

CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the City of Durham Full Parish Council held on Monday 4 February 2019 at 19:00 in the Lantern Room, Durham Town hall, Market Place, Durham, DH1 3NJ.

Present:

Cllr E Scott in the Chair

Councillors E Ashby, J Ashby, J Atkinson, E Brown, S Cahill, R Cornwell, R Ormerod, C Reeves, M Ross, D Freeman and A Doig

7 members of the public attended the meeting and 4 speakers from the various interested groups presenting under Item 3 of the Agenda.

17. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved by Council for Cllrs J Elmer, V Ashfield and G Holland.

Cllr J Ashby asked that the Council write to Cllr Holland and wish him a speedy recovery and best wishes. The Parish Council unanimously agreed this, and the Clerk advised he would do this on behalf of all Councillors.

18. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were received by Members:

Cllr E Ashby – member of SNCF and WRRAG
Cllr J Ashby – member of SNCF, WRRAG and City of Durham Trust
Cllr D Freeman – member of SNCF and City of Durham Trust
Cllr R Cornwell – Trustee of City of Durham Trust
Cllr L Brown – Trustee of City of Durham Trust
Cllr C Reeves – member of City of Durham Trust
Cllr A Doig – member of City of Durham Trust
Cllr M Ross – member of SNCF

19. Participation from members of the public and interested groups on Pre-submission Draft of the County Durham Local Plan

The Chair welcomed the three local groups present – the Western Relief Road Action Group, the City of Durham Trust and the St Nicholas Community Forum – and thanked them for attending. Each group provided a 10-minute presentation as follows:

The Western Relief Road Action Group

Amanda Taylor-Saunders and John Pacey attended on behalf of the group to discuss the aspect of the Local Plan relating to the proposed Western Relief Road. Amanda thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to present the group's case to them. John opened the presentation by providing a brief outline of what the group had done so far and what the current proposals were on the relief roads.

John advised that claims by DCC of wide-spread public support for a Western Relief Road (WRR) were based on the response to the question: "Do you think something

should be done about traffic congestion at Neville's Cross and the A167?". This, he advised, had received 98% approval by the public, however the WRRAG felt that the WRR had been incorrectly presented to the public as offering an effective, sustainable, and acceptable solution to traffic congestion problems in the local area.

John advised that the Group felt that traffic congestion problems, with consequential pollution would, if no action is taken, only worsen. He also advised that this issue would only become worse still, as planned University growth progresses to a further 40% by 2026.

John advised that the WRRAG felt that there seemed to be an over-concentration of development within the City of Durham itself rather than in outlying areas.

John commented that the WRRAG felt that something must be done quickly. The unacceptable relief road – even if it were approved – would not be delivered until the late 20's. John advised that the Group were lobbying for more sustainable measures such as an expansion of the park and ride system to ease congestion and pollution.

The St. Nicholas Community Forum

Janet George presented the case on behalf of the St. Nicholas Community Forum (SNCF) to the Parish Council. Janet advised that the aspect of the Plan which greatly concerned the group was around the proposed expansion of the University. She advised that the SNCF has major concerns regarding the Plan's endorsement of the scale and pace of growth of Durham University. The SNCF felt that this is already out of balance with this small town and the resident population is being driven out by the loss of family homes to Houses in Multiple Occupation and by the clash in lifestyles between students and families. Janet advised that Policy 16 of the Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan is of great importance to SNCF.

Janet advised that the SNCF are glad to see the University is proposing six PBSAs within its own estate. She advised that they felt that this is the way to accommodate growth. However, the SNCF feel that they won't be sufficient to accommodate all the planned increase in student numbers and there is a lack of robust protection for the City and residents regarding University expansion.

Janet advised that the SNCF are concerned that the policy on additional PBSAs doesn't include the 10% limit i.e. saying no more allowed if HMOs and PBSAs already there within the 100-metre radius are more than 10% of the total number of dwelling units. Further to this, Janet advised that the HMO policy only counts other HMOs in the 100-metre radius – it ignores the hundreds of students in a PBSA. Janet advised that noise pollution from night time revelling in the early hours are disruptive and damaging to balanced and sustainable communities.

Janet commented that SNCF were very concerned about the lack of any policy on returning HMO's to family housing and residential use. Counting student residents by council tax is insufficient and is a loophole which landlords can bypass.

Janet advised that SNCF felt that support for evening economy clashes with the wellbeing of those who reside in the City.

Janet finished her remarks by stating that SNCF felt that developers should ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity in the surrounding area through increased noise, disturbance or impact on the street-scene either from the proposed development itself or when combined with existing accommodation. The

impacts of a large number of students living in an area maybe more easily mitigated when they are living in purpose-built accommodation which has a management plan, rather than a number of HMOs.

The City of Durham Trust

John Lowe presented the case on behalf of the City of Durham Trust to the Parish Council. John advised that the Trust felt that Policy 1 of the Preferred Options Stage document had been very positive, setting out the basis on which the Plan should be written. John advised that the City of Durham Trust were very disappointed that this had been removed since from the Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan.

John advised that the City of Durham Trust welcomed policies 45 and 46, which emphasized the significance and importance of the views in Durham.

John advised that the City of Durham Trust were greatly concerned that protection of the Greenbelt seemed to have been watered down in the current Pre-Submission Draft of the Local Plan.

The City of Durham Trust are also concerned about the major housing proposals under policy 5 and in particular its impact on Sniperley.

John advised that Policy 3 relating to Aykley Heads is also a cause for concern for the Trust as this involved the removal of some Greenbelt land and the development would only allow for 4,000 office spaces, not the 6,000 office spaces currently being advertised on signs outside the existing County Hall HQ building.

John advised that the City of Durham welcomed the sentiments behind policy 16, however felt that there was a lack of rigour and enforcement, which was poor.

John also remarked that the proposals to regenerate North Road represented positive thing, which had come out of the 'Looking Forward' document.

Councillor Elizabeth Scott asked the member present from the Western Relief Road Action Group (WRRAG) how they would advise Councillors to answer representations from their residents who are in favour of the relief roads. John (WRRAG) advised that it is imperative to get the correct information to those residents about the implications on the relief roads. Relief roads bring with them more vehicular traffic and therefore pollution. John (WRRAG) advised that a much greater emphasis must be on sustainable methods of reducing congestion, particularly for the City Centre.

Cllr A Doig advised that he had been informed that the development of houses would be happening with or without the relief roads and this should be considered.

Cllr A Doig advised that he felt that the Parish Council should seek to employ someone to investigate the number of HMOs within the Parish. DCC weren't able to release this and the reason provided being data protection.

Amanda Taylor-Saunders advised that she had had difficulty receiving direct answers to her FOI requests on the issue of an expansion of accommodation.

A member of the public requested that a public meeting be held and this was promised some time ago. Cllr E Scott advised that this is something the Parish Council hope to do soon with the appointment of the new Clerk who would facilitate such a meeting.

20. Pre-submission Draft of the County Durham Local Plan

Councillors considered which policies they wished to focus on in their responses to the Pre-Submission Draft of the County Durham Local Plan.

Cllr R Cornwell led discussions and advised that it was imperative to consider only those policies which had an impact on the City of Durham Parish.

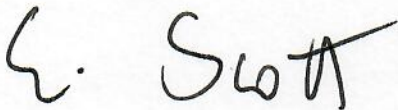
Councillors agreed with all policies set out in a guiding document drafted by Cllr R Cornwell and it was agreed that the Planning Committee should draft a response to these policies and bring this back to the next Full Parish Council meeting for any amends/ approval.

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.

21. Durham County Council's response to Richard Buxton solicitors' letter

The Parish Council considered the detail of the response by DCC following Richard Buxton's letter. The Parish Council agreed to draft a rebuttal letter and commission a traffic consultant to review the plans as a matter of urgency. Given the urgency to commission a professional consultant, review the response and reply within the deadline of 23rd February, the Parish Council unanimously resolved to suspend Standing Orders in relation to the need to receive 3 quotations to commission this work.

Signed,



Chair of City of Durham Parish Council.
28 February 2019