

City of Durham Parish Council

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26 October 2020

Access details for Zoom Planning Committee meeting:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82971465487>

Meeting ID: 829 7146 5487

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 30 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 16 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 application:
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)
- 6. County Durham Plan:** to note that the County Durham Plan was adopted by Durham County Council on 21st October 2020. It replaces the City of Durham Local Plan and sets out the planning policies alongside the NPPF and the post examination Neighbourhood Plan which the County Council will use henceforth to determine planning applications in County Durham.

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

a. To note:

DM/20/02166/LB | Installation of double-sided OFF indicator and bracket to serve Platform 2 | Railway Station Station Approach Durham DH1 4RB (12 November)

DM/20/02935/TPO | Fell 1no. Willow (T1) | Land To The South Of 55-72 Kirkwood Drive Nevilles Cross DH1 4FF (5 November)

DM/20/02951/FPA | Rear single storey extension | 84 Hastings Avenue Durham DH1 3QQ (4 November)

DM/20/02980/HPN | Prior notification for the erection of a single storey extension which would project beyond the rear wall of the original dwellinghouse 5-5.4m, for which the maximum height would be 3.6m. | 18 Maddison Court Aykley Heads Durham DH1 5ZT (6 November)

DM/20/02993/LB | Demolish and rebuild a corner of a wall at the south of the extension, taking the wall in by 200mm and to a height of 2m. | 68 Gilesgate Durham DH1 1HY (19 November)

DM/20/03014/FPA | New shopfront (resubmission of DM/20/00541/FPA) | 41 The Riverwalk Millburngate Durham DH1 4SL (12 November)

DM/20/03037/FPA | Replacement retail shopfront. | 23 High Street Durham DH1 3UJ (19 November)

DM/20/03056/FPA | Erection of single storey rear extension and garden shed to rear of existing garage | 9 Westhouse Avenue Nevilles Cross Durham DH1 4FH (13 November)

DM/20/03060/TPO | Fell 2no beech trees | Durham View Whitesmocks Durham DH1 4LL

b. To consider making representations

DM/19/02504/FPA | Demolition of existing dwelling, and construction of 2no. detached new dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping. (Revised plans and amended description) | Tower Cottage The Avenue Durham DH1 4EB

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/20/02954/FPA and **DM/20/02955/LB** | To retain existing external storage structure and clad in facing brickwork with new flat felt roof | Basement 41 - 42 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NU (12 November)

DM/20/02978/FPA | Single-storey extension to rear of existing building with external terrace at first floor level. | 59 South Street Durham DH1 4QP (19 November)

DM/20/03068/FPA | Installation of dormer window in roof space to rear of dwelling. | 17 Providence Row Durham DH1 1RS (19 November)

8. Neighbourhood Plan

Progress report on preparing the version for referendum

9. Proposal for joint working on masterplans/design briefs for Sniperley Park and Sherburn Road (see attached documents)

10. Planning for the Future White Paper consultation – response to consultation attached.

11. To consider follow up actions in relation to the A177 and introduction of “Busgate”

12. Dates of future meetings

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

Friday 27 November 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 will be 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 will be asked to leave the room.

13. The Sands virtual Public Inquiry: to consider the Parish Council response to the communication from PINS.

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 16th October 2020.

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

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and Mr John Lowe (member of the public).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr V Ashfield

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members

None received.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 2 October 2020.

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2020 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

Mr John Lowe advised that he was attending the meeting to hear discussions on items 6-9 on the Agenda.

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. The Committee **approved** 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. The Committee **approved** 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. The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

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. The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

The Clerk also reminded Members that an application to have the garages on Bakehouse Lane registered as an asset of community value had been submitted. However, following a site meeting with both the applicant and Cllrs J Ashby and R Ormerod, the Parish Council had now received assurances from the applicant Believe Housing that the garages which are currently in use will be retained and those which are derelict will be demolished. It was **agreed** that the application to have the garages registered as assets of community value should be withdrawn in view of these assurances.

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). It was **agreed** to note this application.

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

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). It was **agreed** to note this application.

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. It was **agreed** to note this application.

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). It was **agreed** to object to this application. Cllr L Brown **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

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). It was **agreed** to note these applications.

DM/20/02826/FPA | Partial change of use from retail to restaurant and new shopfront | 21 The Riverwalk Millburngate Durham DH1 4SL (5 November). It was noted that there were some unresolved queries on this application and, as a result, it was **agreed** to defer consideration of this application until these queries were answered.

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). It was **agreed** to note this application.

7. Neighbourhood Plan

The Planning Committee noted that work is still ongoing with making the necessary amendments to the Plan prior to this being resubmitted to Durham County Council. The Chair advised Members that a report would be going to the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd October 2020 to update the Parish Council on this and to also recommend having 50 copies of the Referendum version of the Plan printed. Cllr J Ashby asked that the Plan be printed with a white spine.

8. County Durham Plan:

The Planning Committee noted the decision of the Council Cabinet meeting of 14 October 2020 regarding the adoption of the County Durham Plan.

Members also approved the supplementary representations for the following applications:

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. It was also noted that this application is currently on hold given that the Environment Agency had objected to the proposals.

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.

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

Cllr J Ashby presented the current draft response to the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper consultation and advised Members that he would also include responses to sections 22-26 of the draft response taking on board Members' views. Cllr J Ashby also advised that he had attended the CDALC event where this consultation was discussed. Cllr J Ashby advised that there had been a very good presentation by Durham County Council at this meeting.

Cllr J Elmer advised that the White Paper proposed by the Government did not address the very real issue of land banking and the impact this had on restricting the number of houses which are built each year.

The Clerk asked that the Parish Council's response to this White Paper also includes the point about Parish and Town Council's still receiving a percentage of the funding from infrastructure levies.

It was **agreed** that Members should submit any final comments to Cllr J Ashby ahead of 23rd October so that the Parish Council's response may also be shared with CDALC ahead of the consultation closing date.

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.

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: PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT WITH DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE PREPARATION OF DESIGN BRIEFS FOR THE SHERBURN ROAD AND SNIPERLEY PARK HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

The County Durham Local Plan has now been formally adopted and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan has been passed for referendum. The principles and proposals in both plans now need to be taken forward. This note sets out a positive approach to be taken jointly by the Parish Council, the City of Durham Trust and the Friends of the Durham Green Belt (the 'Durham City Coalition') to seek major involvement in the drawing up of comprehensive masterplans/design briefs for both these sites.

The 'golden thread' of sustainability

Eleven years have been spent in establishing whether the Durham City Green Belt should and could be used to meet the quantitative and qualitative need for housing in the County. That matter has been settled by the acceptance of the Examination in Public Inspector's required Main Modifications and the formal adoption of the County Durham Local Plan on 21 October 2020.

At the same time, the Government has endorsed the report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.

The two 'sustainable urban extensions' at Sniperley Park and at Sherburn Road will now be the subject of development proposals to bring both into reality. This is therefore a critical moment to establish the true principles of sustainability, design and other key policies to ensure satisfactory development. A fundamental change of approach is needed.

The key to a successful and sustainable development is for a master plan or design brief that genuinely incorporates and applies the principles of sustainability and high quality design, together with phasing and possible timing of each sub-division of the site. Each of these two major sites is a precious resource to be carefully released for development over a number of years rather than an opportunity to roll out a standard housing layout. The masterplans must identify and deliver packages of land to meet the short, medium and long term demands as anticipated by the County Plan population and housing forecasts. This will ensure that development is phased in smaller and distinctive units avoiding a continuous building site appearance, and in a timely fashion where progressive improvements in housing style and function are possible

The new development plan context

The Inspector's report makes some telling points about the nature of the development on the two major housing sites in respect of connectivity at Sniperley and the containment of the site at Sherburn Road. In his required Main Modifications, now implemented, the County Plan EiP Inspector in his Final Report says for Sniperley Park:

"89. The site is well served by buses to and from the city centre and elsewhere. Part (j) of policy 5 requires an expansion to the adjoining park and ride site, along with the provision of attractive and safe links from the proposed housing. Part (i) requires the provision of suitable, convenient, safe and attractive cycleways and footpaths to the existing development to the east of the A167. These proposals, along with other policies in the Plan relating to sustainable transport, should ensure that future residents are not dependent on the use of private motor vehicles."

For Sherburn Road he said:

"96. Because of the site's location and relationship with heritage assets, development needs to be sensitively designed and landscaped. This can be ensured by the requirements of parts n, o, s and t of policy 5, although a number of modifications are required to the detailed wording and the reasoned justification to ensure that they are effective in preventing any harm to the setting of heritage assets and safeguarding the character and appearance of the area."

"97. The motorway and its wooded embankment would represent a readily recognisable physical feature to provide a permanent Green Belt boundary to the east. The southern boundary is currently weakly defined by a fence and recent planting at the point where the land starts to fall more steeply. Part t of policy 5 (subject to MM53) refers to a 20 metre wide landscaped area which should be effective in creating a recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary in this location. A hedge along the proposed Green Belt boundary and existing buildings at Bent House Farm would separate the development from the open countryside to the west, and part n of policy 5 should ensure that the character of the farm is protected."

"98. Part s of policy 5 would ensure that the proposal delivers compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land in the Old Durham Beck valley."

In addition, the relevant policies of the County Durham Local Plan such as those on affordable housing provision, meeting the needs of older people, and delivering sustainable transport will all be engaged. The notion of 'lifetime housing' should be 'in the mix'.

The suggested approach by the 'Durham City Coalition'

The above quotes set an indisputable set of requirements that a masterplan or design brief would need to embody. Here is the big opportunity for a very sustainable development, but experience is that various developers will 'dumb down' the product and produce standard car-dependent estates with only token provision for sustainable travel for work, shopping, education and recreation. To avoid this, a wide-ranging exercise is proposed in which the County Council, the Parish Council, the City of Durham Trust and the Friends of the Durham Green Belt are partners and not just consultees in the production of a jointly agreed masterplan or design brief.

Sniperley Park: the County Council is directly involved as land-owner and may be resistant to 'outside' involvement except through the normal consultations processes. Nevertheless, the offer should be made, probably headlining the Trust and the Friends so as to avoid the negative point that Sniperley is outside the City of Durham Parish Council area. The County Council issued a Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Sniperley Park in July 2012 but much has happened since and a new masterplan/design brief is needed to meet all of the Inspector's requirements and the pressing factors of the climate change emergency, well-being post COVID, and the lessons of the behaviour of the local housing market in producing unimaginative high-end 'executive housing'.

Sherburn Road: as well as approaching the County Council for involvement in shaping the masterplan/design brief, there is an opportunity to couple this to a draft masterplan issued by the Banks Group'. A consultation leaflet issued by Banks on 9 October (attached) invites input. The response, whilst acknowledging the site is outside the Parish Council area, could be along the following lines by being party to a 'coalition' response.'

- The consultation leaflet promises “*housing with a good sustainability rating*”. This is a case when good is not good enough. York is an example of a Council with a project for 600 zero-carbon homes in “*car-free cycling paradises full of fruit trees and allotments.*” The highest levels are clearly not achievable with a traditional medium density layout with road access dominating despite green flourishes.
- The main failure in the layout is that there is a nearly complete spine road where a pedestrian, cycle, ecological, social and play environment should be. It is a layout that looks dated and compromised.
- “*A contribution towards affordable housing*” seems to be less than a full commitment to the provision for local people. Does this imply the affordable housing is to elsewhere in possible less satisfactory locations? If that is the case then claims to be providing a sustainable product falls on the grounds of social equity.
- There is no mention at all of the sources of energy and indeed how much energy can be generated from the site by studying the applicability of a district heating scheme from for example a small heat and power plant, the provision of solar power, air or ground source heating. It is a key metric for the sustainability of the housing to avoid the provision of housing that in a few years will suffer an energy deficit as gas is phased out.
- The use of public transport is dismissed in a line. This is clearly a car dependent development and almost completely unsustainable without some accommodation of greatly enhanced public transport within the site remembering that a generation of electric buses is close now. As a minimum, greatly improved bus stands with traffic calming and comfortable waiting facilities should be provided.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) For Members to agree to approach the City of Durham Trust and the Friends of the Durham Green Belt for a joint approach to Durham County Council to work together on a jointly agreed Masterplan/design brief for Sniperley Park and for Sherburn Road housing development projects. 2) For Members to agree to make a response as outlined above to the consultation leaflet issued by the Banks Group for the Sherburn Road scheme.
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ITEM 10: 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;
- excessive profit levels for developers;
- approved large sites being land-banked and not developed quickly in case a ready supply of houses lowers the prices developers can charge;
- the benefit bestowed by planning permissions of enhanced land value is not adequately captured for the community.

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 areas 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 is 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.]

On the face of the proposal it seems attractive but In County Durham there is no Community Infrastructure Levy scheme because the County Council judged that it would be a deterrent to inward investment. The County Council instead makes use of the Section 106 facility selectively and we see the merit in their approach. Should a new consolidated infrastructure levy be introduced, it is essential that this also be introduced in areas which do not have the current Community Infrastructure Levy in place, so as not to remove the Section 106 facility without a suitable replacement. Furthermore, it is essential that the current provisions that town and parish councils continue to receive a proportion of this funding and that this funding is increased where areas have a neighbourhood plan in place

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**]

Our feeling is that an Infrastructure Levy scheme should be set locally so as to be sensitive to the weaknesses of the development market in some areas.

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.]

There is much to be said for capturing more value given that it is the community's decision made through its elected Local Planning Authority that creates the dramatically increased value of land if planning permission is granted.

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.]

Delivering the associated necessary infrastructure is essential, so being able to borrow the finance required 'up front' is a good idea.

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.]

This approach would increase the levy base, and would allow these developments to better contribute to infrastructure delivery and making development acceptable to the community.

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.]

No comment.

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.]

No comment.

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.]

No comment.

25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?

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

Simply because this is in the spirit of localism. We are pleased that the Community Share is to be retained, namely that up to 25 per cent of the Levy is spent on priorities in the area that development occurred, with funding transferred to parish councils in parished areas.

25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [**Yes** / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

Affordable housing is a key priority here in Durham City.

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?

The City of Durham Parish Council is concerned that the proposals to significantly increase the delivery of the planning service through online and electronic means has the potential to discriminate against those groups that are unable to access information in this way. This could include elderly residents and those with disabilities.