

City of Durham Parish Council

Office 3 D4.01d Clayport Library
8 Millennium Place
Durham
DH1 1WA
Telephone 07704 525630
Email: parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

12 October 2020

Access details for Zoom Planning Committee meeting:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83247346903>

Meeting ID: 832 4734 6903

Dear Planning Committee Member,

In accordance with both the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of local authority and Police and Crime Panel meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, I hereby give you notice that a meeting of the **Planning Committee** will be held in **via Zoom** on **Friday 16 October 2020 at 2pm** to transact the following business:

- 1. Welcome and apologies**
- 2. To receive any declarations of interest from members.**
- 3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 2 October 2020.**
- 4. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.** Please email the Parish Clerk parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk to register to speak.
- 5. Matters arising:**

To approve responses on the following planning applications:

DM/20/02491/FPA | Change of use of part of ground floor and first and second floors to 9 studio apartments (use class C3) and one small house in multiple occupation (HMO) (use class C4). | 18 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RB

DM/20/02665/LB | Listed building consent for individual internally illuminated built-up letters on existing fascia, non-illuminated Heritage Projecting Sign and printed, frosted M-Pattern window vinyl and printed ATM vinyl surround. | 76 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP

DM/20/02702/FPA | Construct 2 no new build 1 bed apartments on the upper terrace of the site at Grove House. | Grove House Grove House Drive Gilesgate Durham DH1 1UP

6. To consider these planning applications (the date in brackets is the deadline to call to committee):

a. To note:

DM/20/02728/LB | Repair various parts of the external stonework and windows to the west and south elevations | Durham Cathedral The College Durham DH1 3EH (29 October)

DM/20/02742/TPO | Reduce height by approximately 2m to 1no. Maple | 15 Faraday Court Nevilles Cross Durham DH1 4FG (28 October)

DM/20/02807/TPO | Prune 1No Ash, Beech and Oak Trees in line with Garden Boundaries | Land To The Rear Of 22/23 Westhouse Avenue Nevilles Cross Durham DH1 4FH (28 October)

b. To consider making representations

DM/20/02667/FPA | Installation of new shop front windows behind existing roller shutter and new single entrance door incorporating glazed panel | Kiosk Adjacent To 7 North Road Durham DH1 4SH

DM/20/02669/VOC | Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) of planning permission DM/17/04064/FPA to replace 1no window with a door within side elevation and replace single storey rear extension for a two-storey rear extension | 10 Red Hills Terrace Redhills Lane Crossgate Moor Durham DH1 4AX (5 November)

DM/20/02732/FPA and **DM/20/02733/LB** | Conversion into a 6-bedroom HMO with the ground floor level remaining as a retail unit. | 72 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP (5 November)

DM/20/02826/FPA | Partial change of use from retail to restaurant and new shopfront | 21 The Riverwalk Millburngate Durham DH1 4SL (5 November)

DM/20/02845/FPA | Single-Storey Front, Two-Storey Side and Rear plus Single-Storey Rear Extensions | 22 Baliol Square Durham DH1 3QH (28 October)

7. Neighbourhood Plan

Progress report on preparing the version for referendum

8. County Durham Plan:

a. To note the decision of the Council Cabinet meeting of 14 October 2020 regarding the adoption of the County Durham Plan.

b. To approve the following supplementary representations:

DM/19/02199/FPA & DM/19/02200/LB: 21 Market Place Durham DH1 3NJ, and to note the outcome of the Area Planning Committee on 13 October.

DM/19/02553/FPA: Demolition of former baths & construction of new Business School at Former Swimming Baths

DM/20/01846/FPA: Hybrid planning application for Business Park, Land At Aykley Heads Durham DH1 5UQ.

DM/20/01961/FPA: William Robson House Claypath Durham DH1 1SA.

DM/20/02258/FPA and **DM/20/02259/LB:** 34 Old Elvet Durham DH1 3HN.

DM/20/02277/FPA: The Crossgate Centre Alexandria Crescent Durham DH1 4HF

DM/20/02278/FPA: 8 High Wood View Durham DH1 3DT.

DM/20/02394/FPA: 19 Mistletoe Street Durham DH1 4EP.

9. Draft response to the Planning for the Future White Paper

10. Dates of future meetings

Friday 30 October 2020 - 14.00 to 16.00 hrs – via Zoom.

Friday 13 November 2020 - 14.00 to 16.00 hrs – via Zoom.

And, pursuant to the provisions of the above-named Act, I Hereby Summon You to attend the said meeting.

Adam Shanley

Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of Planning Committee meeting held via Zoom at 14:00 pm on Friday 18th September 2020.

Present: Cllr R Cornwell (in the Chair), Cllr J Ashby, Cllr V Ashfield, Cllr J Elmer and Cllr G Holland

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Cllr E Ashby, Mr Peter Smith, Mr Terry Greenwell, Mr Nick Williams and Mr Michael Hurlow (members of the public).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr L Brown

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members.

Cllrs J Ashby and G Holland declared an interest in application DM/20/02491/FPA and took no part in the discussions on this application.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 18 September 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. To receive any public participation comments on the following agenda items.

Cllr E Ashby advised that she was attending the meeting to hear discussions on application DM/20/02702/FPA.

Mr Michael Hurlow advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on all matters under Item 6 of the Agenda.

Mr Peter Smith, Mr Terry Greenwell and Mr Nick Williams advised that they were attending the meeting to discuss application DM/20/02491/FPA with the Committee.

The Chair invited Mr Peter Smith, Mr Terry Greenwell and Mr Nick Williams to make their representations on this application.

Mr Peter Smith advised that he and his colleagues were looking for the Parish Council's support with application DM/20/02491/FPA. Peter advised that the class N exemption percentage within a 100-metre radius of the site is 85.39%. That being the case, Peter advised that it is his hope that the rent obtained through turning the part of the units into student HMOs would make the downstairs retail unit more attractive to a local retailer and support the unit being filled once more with a business following on from Topman's and Topshop's departure from Durham City. Peter advised that this model could make more businesses in the City more viable for the future and in turn help to safeguard the City's retail offer.

Mr Terry Greenwell advised that very little was being changed to the outside of the building which may otherwise affect the architecture of the building.

Terry advised that the World Heritage Site Co-ordinator had raised a small issue with regards to light spillage from the proposals which he and his team had sought to address.

Cllr V Ashfield asked about the issue of bin collections for the dwellings should the plans be approved. Peter advised that bins would be collected once/twice per week to avoid issues of bins overflowing which is a big issue for the City.

Cllr E Ashby asked if any assurances could be provided on which business occupies the downstairs space. Cllr E Ashby expressed concern that this may be let to a night time bar as opposed to a daytime shop.

Cllr G Holland advised that he felt that the City was suffering due to the level of HMOs which now existed in the Parish area but that this may well be a new model to help safeguard the city's retail offer. Cllr G Holland advised that the City needed to be won back one unit at a time.

Mr Peter Smith advised that he hoped that this application could be determined and approved under delegated authority by DCC as this going to Committee may result in the scheme no longer being viable as it would miss the timing where students are viewing properties and agreeing accommodation contracts.

The Chair thanked Mr Peter Smith, Mr Terry Greenwell and Mr Nick Williams for their representations and advised that the Committee would decide how it wishes to proceed on this application under Item 6 of the Agenda.

5. Matters arising:

a. To approve responses on the following planning applications:

DM/20/02278/FPA | Proposal for a single storey rear extension, rear double dormer and various alterations to a recently established HMO use class C4. | 8 High Wood View Durham DH1 3DT. The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

DM/20/02549/FPA | Demolition of 9 redundant garages | Bakehouse Lane Durham City Durham DH1 1JS. The Clerk reminded Members that the Committee had **agreed** to note this application but that an application to have the garages registered as assets of community value had now been submitted to the County Council and the Parish Council awaits a response to this.

DM/20/02524/FPA | Construction of 1.8m wide access path. | Low Burnhall Woodland Darlington Road Durham DH1 3ST. The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

DM/20/02585/AD | Individual internally illuminated built-up letters on existing fascia, non-illuminated Heritage Projecting Sign and printed, frosted M-Pattern window vinyl and printed ATM vinyl surround | 76 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP. The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

b. To consider the list of unspent S106 moneys

The Chair thanked the Clerk for obtaining this list of unspent S106 monies from DCC. The Chair advised that he understood there to be more money available towards affordable housing in the parish. The Clerk advised that he had written

to the Planning Development Manager at DCC on this issue to ask what monies were available for affordable housing in the parish, whether DCC is working with local social housing providers and to see if this is something which the Parish Council may be able to support as a joint venture.

The Clerk advised that the Officer had responded to say that DCC does not normally circulate, as part of the S106 lists, monies that relate to core infrastructure works (such as transport, educational or affordable housing monies and the like) as these are for specific purposes, as opposed to more general purpose s106 funds where local councils can often work with local groups to access the funds.

The Committee asked the Clerk to continue to chase this issue.

Cllr E Ashby also asked whether some of the funding for public art may be used for improvements to the Neville's Cross battlefield statues. The Clerk advised that this was a great idea and it was **agreed** that this ought to be investigated by another Committee of the Parish Council.

6. To consider these planning applications (the date in brackets is the deadline to call to committee):

a. To note:

DM/20/02469/LB | Replace windows, doors and rooflights and redecorate the fascia and cornice | 201 Gilesgate Durham DH1 1QN (15 October). It was **agreed** to note this application.

DM/20/02571/LB | Replace electricity cable including 3no 50mm holes within the internal entrance corridor and floor of bedroom 1, holes will be fire stopped and boxed in | 13 South Bailey Durham DH1 3EE (22 October). It was **agreed** to note this application.

b. To consider making representations

DM/20/02491/FPA | Change of use of part of ground floor and first and second floors to 9 studio apartments (use class C3) and one small house in multiple occupation (HMO) (use class C4). | 18 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RB (22 October). It was **agreed** to support this application. The Clerk **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

DM/20/02665/LB | Listed building consent for individual internally illuminated built-up letters on existing fascia, non-illuminated Heritage Projecting Sign and printed, frosted M-Pattern window vinyl and printed ATM vinyl surround. | 76 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP (22 October). It was **agreed** to object to this application. Cllr J Ashby **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

DM/20/02667/FPA | Installation of new shop front windows behind existing roller shutter and new single entrance door incorporating glazed panel | Kiosk Adjacent To 7 North Road Durham DH1 4SH (15 October). The Chair advised that important documents were missing from the application and therefore this could not be considered by Committee. It was **agreed** that the Clerk should

write to the case officer and request these documents and also request that the consultation deadline be put back accordingly.

DM/20/02702/FPA | Construct 2 no new build 1 bed apartments on the upper terrace of the site at Grove House. | Grove House Grove House Drive Gilesgate Durham DH1 1UP (22 October). Members expressed some concern about the potential ecological impact of this application, particularly in relation to Hedgehogs which are a protected species. Cllr J Ashby **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

The Chair advised Members that work is still ongoing on amending the Neighbourhood Plan as per the Examiner's recommendations. The Clerk advised Members that there would be a report going to Full Council on the progress made to date on progressing the Neighbourhood Plan. It was **agreed** that the Parish Council should look to get copies of the Plan printed once all amendments were approved by Durham County Council.

8. County Durham Plan:

Members agreed the schedule of pending applications where a further representation might be made in view of the County Durham Plan now carrying weight. It was agreed that the all of the original authors of each planning response should draft a follow up response to the respective application(s).

Members **approved** the supplementary representation made on application DM/14/03327/FPA.

Members considered whether the new Policy 16.3 merits the extension of the Article 4 Direction to the whole Parish. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council had already contracted the services of a planning consultant to look into this issue and an agreed response had been drafted for as and when the consultation on the extension of the Article 4 Direction gets underway. Members endorsed this response.

9. Government consultation on proposed changes to the planning system

The Chair reminded Members that the Government had consulted on proposed changes to the planning system and that the deadline for responding to the consultation was the 1st October. The Clerk confirmed that the response to the consultation approved in writing had now been submitted. The Chair thanked Cllr J Ashby for his work drafting the response to this consultation.

10. Dates of future meetings

Friday 16 October 2020 - 14.00 to 16.00 hrs – via Zoom.

Friday 30 October 2020 - 14.00 to 16.00 hrs – via Zoom.

Due to the confidential nature of the following items, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972 Act and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to

Meetings) Act 1960. At this point in time the press and the public were asked to leave the room.

11. Common land at the Sands

The Clerk reminded Members that a letter, together with a legal undertaking requesting that Kier vacate the former coach park and remove the fencing around the common land, had been submitted to the County Council by the Parish Council/ Freeman's Barrister. Members endorsed this letter and noted the response received from the Council's Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

And, pursuant to the provisions of the above-named Act, I Hereby Summon You to attend the said meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members of the Committee and members of the public for their input and attendance and closed the meeting.

Signed,

Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee

ITEM 9: DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WHITE PAPER

Response from the City of Durham Parish Council

Principal response

The City of Durham Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan and has participated fully in the preparation and Examination of the County Durham Local Plan. It vigorously uses its right formally to comment to the local planning authority - Durham County Council - on planning applications, and several of its Councillors are experienced in planning matters over decades. It recognises the frustrations felt by applicants and by communities over some aspects of the planning system, and supports measures that bring the system up to date with modern challenges, with new ways of working, and with striking the right balance between speed and democracy.

On that basis, our principal response to the White Paper is to welcome several aspects such as advocating high standards of design but to reject the fundamental premise behind the White Paper that the UK planning system is broken. Our experience is that, whilst imperfect, it is much to be preferred over alternatives such as zoning. This is particularly the case in the removal of public and local authority input on development proposals in the suggested 'growth areas'.

Responses to the White Paper from a very wide range of other bodies provide the key information to demonstrate that it is not the planning system that is the obstacle to achieving the Government's target of at least 300,000 new dwellings per year:

- There are one million un-built new dwellings with planning permission
- 90% of planning applications are approved each year
- Developers store planning permissions (a) as quotable assets and (b) to prevent supply outstripping demand and causing prices to fall
- The last time 300,000 dwellings were built in a year was 1969-1970; 135,000 of these were built by local authorities for rent.

It is finance, not planning, that is the blockage, notably:

- insufficient funding for local authorities to build at least 100,000 new social dwellings per year
- ten years of austerity reducing household incomes and ability to moving up the housing ladder
- insufficient funding for first-time buyers, and
- excessive profit levels for developers.

Durham city is small - the Parish Council area has a total population of about 28,000 (of whom about 18,000 are Durham University students). Many hundreds of new dwellings have been approved within and on the edge of the city in the past decade and have been built, virtually all in the so-called 'executive housing' sector. Releasing more land would not create the housing that local people need.

The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan has been cleared, with amendments following independent Examination, to proceed to referendum. The Parish Council is alarmed to read Locality's comments on the White Paper that "*the government is also considering changing the role of neighbourhood plans to focus on a smaller range of planning issues, which may mean the motivation for residents to pursue such plans is reduced.*" We cannot understand why all that dedicated volunteer effort, epitomising the core

purposes of the Localism Act 2011, is to be over-ridden by crude zonal designations and standardised national policies.

Our conclusion is that, whilst several aspects of the White Paper are welcome (see our answers to the questions), and the subordinate options mentioned may emerge as the least worst outcome, its headline proposals sidestep the above realities and tilt at an assertion about planning failure that has little more basis than pub talk.

Answers to the White Paper's questions

1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

Valued, civilised, well-being.

2(a). Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? **[Yes** / No]

2(b). If no, why not?

[Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future?

[Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]

Direct electronic notification as a statutory consultee

4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [**Building homes for young people** / building homes for the homeless / **Protection of green spaces** / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / **Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas** / Other – please specify]

5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? [Yes / **No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

We do not agree with the main option of limiting local plans to no longer containing policies, instead just consisting of a core set of standards and requirements for development, under a national, universal, blanket set of policies. The very notion that planning policies would be the same throughout the country runs counter to the exhortation for greater public engagement at the plan-making stage. The third option offered, of retaining policies in local plans except those that would duplicate NPPF policies, is far preferable.

Nor do we agree with abolishing the Duty to Co-operate. This Duty has only recently been strengthened to ensure that housing need that cannot be met within the boundaries of one local authority should be met in the adjacent authority area. The White Paper proposes a new algorithm for calculating a new nationally determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans. When a local authority finds it physically impossible to meet that imposed figure of housing need there will have to be spillover, or the intention of a binding housing requirement figure will be thwarted.

6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?

[Yes / **No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

We view question 6 as the same as question 5, and our response is the same as given above.

7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of "sustainable development", which would include consideration of environmental impact?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

We experienced a 12 month delay in progressing our Neighbourhood Plan when a SEA requirement was placed on us 'out-of-the-blue'. Locality provided the essential technical expertise but it felt very much like a box-ticking exercise. It did have the virtue of giving an independent evaluation of a controversial choice regarding Local Green Spaces, but we would have greatly preferred to not have been required to have an SEA.

7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

The formation of combined authorities, or of a sub-regional planning team, are the next steps.

8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

The Government is frustrated that its national target of 300,000 new dwellings per year has not been achieved, and that up-to-date policy-free national household projections have not come up with the 'right' answer. The DHCLG's prevailing solution is to pick an older, higher household projection. The White Paper, and its companion consultation document, proposes an ingenious formula. Its starting point is the remarkably crude annual requirement that the annual build rate should be 0.5% of current housing stock. There is absolutely no basis for 0.5% as opposed to any other percentage. It has been chosen simply because it produces the national quantum of at least 300,000 new dwellings per year. Having said this, we support the principle of a standard method for establishing housing requirements and the ideas in the White Paper for moderating the numbers locally in the light of constraints such as Green Belt.

8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban area are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

The heart of the housing crisis is not so much an overall numerical target as a lack of the right kind of new housing, and affordable and social housing are the priority kinds. Respecting the extent of existing urban areas and not sprawling into the countryside are longstanding principles which rightly should be part of assessing the quantity of development to be accommodated.

9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (*Growth* areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?
[Yes / **No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

This is the core rationale for the zoning proposals. Automatic outline permission removes much of the negotiating leverage of the local planning authority and thereby the democratic voice of the residents and businesses of the area. Plan-making councils already include land use allocations in their local plans, including substantial areas for residential and employment developments and so the current system already provides the certainty sought by the White Paper's proposals for growth zones.

9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for *Renewal* and *Protected* areas?
[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

The proposals retain the role of planning permissions and explicitly recognise the importance of neighbour and interested party consultations.

9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?
[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Not an issue for our Parish Council but we see the logic of this proposal.

10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?
[Yes / **No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

This is a mixed-bag of good ideas, retrograde ideas and impractical ideas. Essentially, the many aspects of digitisation and electronic formats are good. The ideas about less data and standardised planning statements are retrograde in our opinion as society becomes more sophisticated and thoughtful about the wider implications of developments. The ideas about decisions always being made within the statutory time limits are impractical unless staffing levels are restored from the greatly depleted present levels across the country.

11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?
[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

These proposals that plans should be fully digitised and web-based following agreed web standards are welcome (but obviously not the repeated proposals for reductions in data, evidence and content).

12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30 month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?
[Yes / **No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

We fully support, from direct experience, the desire for shorter plan-making timescales. However, the White Paper says "Under the current system, it regularly takes over a decade for development sites to go through the Local

Plan process and receive outline permission. Under our proposals, this would be shortened to 30 months." This is demonstrably not feasible; the White Paper sets out 5 stages of plan preparation, allowing a mere 12 months for the local plan to be drawn up but a full 9 months for a Planning Inspector to consider and report. This disparity between the time allowed for the Council and the time allowed for the Inspector is plainly compressing the Council's time unrealistically. We would suggest at least 18 months for the Council to draw up the plan, and will not be surprised if principal authorities argue for longer than that.

13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

The Localism Act 2011 was a fundamental strengthening of community engagement and rights, taken forward with extraordinary dedication and faith through neighbourhood planning fora and Parish and Town Councils. Ministerial Statements have emphasised and reinforced the role of neighbourhood plans for local people and businesses to shape their area. It is most welcome that the White Paper envisages the continuation of neighbourhood plans, though we remain wary about the hints of limiting their scope.

13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

The White Paper's suggestions are welcome and endorsed.

14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

We are very supportive of breaking large development allocations into smaller elements to enable a variety of schemes and builders, especially small local building firms, to advance construction and build-out.

15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area?

[Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/ or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / **Other** – please specify]

Some has been of high quality and has received well-deserved awards from the local conservation body the City of Durham Trust. This includes bold, modernist work by world-class architects on behalf of Durham University. But most has been standardised anywhere design, not offensive but neither beautiful nor fitting to a World Heritage Site city. Finally, some has been illiterate and ugly, and approved on the unstated premise of stop fussing or we won't come to the North East.

16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for

sustainability in your area?

[**Less reliance on cars** / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]

A huge question; given Durham city's mediaeval core street pattern our priority would be less reliance on cars. That is a matter that our Neighbourhood Plan was excluded from addressing so we have instead chosen to set out sustainability policies which the Independent Examiner has approved with amendments. Concurrently, the County Durham Plan Examination Inspector has rightly struck out its proposals for increased provision for car-based travel here.

17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

This by far the most enlightened and positive proposal in the White Paper. The Parish Council had already formally resolved to have a design guide produced as a follow-on from the Neighbourhood Plan, and had welcomed the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Virtually every sentence of that Report should be celebrated for laying out principles for creating a stimulating built and green environment, essential for well-being and hope for the future. Proposal 11 is fully supported.

18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Our experiences of local government confirm that having top-level champion for a topic ensures attention and delivery.

19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?

[**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

The text supporting Proposal 13 admirably makes the right statement.

20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?

[**Yes / No** / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Yes and No. Yes to the first of three proposals, that is updating the National Planning Policy Framework to make clear that schemes which comply with local design guides and codes have a positive advantage and greater certainty about their prospects of swift approval. Yes to much of the second proposal, that is requiring that a masterplan and site-specific code are agreed; but we repeat that we do not favour a system of permissions in principles through designated growth zones in plans. No to the third proposal, that is widening the nature of permitted development so as to allow the pre-approval of popular and replicable designs; we recognise that existing classes of permitted development

would be all the better if good design is made a requirement, but we would not support widening the classes of permitted development so as to include development that should be carefully considered through the planning application system but is excused this scrutiny if the design is good.

21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it?

[**More affordable housing** / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / **Green space** / Don't know / **Other – please specify - housing for the elderly**]

22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally? [Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure.]

Please provide supporting statement.]

22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?

[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

- 24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?
[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
- 25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]
26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?