites have been assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal process (AECOM, 2019) to ensure that the potential social, economic and environmental impacts including those on known heritage assets has been identified, and additionally to ensure that appropriate mitigation and/or enhancement measures will be applied in accordance with the sustainability Policy S1 and the three heritage Policies H1 to H3 of this Plan.

4.194 The two sites identified are located within the Durham City Conservation Area and have the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself, including its special qualities, distinctiveness and setting. Additionally, the location and visibility of Site D1.1 Main Street USA is likely to also be sensitive in relation to the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site. Accordingly, it is essential that the Conservation Area Appraisals and the World Heritage Site Management Plan are used in considering residential development proposals for these identified sites so as to provide an appropriate basis for the protection and enhancement of heritage assets. There are other possible sites and these should similarly be assessed against these policies and protections if housing development applications come forward. The number of housing units given below for each site is indicative and numbers can be greater or fewer depending on how proposals are designed to deal with topographical and landscape issues and requirements.

- D1.1: Main Street USA: (anticipated yield 5): existing space could provide for 5 terraced houses, provided that trees and surrounding woodland are protected and that the right of way that residents and occupants of the Main Street USA offices have from Framwellgate Peth over the land now owned by a developer to get to their properties is retained. The site's location and visibility make it very sensitive in relation to the paramount consideration of safeguarding the setting of the World Heritage Site when evaluating specific development proposals.
- D1.2: 24 a, b and c The Avenue: (anticipated yield 12): 12 apartments have been approved but not commenced.

4.195 To maximise the contribution that any site makes towards appropriate residential developments, high densities will be encouraged in areas that are characterised by existing higher densities, provided that adequate green and open space provision is included. Contributions from conversions of existing buildings into residential uses will

also be supported in principle, including residential use of upper floors of retail and commercial premises.

4.196 In addition to housing sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, additional houses would become available from small windfall sites. Indeed, any new sites that come forward that have the potential for mixed residential development will be supported in principle subject as always to relevant NPPF, County Durham Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan policies. Although the possibility of redevelopment on the site of Durham Prison in New Elvet has been raised, the Home Office does not envisage closing the Prison in the lifetime of the Plan.

Student Accommodation

4.197 The County Durham Plan contains strategic policies for the development of the University (Policy 16.1), for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSAs) (Policy 16.2) and for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (Policy 16.3).

4.198 Student accommodation in Durham City is one of the most frequently mentioned issues in the Neighbourhood Plan's consultations (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015), and the subject of much debate over many years. Working in partnership with Durham University and residents' groups, the County Council adopted an Interim Policy (Durham County Council, 2016d) to deal with applications to develop houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and purpose built student accommodation (PBSAs) and this has proved to be reasonably effective. The policies in the County Durham Plan are significant improvements in the light of experience. This is most welcome.



Policy D2: Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

Housing for older people

In order to help meet the needs of the ageing population in Our Neighbourhood, 10% of private and intermediate housing on sites where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, should be of types and design appropriate for older people. Accommodation that would meet this requirement includes:

- level access flats;
- level access bungalows;
- sheltered housing;
- extra-care schemes;
- housing products that meet the specific needs of a multi-generational family.

Housing schemes that are solely for older people are encouraged and will be supported.

New provision for older people should either be located close to shops, healthcare services and other essentials, or provide access to such facilities by being near a public transport route, as well as being served by appropriately designed and sited pavements and footpaths.

Housing for older people and for people of all ages with disabilities

Extensions to houses and flats, and other building works within the curtilage of a residential property, which are needed to enable a resident to continue to live there rather than go into a nursing or residential care home will be permitted providing they are in keeping with the building and its surroundings.

4.199 Provision of nursing homes and residential care homes is covered in community Policy C4.

4.200 Our Neighbourhood provides a topographical challenge in the provision of housing sites suitable for older people. Section 106 money could be used to provide suitable public transport facilities, pavements and footpaths across Our Neighbourhood that are designed for older people and for people of all ages with disabilities.

Justification

4.201 The NPPF (para.61) states that: "the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students". The NPPF Annex 2 defines the housing needs of older people as:

People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

4.202 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance notes that: "The need to provide housing for older people is critical. People are living longer lives and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing." (PPG 'Housing for older people and disabled people' para. 001).

4.203 The figures in Appendix C (para. C24, C25) show that 33% of the long-term (i.e. non-student) population are retired, and 11% are aged 75 or over. The increase in the numbers and proportion of the population that are in the older age groups is a challenge across many areas of national policy, not just housing. Locally, it has been highlighted in the Plan's consultations as a key issue for the Neighbourhood Plan (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015). Accordingly, The Neighbourhood Plan sets out this policy to implement the expectations of the NPPF and of Parliamentary Committees and pressure groups.

4.204 Durham County Council's (2016c) strategic housing market assessment surveyed housing needs for older people:

... modern properties aimed at the elderly, dementia schemes, extra care schemes, ground floor apartments and 2 bed bungalows were highlighted as key areas. In terms of stock shortages amongst older people stakeholders recognised; energy efficient homes for life, extra care facilities, sheltered accommodation and affordable rent schemes as priorities. (para. 6.16)

4.205 As well as providing for older people in new builds through the policy set out above, much of the existing housing stock in Our Neighbourhood could be suitable for older people either as it is or by adaptations and conversions.

4.206 The 2011 Census gives a figure of 3% of the population of Durham City who are sick or with disabilities. As with older people, the aim of this policy is to enable independent living in a person's own home. One way is through adoption and use of the relevant building regulation standards. These optional building regulations include a standard for accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(2) Category 2: UK Government, 2016). This comprises the optional requirement of:

- (1) Reasonable provision must be made for people to—*
 - (a) gain access to; and*
 - (b) use, the dwelling and its facilities.*
- (2) The provision made must be sufficient to—*
 - (a) meet the needs of occupants with differing needs, including some older or disabled people; and*

(b) to allow adaptation of the dwelling to meet the changing needs of occupants over time.

4.207 The Neighbourhood Plan would strongly encourage developers to implement this optional building regulation in building new houses or renovating existing houses. This is optional unless the requirement is implemented through the Local Plan. The developing County Durham Local Plan contains the requirement that housing for older people must be built to Building Regulations Requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings). It is good practice for new buildings to be checked by a qualified access consultant for accessibility.

4.208 Recognising both that people often wish to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, and that in any case places may not be available in care homes, this policy facilitates extensions to allow people to continue living independently for as long as possible. Additionally, adaptations of existing buildings, which would not be covered by a Neighbourhood Plan, would be very suitable for this goal.

Policy D3: Affordable Housing

Any scheme for new residential development, or for conversions of existing sites, on sites where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more, will be required to include 25% as affordable housing.

Affordable housing should be located on the proposed site. Where it can be justified by the developer, or it is considered by the local planning authority that it is the most appropriate course of action, off-site contributions in lieu of on-site provision will be accepted for affordable housing located within or adjacent to Our Neighbourhood.

4.209 If the percentage of affordable units is not a whole number then round to the nearest whole number as follows: if the number is followed by .5, .6, .7, .8, or .9, round the number up; if the number is followed by .0, .1, .2, .3, or .4, round the number down.

4.210 A House of Commons Briefing Paper (Wilson and Barton, 2018, p.5) looked at affordable housing and noted that "There is no all-encompassing statutory definition of affordable housing in England". The NPPF defines affordable housing in Annex 2 covering social housing for rent and intermediate housing for sale or rent. There are proposed amendments to NPPF guidance on this topic with the overall premise that affordable is at least 20% below market rent or market value. The emerging County Durham Local Plan proposes, on the basis of evidence, that in Durham City the percentage should be 25% affordable provision.

4.211 Affordable housing in Our Neighbourhood is affected by a premium on the value of housing caused by three main factors: (i) the strength of the buy to rent market because of

the large number of students as a percentage of the population; 53% in the 2011 census, now over 60% (see para. C.3); (ii) the high level of provision of new executive housing, and (iii) the large number of residential properties that are listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets. This means that 80% of market value is way beyond most people's income levels. To achieve more realistically affordable houses to revitalise Our Neighbourhood requires more creative mechanisms than dependence on the market. For example: Durham County Council owns property in Our Neighbourhood that could be developed for realistically-affordable housing; Durham University could support its expansion by providing realistically-affordable housing for young academics starting out in the profession.

4.212 Affordable accommodation is also an issue for students. Durham Students' Union (2018a,b) have been carrying out a campaign to address the cost of Durham University college accommodation. Though this does not include private PBSAs, many of these charge higher levels than the colleges. Durham University provides bursaries to assist qualifying students with their accommodation costs, but PBSAs do not provide any 'affordable' (at 80% of market rent) accommodation.

Justification

4.213 The Plan priority consultation (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015) shows that family housing and affordable housing, for renting and for buying, are a particular need in Durham City and that appropriate provision is needed here for people starting out in the housing market, for families



with children and for young professionals. The NPPF (para. 61) expects that such categories of need are recognised. Changes in law nationally tilt the provision from renting to owning and do not protect the affordable price in perpetuity. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to keep both renting and buying as options. Provision can be made by new build or by conversions of former Houses in Multiple Occupation.

Policy D4: Building Housing to the Highest Standards

All new housing, and extensions and other alterations to existing housing, should be of high quality design relating to:

- a) the character and appearance of the local area; and
- b) aesthetic qualities; and
- c) external and internal form and layout; and
- d) functionality; and
- e) adaptability; and
- f) resilience; and
- g) the improvement of energy efficiency and the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

New residential development should meet the Building for Life 12 standards provided for in County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document (2019).

4.214 This policy should be used in conjunction with Policy S1, Policies H1 to H3, Policy G1, and Policies T1 to T3.

Justification

4.215 The NPPF (para. 124) sees good design as a key aspect of sustainable development, and states that:

Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. (NPPF para. 125).

4.216 It was commented on in the results of the priority survey of local opinion that the City has been blighted by poor building design from the 1960s and 1970s (though some of this is being addressed by new developments in progress to replace such buildings). There are also some examples of modern architecture that complement the historic character of the City such as the Calman Learning Centre on South Road and the café/meeting room in Wharton Park. Newer building developments in the outer areas of the City have tended to be of uninspiring, standard-product semi-detached and detached houses. But options for better design of new housing exist.

4.217 Design of housing is a huge topic. Much of this is covered by building regulations (UK Government. Planning portal) and is outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. The view taken in this Neighbourhood Plan is that there are a few key principles of importance to the local community. These comprise:

- sufficient space, with housing designed to achieve at a minimum the government's nationally described space standard (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Durham County Council has adopted this optional standard in the emerging Durham County Local Plan.
- accessibility. The developing Durham County Council's Local Plan contains the requirement that housing for older people must be built to Building Regulations Requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings). The Neighbourhood Plan would like to see, as a general aim, all housing to be built to this standard.
- energy efficiency. (See also Policy S1).
- aesthetics, to achieve housing that is sympathetic to their area, but not a pastiche. Theme 2a policies address this aspect.

4.218 The RIBA (2009) discussion paper noted that “the design quality of many developments built before the credit crunch was inadequate, with only 18% of schemes rated as ‘good’ or ‘very good’” and that “many buyers of new homes have concerns over a lack of space and an inconvenient layout.” (p.1) It concluded that “there is a huge potential for the market for new homes to be expanded by placing more emphasis on design quality and providing a more diverse product.” (p.1) Concerns about lack of space were reiterated in RIBA (2011): consumers felt that new houses failed to provide adequate inner and outer space. Over 90% of these houses did not meet minimum size standards set by the ‘Nationally Described Space Standard’ (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015) and were smaller than new houses in Western Europe. Ipsos MORI and RIBA (2012) surveyed the housing needs and expectations of consumers and the key findings were (p.4-5):

- Large windows for natural light, large rooms and high ceilings;
- Large main living area for eating and socialising;
- Layouts which take into account technology used within the home;
- Space for private time away from other members of the household;
- Private space outside, particularly for families, or access to green public space in urban locations;
- Long-term and short-term storage for functional items, and for personal possessions;
- Dedicated space for domestic utility tasks, such as, washing, drying and ironing clothes, as well as for storing vacuum cleaners, rubbish bins and recycling;
- Options for different layouts, with flexibility.

4.219 Access to high speed Internet and mobile access in the home for both leisure and home working is crucial. The provision of this technology infrastructure needs to keep pace with new technological developments, e.g. the need for electric car charging points.

4.220 'Locality' has produced guidance on design in neighbourhood planning (Design Council and Cabe, 2016). It states (p.5) that good design means "solutions that put people first by addressing the way the building or space functions – thinking about what it is used for and how it is used; ensuring it is designed to last and valued by those who use it." It also states that good design should be functional, support a mix of uses and tenures, be

adaptable and resilient and have a distinctive character. It also supports use of the Building For Life criteria.

4.221 The Building for Life criteria (Birkbeck and Kruczkowski, 2015) are a set of quality tests agreed nationally by The Design Council, the Housebuilders' Federation and Design for Homes to ensure that the design of new homes and the spaces that surrounds them are as attractive, functional and sustainable as possible. The scheme uses 12 questions that are scored using a traffic light system. The Design Council offers an accreditation scheme that developers can apply for related to proposals that have received planning approval.

4.222 The 12 Building for Life questions are:

- Integrating into the neighbourhood (covering Connections, Facilities and services, Public transport, Meeting local housing requirements)
- Creating a place (covering Character, Working with the site and its context, Creating well defined streets and spaces, Easy to find your way around)
- Street & home (covering Streets for all, Car parking, Public and private spaces, External storage and amenity space)

4.223 Durham County Council have adopted an in-house review process to assess schemes against the Building for Life Standards. Their related Supplementary Planning Document formalises the review process and establishes the guidelines and standards for its operation (Durham County Council, 2019a). The aim is to use this process to obtain improvements in the design of proposals submitted by developers. The Building for Life Standards are a requirement in the emerging County Durham Local Plan. Durham County Council's Building for Life review process covers all major residential-led schemes of 50+ units (or 1.5 hectares+), as well as any smaller schemes in particularly sensitive locations at the discretion of Durham County Council. It would seem appropriate that all developments within Our Neighbourhood should be reviewed, because of the sensitivity of the World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation Area.

4.224 Many policies in this Neighbourhood Plan would contribute to the achievement of green traffic light scores to these Building for Life questions, e.g. Policies S1, H2, H3, G1, T1, T2, and T3.