

# Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

SA Report to accompany the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan

City of Durham Parish Council

October 2019

## Quality information

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## Revision History

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
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# Non-technical summary

## What is a Sustainability Appraisal?

A sustainability appraisal (SA) has been undertaken to inform the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP). This process is required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

## What is the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan?

The DCNP presents a plan for the City of Durham for the period to 2035. The area covered by the DCNP is shown in **Figure 1**. The area is centred on the historic core of the City, designated as a World Heritage Site (WHS), and includes Durham Cathedral and Castle situated above the incised banks of the River Wear. The DCNP area includes the wards of Neville's Cross, Elvet & Gilesgate and the part of Durham South that is on the city side of the River Wear.

Prepared to be in conformity with the 2004 City of Durham Local Plan, and the emerging County Durham Plan (CDP) 2016 – 2035, it sets out a vision and a range of policies for the DCNP area. These relate to a range of topics, including creating a diverse and resilient economy which is supported by attractive, healthy and affordable places to live, and improving and protecting the area's natural, built and historic environment. It is currently anticipated that the DCNP will undergo referendum later in 2019.

## Purpose of this SA Report

This SA Report, which accompanies the Submission version of the DCNP, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SA process. The first document was the SA Scoping Report (October 2017), which includes information about the DCNP area's environment and community. The second document was the SA Report accompanying Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019).

The purpose of this SA Report is to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the DCNP and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SA process which has been carried out to date.

The SA Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the DCNP and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes;
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues;
- The SA Framework of objectives against which the DCNP has been assessed;
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the DCNP;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the DCNP;
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the DCNP; and
- The next steps for the DCNP and accompanying SA process.

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the DCNP

A key element of the SEA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the DCNP. The SEA Regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the Environmental Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.

**Chapter 4** of this SA Report therefore describe how the SA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the DCNP area. As the delivery of new development through the DCNP is what is most likely to have a significant effect on SA objectives, it was determined that this issue should be the primary focus of the consideration of alternatives through the SA process. The potential sites and spatial strategy options (packages of sites) for delivering development in line with the DCNP objectives, will directly or indirectly influence the topic areas identified above and the Parish Council's preferred approach.

Alternative approaches have been considered in relation to the designation of Local Green Space (LGS) in the DCNP area, given this is a contentious issue for the Parish Council and local residents.

## Assessment of alternatives for Observatory Hill Local Green Space

The use of LGS is a significant issue in the DCNP area given the development aspirations of Durham University alongside the Outstanding Universal Value associated with the area's historic environment and its setting. Additionally, the Open Space Needs Assessment (2018) has identified that there is already an existing quantitative shortfall in the provision of all types of open space in the Durham City area. The impact of any future housing growth is also likely to exacerbate this situation. Therefore, the need to protect existing open space and provide open space on site in new development is a key priority for the area.

National policy makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection. However, these green areas may also be of use for development purposes. The challenge is therefore protecting green areas when there is an increasing demand for development, together with the scarcity of land within the City.

To support decision-making on this element, the SA process considered three broad options relating to the designation of Observatory Hill LGS through the DCNP. The three options are as follows:

- **Option 1:** The original proposal in the Consultation Draft Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017)
- **Option 2:** Option 1 with the removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House.
- **Option 3:** Option 1 plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery (all located on the south / south east side of Potters Bank)

A detailed high-level appraisal was undertaken for the options outlined above and presented within the SA Report accompanying Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019).

A number of representations received during the Regulation 14 consultation (from Residents' Groups and others) suggested that the Observatory Hill LGS should be extended through the DCNP to include the fields behind Durham School.

As a result of these representations it was considered appropriate to identify and appraise an additional option for the designation of Observatory Hill LGS through the SA process. The previous appraisal presented in the SA Report accompanying the Regulation 14 DCNP has been revised to include consideration of the new option. This is presented in **Table NTS.1** below. The location of all four options are presented in **Figure 4.1** of this report.

**Table NTS.1** comprises a row for each of the objectives that make up the SA Framework (see **Table 3.2**). Within each row the alternatives are ranked in order of relative performance (with '=' used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par, i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them). If an option is ranked as 1 then it is preferred to an option that is ranked 2. **Table NTS.1** also

identifies if an option is likely to have a significant effect. Please note that the rank is not linked to the potential for a significant effect.

**Table NTS.1 Assessment of the Observatory Hill LGS options**

<b>Observatory Hill LGS assessment findings and conclusions</b>					
<b>Categorisation and rank</b>					
<b>SA Objective</b>		Option 1: The Original proposal in 2017 DCNP	Option 2: Option 1 with removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House	Option 3: Option 1 plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery	Option 4: Option 3 plus the extensions comprising Clay Lane and land south east of Clay Lane
Air quality	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Climate change	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Landscape and historic environment	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Land, soil and water resources	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Population and community	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Health and wellbeing	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Transportation	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

A narrative summarising the assessment findings can be found at **Section 4.14** of this report.

## Option taken forward for the DCNP

The City of Durham Parish Council has concluded that the use of Observatory Hill should reflect Option 4 comprising Observatory Hill itself (Area A) plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery (Area B) plus the extension comprising Clay Lane and land south east of Clay Lane (Area C) as this Option achieves the highest scores against seven of the eight SA objectives. In effect, the Parish Council feels that the purpose and benefits of designating a Local Green Space in this general location are best realised by adopting the largest of the boundary options. If this is considered to be too large an area to designate as an LGS then the Parish Council would seek an LGS as in Option3 comprising Areas A and B; in any case Area A - Option 1 - should be an LGS.

## Assessment of housing sites for allocation through the DCNP

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in conjunction with the 2004 City of Durham Local Plan, and the emerging CDP 2016 – 2035. As identified in the Submitted County Durham Plan (June, 2019), for Durham City this incorporates the delivery of 50 residential units on the Former Skid Pan site, and six sites for purpose-built student accommodation.

In terms of the housing number for delivery within the DCNP area, the CDP does not provide a figure. The DCNPF therefore requested that DCC provide an indicative housing target for Durham City, based on the latest evidence of local housing need and the spatial strategy as set out in the Submitted County Durham Plan (June, 2019).

The indicative housing requirement provided by DCC (1,297 dwellings) is already being met by existing commitments and the allocation in the Submitted County Durham Plan. However, despite this the City of Durham Parish Council are keen to take a proactive approach to development in the Neighbourhood Plan and seek to provide for additional allocations above the 1,297-housing figure. This is with the combined intention of securing additional community infrastructure; protecting and enhancing the distinct historic environment, the natural environment, and open spaces; and ultimately supporting the vitality of the City.

## Assessment of housing sites for allocation through the DCNP

A key aim of the DCNP is to ensure that housing delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area is appropriately located for local needs.

In light of the conclusions of the Site Assessment Report Addendum (2018), the following five sites have been considered and reviewed by the City of Durham Parish Council for promoting development for the purposes of the DCNP:

- **Site A:** John Street
- **Site B:** Offices at Diamond Terrace
- **Site C:** 24 (a, b & c) The Avenue
- **Site D:** Main Street USA
- **Site E:** Lovegreen

The locations of these sites are presented in **Figure 4.2** of this report.

To support decision making on this element of the DCNP, the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the five sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework of objectives and decision-making assessment questions developed during SA scoping and the baseline information.

**Table NTS.2** below presents a summary of this appraisal and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SA themes.



**Table NTS.2: Summary of SA site appraisal findings**

Site	Air quality	Biodiversity and geodiversity	Climate change	Landscape and Historic Environment	Land, soil and water resources	Population and community	Health and wellbeing	Transport
Site A	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Red
Site B	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site C	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Yellow
Site D	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site E	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red

## Choice of sites taken forward for the DCNP

The following text has been provided by the City of Durham Parish Council regarding the choice of sites taken forward as a proposed allocation within the DCNP.

When work started on the Neighbourhood Plan there were sites within the urban area capable of providing over 1,500 additional dwellings. However, many of these have subsequently been approved for the construction of Purpose Built Student Accommodation. The few remaining areas of land potentially suitable for housing development are therefore extremely precious.

The County Council's estimate is that a minimum of 1,297 new dwellings are required in the DCNP area and that this requirement is already met by 639 on sites now under construction, 120 with planning permission but not yet under construction, and 488 with planning permission. Additional suitable sites would be useful in case of non-delivery of some of the approved sites and would provide flexibility and a contingency provision. Accordingly, further sites; however small, have been sought, as detailed below in **Table NTS.3**.

**Table NTS.3 Reason for selection/ rejection of sites**

Site	Indicative capacity (dwelling units)	Reason for selection/ rejection
<b>Site A - John Street</b>	22	Allocated: the land has previously had the benefit of planning permission for 22 residential apartments. It is in a central location near to city centre shops and the bus station. A good site for older people or for young professionals/young couples starting out.
<b>Site B - Offices at Diamond Terrace</b>	5	Not allocated: Offices at Diamond Terrace had been included in the Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017). Unfortunately the County Council in July 2018 approved a planning application for the site for the construction of a 3 storey office building 9.5 metres high and extending 5 metres into the Green Belt. Accordingly, the site is no longer available for housing development and was excluded from the subsequent Draft Plan.
<b>Site C - 24 a, b and c The Avenue</b>	12	Allocated: twelve apartments have an extant planning permission but have not commenced, and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan allocates the site to confirm the principle of this development.
<b>Site D Main Street USA</b>	5	Allocated: this site could provide for 5 terraced houses as a continuation of the adjacent Diamond Terrace, provided that rights of way and trees and surrounding woodland are protected. The site's location and visibility make it very sensitive

		in relation to the paramount consideration of safeguarding the setting of the World Heritage.
<b>Site E - Sidegate electricity sub-station (part of Lovegreen)</b>	12	Not allocated: this site is not a formal allocation because of constraints including the fact that it lies within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. Subject to the Sustainability Appraisal, if the constraints can be mitigated It would be suitable for terraced houses matching nearby Sidegate, provided that development proposals protect surrounding trees and woodland habitats and carry out a site-specific flood risk assessment.
<b>Site E - Council-owned car park, Sidegate (part of Lovegreen)</b>	20	Not allocated: this site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available. It is suitable for two or three rows of terraced houses; provided that development proposals protect surrounding trees and woodland habitats.
<b>Small site next to Sainsbury supermarket on A167</b>	2	Not allocated: This site is not identified as not currently suitable within the Site Assessment Addendum (2018) and therefore has not been assessed through the SA process. This site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available.  However, the aspiration is that if the site becomes available from the owner it should be included as an allocation in the final Plan. It is suitable for 1 or 2 family houses, average density 2 storey houses; need to protect the mature black poplar tree.
<b>Former Shell Garage, A167</b>	4	Not allocated: This site is not identified as not currently suitable within the Site Assessment Addendum (2018) and therefore has not been assessed through the SA process. This site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available.  However, the aspiration is that if the site becomes available from the owner it should be included as an allocation in the final Plan. Although previously approved for 8 units, the surrounding house-style indicates that 4 average-to-low density 2 storey houses would be more suitable, with access via St Johns Road rather than the A167; important to keep trees on the boundary of the site; may be costly to develop to deal with underground fuel storage tank.

## Preliminary assessment of the Pre-submission DCNP

A detailed high-level appraisal was undertaken for the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. This appraisal is presented within the SA Report accompanying Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019).

Four recommendations were made for improving the sustainability performance of the DCNP, relating to the biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change, and historic environment and landscape SA themes.

The DCNP has subsequently been amended to take these recommendations into account where possible.

## Assessment of the Submission version of the DCNP

The Submission version of the DCNP presents 29 planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Utilising the SA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SA, the SA process has assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the DCNP. The SA Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SA themes:

- Air Quality
- Biodiversity;
- Climate change;
- Landscape and historic environment;
- Land, soil and water resources;
- Population and community;
- Health and wellbeing; and
- Transportation

The assessment has concluded that the DCNP policies will benefit the local community through; the delivery of new housing to meet local needs; addressing studentification and setting standards for the delivery of PBSA and conversions to HMOs; protecting Durham’s internationally, nationally, and locally valued heritage; protecting and enhancing Local Green Spaces and the wider infrastructure network; and supporting the economic function of the city in terms of the employment and tourism offer.

In this context, the assessment has concluded that the current version of the DCNP is likely to lead to **long term significant positive effects** in relation to the population and community and health and wellbeing SA themes. **Long term significant positive effects** are also anticipated in relation to the land, soil and water resources SA theme given the utilisation of brownfield land and protection and enhancement of green spaces.

It is recognised that the DCNP is relatively limited in the potential to improve local transport infrastructure through new development, however seeks to capitalise on opportunities to connect the existing pedestrian and cycle network, which will serve a large number of residents. However, it is considered likely that poor air quality will continue to be a key issue for Durham City, in addition to a continued reliance on the private vehicle. **Neutral effects** are therefore anticipated in relation to the air quality and transportation SA themes.

No significant negative effects have been identified, however; it is recognised that there is the potential for **uncertain minor long term negative effects** due to the sensitivity of the historic environment and the potential for site allocations to adversely impact upon the setting of the WHS and/or the Durham City Conservation Area. It is however noted that the any mitigation provided may result in a residual neutral effect; however, this is uncertain at this stage.

## Next steps

### Plan finalisation

The DCNP and this SA Report have been submitted to DCC for their consideration. DCC will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the DCNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the emerging Local Plan.

If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the DCNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by DCC. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the DCNP, then the Neighbourhood Plan will be ‘made’. Once made, the DCNP will become part of the Development Plan for Durham City.

### Monitoring

It is considered that most of the monitoring will be carried out by the Local Planning Authority or made available at national level.

The Submitted CDP includes a range of proposed monitoring measures to ensure that the Plan is being delivered and remains effective. **Table NTS.4** below lists a selection of these that are of particular importance to the DCNP given the findings of the appraisal.

**Table NTS.4 Proposed monitoring measures**

<b>SA theme</b>	<b>SA objective</b>	<b>Proposed measure (given appraisal findings)</b>
<b>Air quality</b>	To protect and improve air quality in the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity &amp; geodiversity</b>	To protect and enhance the biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net loss of trees/woodlands/hedges as a result of new development.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	To make the Neighbourhood Plan area resilient and able to adapt to climate change and specifically minimise flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>• Energy generated from renewable sources (GWh).</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape and historic environment</b>	<p>To protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, with particular reference to the quality of design required by the World Heritage Site and the special character of the Neighbourhood Plan area</p> <hr/> <p>To conserve heritage assets so that they can be understood and enjoyed for their contribution to the local economy, particularly tourism, and to the quality of life of this and future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of heritage assets lost</li> <li>• Number of heritage assets removed from At Risk Registers as a result of the implementation of a permitted scheme.</li> <li>• Number of heritage assets removed from At Risk Registers as a result of the implementation of a permitted scheme</li> <li>• Number of enforcement cases taken against the owners of listed buildings.</li> <li>• Appeals upheld contrary to Policy 40 (Landscape).</li> </ul>
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	<p>To use natural resources prudently, encourage the reuse of materials, and minimize waste</p> <hr/> <p>To encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield) and thus protect the Green Belt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of eligible schemes accompanied by a Agricultural Land Classification Assessment</li> <li>• Number of water bodies which show Water Framework Directive improvement as a direct consequence of new development.</li> <li>• Percentage of proposals permitted that either minimise waste production; help prepare waste for re-use; and increase the capacity and capability of the county's network of waste management facilities to reuse, recycle and recover value from waste materials.</li> <li>• Percentage of proposals permitted that enable the disposal of waste via landfill or via the incineration of waste without energy recovery where an alternative treatment solution is available at a higher level in the waste hierarchy.</li> </ul>

SA theme	SA objective	Proposed measure (given appraisal findings)
<b>Population and community</b>	<p>To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity (tonnage) of secondary and recycled aggregate management facilities.</li> </ul>
	<p>To identify and then meet the business and other development needs of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the retail offer and tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Land approved and completed</li> <li>Number of houses approved and completed per year</li> <li>Status of five year land supply/delivery test.</li> <li>Number of new bedspaces in HMOs approved.</li> <li>Number of units approved and completed on allocated PBSA sites.</li> <li>Percentage change of total HMOs in Durham City.</li> <li>Number of new bedspaces in PBSA approved.</li> <li>Vacancy rates in retail centres</li> <li>Net additional bed spaces.</li> </ul>
	<p>To provide the supply of affordable housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations</p>	
	<p>To alleviate deprivation and poverty and improve social inclusion</p>	
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<p>To support strong, safe, vibrant and healthy communities and enable all residents to live in a decent and affordable home that meets current and future needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of employees in Durham City walking or cycling to work</li> <li>Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>Percentage of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport to school.</li> </ul>
	<p>To provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, leisure, social and cultural well-being</p>	
<b>Transportation</b>	<p>To identify and coordinate development requirements, including the provision of a modern transport and communications infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of employees in Durham City walking or cycling to work</li> <li>Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>Percentage of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport to school.</li> </ul>

# 1. Introduction

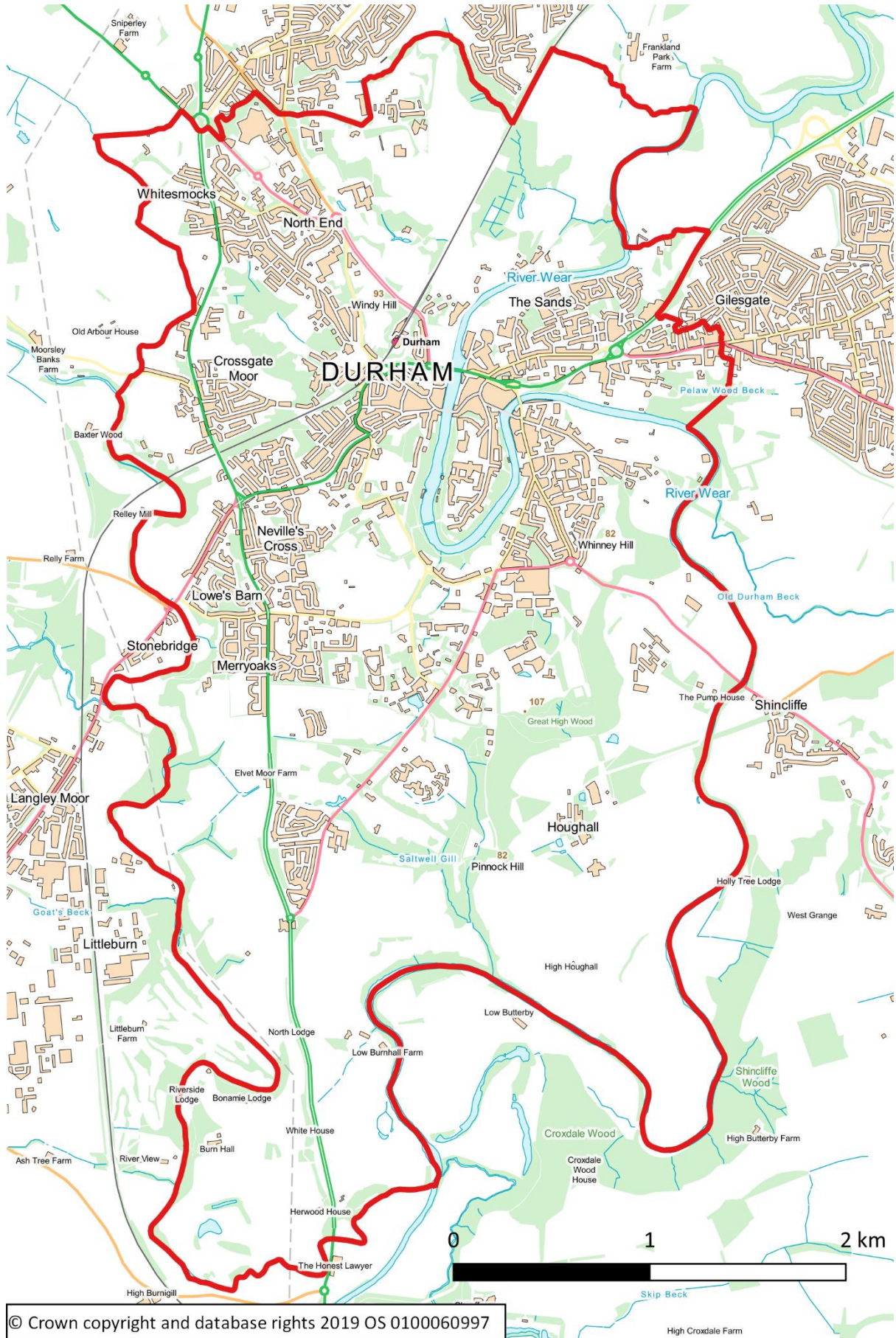
## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Durham City’s Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the emerging County Durham Plan (CDP). It is currently anticipated that the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to Durham County Council later in 2019.
- 1.3 Key information relating to the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan is presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Key facts relating to Durham City Neighbourhood Plan**

Name of Responsible Authority	Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Planning Forum
Title of Plan	Durham City Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood Plan
Purpose	<p>The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the emerging County Durham Plan 2019 – 2035.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2035
Area covered by the plan	The Neighbourhood Plan area is centred on the historic core of the City ( <b>Figure 1.1</b> ).
Summary of content	The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	<p>John Ashby</p> <p>City of Durham Parish Council</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:john.ashby@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk">john.ashby@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk</a></p>

Figure 1.1 Durham City Neighbourhood Plan area



## Sustainability Appraisal (SA) explained

- 1.4 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SA for the DCNP seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.5 The SA process should be undertaken in compliance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.<sup>1</sup> SA widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues. SA is a legal requirement for Local Plans; however, a Neighbourhood Plan is not a Local Plan and SA is not therefore legally required.
- 1.6 In line with basic conditions, SEA screening has been undertaken for the DCNP to determine if the plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects. A Screening Opinion was drafted by the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum (DCNPF) in December 2016 following discussion with various officers of Durham County Council (DCC).<sup>2</sup> The Screening Report was sent to the three Statutory Consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) for comment and review.
- 1.7 In response to the December 2016 Screening Report, Historic England (in a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017) concluded that the DCNP should be the subject of an SEA. The reasons for their decision were:
- the Neighbourhood Plan will come into effect before the County Durham Local Plan and therefore form the most up-to-date development plan document for the area; and
  - there is insufficient evidence that the potential impacts have been assessed in an area which has such a high number of designated heritage assets including sites of national and international significance.
- 1.8 Although ultimately only one statutory consultee considered that there was a need for an SEA, and the County Council had considered that there was no such need, the decision was taken by the DCNPF to undertake a SEA. The decision was also made to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating SEA to ensure that there was a demonstrable certainty it would contribute towards sustainable development and its policies would provide the necessary environmental protection, particularly with regard to Durham City's unique historic environment. It should also be noted that this approach is supported by DCC.
- 1.9 The DCNPF prepared a Draft SA Report during 2017; however, DCC in a letter of 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017 rejected the Draft SA Report and advised that, *"as a consequence, the plan fails to meet the Basic Condition relevant to this matter. The county council urges in the strongest of terms that this matter is resolved. Failure to do so prior to the formal submission of the plan to the county council in due course (Submission Stage) will result in the county council having no option but to decline to advance the plan to independent examination."*
- 1.10 Accordingly, DCNPF confirmed that a full SA would be the most robust approach for meeting Historic England's concerns and DCC's views on meeting the Basic Conditions requirements. This approach was confirmed in a workshop for the Working Group conducted by DCC on 08<sup>th</sup> March 2018, including the decision to commission AECOM through Locality to carry out the SA.

## The SEA Regulations

- 1.11 The SA has been undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

<sup>2</sup> The City of Durham Parish Council assumed responsibility for the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan in October 2018 and has therefore replaced the DCNPF.



- 1.12 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.13 In line with the SEA Regulations this SA Report must essentially answer four questions:
1. What's the scope of the SA?
  2. What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?  
'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised for the plan.
  3. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?  
i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  4. What happens next?
- 1.14 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present the information to be provided within the report'. Table 1.2 presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SA questions.

## Structure of this SA Report

- 1.15 This document is the SA Report for the DCNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as presented in **Table 1.2**.

**Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SA Report in order to meet regulatory<sup>3</sup> requirements**

<b>SA Report question</b>	<b>In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include...<sup>4</sup></b>
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</li> </ul>
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant environmental protection <b>objectives</b>, established at international or national level</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
<b>What's the scope of the SA?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
What are the key issues & objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>problems/issues</b> and <b>objectives</b> that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment</li> </ul>
<b>What has plan-making/SA involved up to this point?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the <b>alternatives</b> dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach)</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>alternatives</b></li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of <b>alternatives</b> appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.</li> </ul>
<b>What are the assessment findings at this stage?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>the Submission version of the plan</b></li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing <b>the Submission version of the plan</b></li> </ul>
<b>What happens next?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next steps for plan making/SA process.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

## 2. Local Plan context and vision for the DCNP

- 2.1 The DCNP is being prepared in the context of the 2004 City of Durham Local Plan, and the emerging CDP 2016 – 2035. The CDP will supersede the 2004 City of Durham Local Plan upon its adoption. Currently, the DCNP would need to comply with the policies contained within the adopted City of Durham Local Plan but must also give reasonable consideration to the emerging CDP, which is being prepared based on up to date evidence.
- 2.2 In April 2014 the CDP was submitted for independent examination. In February 2015 the Inspector published his interim report stating reasons why he thought the plan could not be adopted. DCC believed that the Inspector's report was flawed and following legal advice, they challenged it by submitting a judicial review. As a result, a resolution was reached which saw the Inspector's report quashed and the plan withdrawn.
- 2.3 Following the withdrawal of the plan work began on a new CDP. An Issues and Options Document was published in June 2016 and a new CDP timetable was then agreed by cabinet in November 2017. DCC published a Preferred Options Document in June 2018. The consultation on the Preferred Options took place from 22 June to 3 August 2018.
- 2.4 Subsequent to this DCC published a Pre-submission Document in January 2019. The Pre-submission consultation has now closed (8<sup>th</sup> March 2019) and comments received are available to view online at:
- <https://durhamcc-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/presub>.
- 2.5 Subsequently, DCC authorised formal submission of the CDP with a schedule of Minor Modifications to the Secretary of State for consideration at public examination, in June 2019.
- 2.6 Policy 1 (Quantity of new development) within the Submitted document states that:
- “In order to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future residents of County Durham and to deliver a thriving economy, the following levels of development are proposed up to 2035:*
- a) 302 hectares of strategic and general employment land for office, industrial and warehousing purposes; and*
  - b) 24,852 new homes of mixed type, size and tenure.”*
- 2.7 The emerging CDP does not provide housing figures at a Durham City or Neighbourhood Plan Area level. However, it does propose a number of allocations in these areas through the following policies:
- i. Housing allocations:
- 2.8 Policy 4 (Housing Allocations) of the Submitted document allocates the Former Skid Pan site within the DCNP area for 50 residential units. The site is a derelict, redundant site which until recently was used by Durham Constabulary as a skid pan and car park as part of the former Police Headquarters on Aykley Heads. The adjoining former police headquarters site has now been demolished and is under construction for a total of 217 houses. However, the planning permission does not include the former skid pan or car park site due to these being located in the Green Belt.
- 2.9 The former Skid Pan is a non-strategic Green Belt amendment and is therefore also included within Submitted Policy 21 (Non-strategic Green Belt amendments). This site has also been included as part of the Green Belt Assessment (2019), which concluded that it does not perform strongly against the Green Belt purposes and offers the opportunity to create a durable, permanent boundary. The exceptional circumstances identified for the removal of this site from the Green Belt are to ensure that a fully comprehensive, design solution can be found for this area of redundant land which if left undeveloped has the potential to become an unsightly area

of derelict land which could attract anti-social behaviour. The site is previously developed and would be otherwise suitable for housing, hence being proposed as a housing allocation.

ii. Student accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):

- 2.10 Submission Policy 16 (Durham University Development, Purpose Built Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation) indicates that Durham University should continue to evolve and compete as a high-quality education-led mixed-use establishment, including arts and cultural uses, managed workspace for start-up businesses and other complementary uses. Planning permission will be granted for new University facilities including academic, residential, sport and cultural floorspace and for the refurbishment of existing buildings where certain criteria is met (see Policy 16).
- 2.11 The following sites are allocated within Policy 16 for purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) within the DCNP area:
- PBSA 1 – Leazes Road;
  - PBSA 2 – Howlands;
  - PBSA 3 – James Barber House;
  - PBSA 4 – Elvet Hill Car Park;
  - PBSA 5 – St Mary's College; and
  - PBSA 6 – Mill Hill Lane
- 2.12 In terms of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) - in order to promote, create and preserve sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, to maintain an appropriate housing mix and to protect residential amenity - applications for new build Houses in Multiple Occupation (both Use Class C4 and sui generis) and changes of use from any use to the following will only be permitted where the criteria set out in Policy 16 is met:
- a Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation), where planning permission is required; or
  - a House in Multiple Occupation in a sui generis use (more than six people sharing)
- 2.13 Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the development plan for the district, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. The CDP seeks to give communities a solid framework within which appropriate community-led planning policy documents, including neighbourhood plans, can be brought forward. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the CDP to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in County Durham, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.
- 2.14 In terms of the housing number for delivery within the DCNP area, the CDP does not provide a figure. The DCNPF therefore requested that DCC provide an indicative housing target for the DCNP area, based on the latest evidence of local housing need and the spatial strategy as set out in the Preferred Options Document (2018). In this context, any allocations in the Preferred Options Plan along with any commitments within the DCNP area represent the indicative housing requirement figure for a neighbourhood plan.
- 2.15 The indicative housing requirement provided by DCC for the DCNP area is 1,297. This is already being met by existing commitments and the allocation in the Preferred Options Document (discussed further in **Section 4.27** and **Table 4.2**). Despite this, the DCNPF are keen to take a proactive approach to development in the Neighbourhood Plan and seek to provide for additional growth above the 1,297 housing figure provided by DCC. This is with the combined intention of securing additional community infrastructure; protecting and enhancing the distinct historic environment, the natural environment, and open spaces; and ultimately supporting the vitality of the City.

## Vision for the DCNP

2.16 The vision for the DCNP, which was developed during earlier stages of plan development, is as follows:

*“Durham City’s potential as a beautiful historic City will be realised through policy and action to improve and protect its qualities and by creating a diverse and resilient economy with attractive, healthy and affordable places to live. It will be supported by modern infrastructure, protected by adaptation to climate change and enriched by community engagement in its future.”*

2.17 To support its vision, the DCNP sets out six themes, each having its own set of objectives. These themes and objectives were developed from the Forum's priority survey responses (Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, 2015). The six themes are as follows:

- Theme 1: A City with a sustainable future
- Theme 2: A beautiful and historic City
  - (a) Heritage
  - (b) Green infrastructure
- Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy
- Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live
- Theme 5: A City with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure
- Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life

2.18 Underpinning the six themes are 29 Neighbourhood Plan policies. The latest iteration of these policies has been appraised in **Chapter 5**.

## 3. The Scope of the SA

### SA Scoping Report

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.<sup>5</sup> These authorities were consulted on the scope of the DCNP SA in October 2017.
- 3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
  - The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - An ‘SA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.3 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in Appendix A.
- 3.4 Comments received on the Scoping Report, and how they have been considered and addressed, are presented in **Table 3.1** below.

**Table 3.1 Consultation responses received on the SA Scoping Report**

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<b>Natural England</b>	
<b>Ellen Bekker, Northumbria Area Team</b>	
Natural England broadly welcomes the approach taken in the Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report, which we consider sets out a good framework for the assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Comment noted.
<i>The Sustainability Framework</i> Regarding the reference to brownfield, we advise to consider the potential biodiversity value of brownfield sites also. To assess this, please refer to Natural England’s ‘Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land Inventory’ (a priority habitat dataset currently not integrated into the Priority Habitat Inventory on Magic).	Comment noted. Potential biodiversity value of brownfield sites now considered in the probing questions.
We welcome objective 11, but advise to rephrase the probing question on biodiversity to: ‘protect and enhance biodiversity/ geodiversity’, instead of ‘protect or enhance’.	Comment noted. Probing question rephrased.
There is a risk that in some situations, development can lead to the creation of islands of biodiversity, permanently severed from other areas. Therefore, to ensure ecological connectivity, we advise adding the question: ‘Will the plan protect and enhance ecological networks?’.	Comment noted. Question added.
We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.	Comment noted.

<sup>5</sup> In-line with Article 6(3) of the SA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because ‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme.’

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p><b>Historic England</b>  <b>Jules Brown, Historic Places Adviser</b></p>	
<p>Thank you for consulting us on the draft scoping report for the Durham Neighbourhood Plan. Your continued commitment to delivering a high-quality plan and its attendant assessments is a credit to the group, and we continue to support the effort the group is making. Following our meeting with my colleague Barbara Hooper and Durham County Council's Carole Dillon, I apologise for not being able to prioritise this work any sooner. I understand you have already had detailed guidance on the draft from Clare Hattenham. I refer you to our guidance on SEA (Historic Environment Advice Note 8, 2016) which sets out how to go about SEA in relation to the historic environment.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Overall it is reassuring that we concluded the SEA process you need to go through should be relatively straightforward for historic environment matters. However, I am not convinced that the draft of the scoping report you have shared (date 10 May 2017) yet delivers the task at hand. We are aware that, given the advanced stage of the draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP), you have already carried out much of the work that you would normally only be scoping out here, and therefore this scoping report contains much more information than would normally be seen at this stage in the process. We will therefore provide comments as if this is a very early draft of the SEA environmental report and suggest areas where more work is required.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>In an ideal world, of course, the SEA stages would have been done discretely alongside producing your draft neighbourhood plan, so it is important to ensure the right process is followed now to avoid any possible problems with your plan is examined.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Your scoping report should set the context against which the assessment will be done, setting out, proportionately to the plan's purpose, the scope and level of information needed for the assessment. It should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify other relevant policies and plans likely to affect the SEA. I am confident you have scoped out these sufficiently, as the list of documents referenced in Chapter 2 and Appendix C is very comprehensive, and we congratulate you on the thoroughness of your research. However, the critical element of this part of the assessment process is to understand what these policies and plans are proposing, how much they tell you about the current and future conditions, and how they then might influence the development and delivery of the NP. These form part of your evidence base, and while a start has been made on the planning documents assessed in Chapter 2, there would need to be a greater assessment of the implications of each elements of key documents from Appendix C. For example, the World Heritage Site Management Plan is in the bibliography, but is not discussed in the analysis, despite having many proposals which will be of direct relevance to the NP. We would not anticipate the need to for extensive detail on this; for example, you might choose to identify the policy topic (e.g. planning, heritage, air quality, etc.), and whether the policies are international, national, regional or local, and then identify the key elements which may be of relevance to the NP. There may already be good summaries available which have been collated as part of the evidence base for the emerging CDP, so we would suggest discussing this with Durham County Council.</li> </ol>	<p>Comment noted. Additional text will be produced by the Parish Council.</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>2. Set out the current situation. The level of work you have already carried out is evident from Chapter 3, and again this effectively forms a preliminary draft for your assessment report. However, it is important to ensure that all the evidence you are presenting is adequately sourced, so that it is clear how you have evidenced the statements made. While this has been done for some elements, it has not been done for all, and is particularly apparent for paragraphs 3.26-3.29, which make a number of claims which may need supporting. You might want to consider using footnotes or cross-referencing to documents and consultation responses. For the historic environment section, you set out various designations (although under 3.3, your area has all three grades of listed building: Grade I, II* (two star) and II; total figures for these could be included, as could a map of designations), but more could be done to explain what the issues are that arise from these designations. Our guidance does say that only identifying a list of designations is unlikely to be enough; this is certainly the case with this NP given the depth and sensitivity of the heritage here. For example, the Durham City Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the World Heritage Site Management Plan both contain 'management issues' sections (or equivalent) which highlight issues with those heritage assets. The national Heritage at Risk register identifies highly graded assets in your area which are in need, and the County Council has an emerging Heritage at Risk register which identifies other listed buildings at risk in your patch. All these should be discussed (particularly if they are referenced in the bibliography) to help provide evidence for the heritage's significance, sensitivity and capacity for change in this stage of your scoping report.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Additional text will be produced by the Parish Council to cover the need for evidenced statements and for discussion around designations.</p>
<p>3. Describe the sustainability issues at hand. For the historic environment, this includes threats and opportunities. You should be able to summarise what would happen if the plan was not adopted, and therefore what the effect would be if it were. Threats you might identify (including some you have already) include development pressure on heritage assets or their setting, erosion of townscape character, quality or enjoyment, traffic impact, etc. Opportunities might include supporting sustainable development, promoting a stronger sense of place through design, or addressing heritage risk. Under 3.31, more could be done to set out what the issues, threats, and opportunities are for heritage. For example, I suggest that, for the conservation areas, it is not enough to say that the issue is 'the value of the area to residents' and the opportunity is to include the written appraisal as an appendix to the plan. Other points, however, are stronger, such as highlighting the need for a policy to protect listed buildings from harm (but remember also that not all the heritage at risk in the plan area is 'useable', such as the lengths of city wall on the national Heritage at Risk register). In drawing up this section of the report, it might also be helpful to think how best to present the evidence and issues. There is a lot of information here, but it is not clear how the context and SWOT analysis relate to the table set out at 3.31.</p>	<p>Comment noted. Additional text on issues, threats and opportunities will be produced by the Parish Council.</p>
<p>Set out the assessment framework to be used at the next stage to forecast and judge environmental impacts. We concluded when we met that it should be possible to largely transpose this across from Durham County Council's Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, which has already established a sustainability framework. With some checking to ensure it is proportionate to your neighbourhood plan, this should identify your SEA objectives, and the decision-making criteria and indicators to be used to measure the plan's effects. You could refer to our guidance (paras 2.8 to 2.16) to ensure it addresses the issues we would expect it to. This is a fundamental part of the SEA process; each of the NP policies and options will need to be assessed against this framework, which will then identify critical sustainability issues to be addressed, and help you consider alternatives and mitigation. Again, we are aware that you are trying to 'retrofit' the SEA process to the work that you</p>	<p>Comment noted. SEA/SA Framework has been developed and has been endorsed by DCC.</p>



Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>have already done, and you will already have done much of this thinking as part of your development of the draft NP; this may have formed a number of the alternatives you have presented in Chapter 4. But it is crucial that your final report demonstrates how the policies and the alternatives identified at Chapter 4 have been assessed against the sustainability framework, and the reasoning that it led you to the policies being presented within the final NP. At that stage you can discuss the process you have been through to consider alternatives (such as the amendments to allocations you made). Our guidance gives advice on how to implement that stage, such as on possible adverse environmental effects, and suitable mitigation measures where effects cannot be avoided.</p>	
<p>We hope these comments are helpful, but please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p><b>Environment Agency</b> <b>Charlotte Lines, Senior Planning Adviser</b></p>	
<p>Thank you for consulting us on the Scoping Report for the SA/SEA of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. Having assessed the report I can advise that I feel it correctly identifies the information that is required for the SA/SEA on matters within our remit. Further to my response below I have attached a checklist from the Neighbourhood group to consider as part of the plan making process.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p><i>Flood risk</i> Durham Council have undertaken a updated level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016, in which the Neighbourhood plan should look to consider the issues highlighted within an seek to mitigate the risk of flooding and allocate development away from areas which are at the highest risk from flooding (flood zones 2 and 3) I agree with the Sustainability Objectives in particular objective 16 and further to the current probing questions I would advise the following probing questions are added. - Will the plan steer development away from the highest areas at risk of flood as identified by the Environment agency (flood zone 2 and 3) and the most up-to-date SFRA. - Will the plan ensure the developments are able to deal with future changes in climate? (same as objective 15)</p>	<p>Comment noted. Probing questions added.</p>
<p><i>Water environment</i> We would advise that the incorporation of the Northumbria River Basement Management Plan into the scope of the SA/SEA and should be taken into consideration when preparing the neighbourhood plan and its impacts on local waterbodies Water Framework Directive (WFD) status. The River Wear has currently a Moderate overall water body status in WFD terms and we wish to seek opportunities to improve the water body status and at minimum seek to cause no further detrition. I would recommend the following probing question is included within objective 11: - Will the plan protect the current WFD status of the River Wear?</p>	<p>Comment noted. Probing question added.</p>

## Key sustainability issues

3.5 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SA Scoping Report was able to identify a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SA. These issues are as follows, presented by eight SA themes.

### Air quality

- Air quality in parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area fails government limits.

### Biodiversity and geodiversity

- The Neighbourhood Plan area holds numerous green assets, including open green spaces, banks of the River Wear, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, and protected habitats/species.
- The River Wear Gorge is a County Geological Site located at Durham City.

### Climate change

- An increase in the built footprint of the DCNP area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions.
- Key areas of Durham City lie within Zone 3 of the River Wear (including The Sands; River footpaths, and roads alongside these footpaths where present, from Sidegate/The Sands to the Racecourse; Elvet Waterside; The Racecourse; Maiden Castle; and Houghall). Flooding from the River Wear and from inadequate storm drains are continuing risks.

### Landscape and historic environment

- The deeply incised valley of the River Wear landscape feature is notable and creates the dramatic setting of the World Heritage Site (WHS), with the inner and outer bowls which provide views into and out of the City centre.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area contains sections of Area of Great Landscape Value.
- The heritage of the Neighbourhood Plan area is recognised through a series of categories: the Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS, two Conservation Areas (Durham City, designated in 1968, and Burnhall, designated in 1981) covering the built development of the City from the medieval period up to the 20th century, statutorily listed buildings including Grades I, II\* and II, a statutory designated registered park and garden and registered battlefield, archaeology (either scheduled monuments or non-designated remains), and many locally cherished buildings and sites. Whilst existing statutory protections are often sufficient there are threats which need to be addressed with more detailed and specific criteria and standards. It is also recognised that the significance of any heritage asset can be generated by its setting; a very important issue for the DCNP.

### Land, soil and water resources

- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a good household water supply and good sewerage system.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area includes areas of best and most versatile agricultural land.

### Population and community

- Appropriate housing development to meet the different needs of the population in the Neighbourhood Plan area is greatly affected by pressures for Durham University student accommodation. There is a proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) taking up terraced housing that would otherwise accommodate local residents.
- Current housing trends in the Neighbourhood Plan area are failing to provide for balanced communities and for sufficient affordable housing and accommodation for the elderly.
- There are three state primary schools, two state secondary schools, a special school and a Sixth Form Centre in Our Neighbourhood, all with good or outstanding ratings by Ofsted.

- Durham City functions as a community and cultural hub for Our Neighbourhood and surrounding areas. Such services and facilities comprise: community facilities, cultural facilities, religious establishments, sports fields and children's playgrounds.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area has a diverse employment offer but there are weaknesses such as the dominance of the public sector.
- The University is a member of the Russell Group and provides world-class scholarship and research.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 reveals many communities of the County are amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.
- Over half of the population (53%) are students and are absent half of the year.
- The long-term (i.e. non-student) population has roughly the same age balance as for the rest of County Durham, except that 11% are aged 75 or over as opposed to 8% in the County as a whole.
- Only 15.7% of the population is non-White British, but this is not typical of County Durham which has just 3.4% non-White British. The main minority ethnic groups in the Neighbourhood Plan area are Chinese (2.7%); Indian (1.3%); and Other Asian (1.2%), reflecting the international nature of the University.

## Health and wellbeing

- University Hospital of North Durham is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, there is only one GP's surgery to serve residents and students. It is anticipated that health services will be stretched if there is significant population growth.
- The health of the residents of Our Neighbourhood is above average: about 89% are in good or very good health, somewhat better than the figure of 76% for County Durham which reflects the long-standing damage to health and well-being caused in the traditional industries of County Durham beyond Durham City: coal-mining, railway engineering, shipbuilding and heavy engineering.
- Durham City functions as a community and cultural hub for Our Neighbourhood and surrounding areas. Such services and facilities comprise: community facilities, cultural facilities, religious establishments, sports fields and children's playgrounds.
- The Durham Green Belt serves a number of strategic purposes and is partly included in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Transportation

- The transport network is largely limited and defined by the flood-plains and bridges of the River Wear, and the historic approaches to the city.
- 2011 Census travel to work data (Office for National Statistics, 2011) identified that the majority of journeys are by car (77%), with 11% on foot, 10% by bus, 1% by bicycle and 1% by train.
- There is localised peak-time road congestion during school terms.
- Bus routes from Durham reach all the main towns in the county and adjoining centres although many are infrequent and limited to daytime only.
- Durham railway station is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Journeys by train can be made throughout the UK, but locally only Newcastle and Darlington are well-served.
- There is an extensive network of footpaths throughout the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, some pedestrian routes are highly congested in University terms.

## SA Framework

3.6 The issues were then translated into an ‘SA Framework’. This SA Framework provides a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline. The SA framework for the DCNP is presented below in **Table 3.1**.

**Table 3.1: SA Framework for the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan**

SA theme	SA objective	Assessment questions
<b>Air quality</b>	To protect and improve air quality in the Neighbourhood Plan area	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve local air quality?</li> <li>• Reduce vehicle exhaust emissions to meet climate change commitments and national air quality objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity &amp; geodiversity</b>	To protect and enhance the biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and enhance the green assets of the World Heritage Site and its inner setting and of the character areas of the City's Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Address deficiencies of green infrastructure in Our Neighbourhood?</li> <li>• Improve access to open space/multifunctional green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Protect or enhance designated wildlife sites and protected species?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance biodiversity/ geodiversity?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance ecological networks?</li> <li>• Improve green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Ensure consideration of the potential biodiversity of brownfield sites?</li> <li>• Take into consideration the need to protect the current Water Framework Directive status of the River Wear?</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	To make the Neighbourhood Plan area resilient and able to adapt to climate change and specifically minimise flood risk	Will the option/proposal help to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage new energy efficiency measures?</li> <li>• Contribute to the development/wider use of renewables?</li> <li>• Support the development of community energy schemes?</li> <li>• Reduce the demand for energy or increase the energy efficiency of buildings, transport and industry?</li> <li>• Ensure that developments are able to deal with future changes in climate?</li> <li>• Minimise the risk from flooding?</li> <li>• Steer development away from the areas of highest risk of flooding as identified by the Environment Agency (Flood Zones 2 and 3) and the most up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment?</li> <li>• Ensure that developments are able to deal with future changes in climate?</li> </ul>
	To protect and enhance the natural, built and	Will the option/proposal help to:

SA theme	SA objective	Assessment questions
<b>Landscape and historic environment</b>	historic environment, with particular reference to the quality of design required by the World Heritage Site and the special character of the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the site and setting of the World Heritage Site?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the conservation areas and their setting?</li> <li>• Uphold high standards of sympathetic, distinctive and innovative design?</li> <li>• Ensure that historic buildings are kept in use; recognising the issue of growing vacancy in the city centre?</li> <li>• Ensure that developments reflect the distinctive characteristic and appearance of the local area?</li> </ul>
	To conserve heritage assets so that they can be understood and enjoyed for their contribution to the local economy, particularly tourism, and to the quality of life of this and future generations	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and protect heritage assets?</li> <li>• Contribute to the better management of heritage assets?</li> <li>• Provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment?</li> <li>• Provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment?</li> <li>• Promote heritage-based sustainable tourism?</li> <li>• Promote heritage-led economic, social and environmental regeneration?</li> </ul>
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	To use natural resources prudently, encourage the reuse of materials, and minimize waste	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that buildings approved for development will promote sustainable development?</li> <li>• Help to reduce the number of vacant buildings though adaptive re-use?</li> <li>• Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from waste management?</li> <li>• Encourage the use of recycled/reused materials and minimise the use of non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
	To encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield) and thus protect the Green Belt	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and maintain the openness of the green belt?</li> <li>• Promote good practice in land reclamation having regard to sustainable re-use appropriate to the locality?</li> <li>• Prevent the loss of high quality soils to development?</li> </ul>
<b>Population and community</b>	To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that sites approved for development will promote sustainable development?</li> <li>• Identify strategic and local sites for a range of prestige developments for businesses, university research-based and high technology industries, and business incubators?</li> <li>• Provide land and buildings of a type required by businesses?</li> </ul>
	To identify and then meet the business and	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p>

SA theme	SA objective	Assessment questions
	other development needs of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the retail offer and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase employment opportunities through the establishment and support of large and small enterprises?</li> <li>• Secure the vitality and competitiveness of the City centre through balanced retail developments?</li> <li>• Enhance the tourism and leisure experience of the City?</li> <li>• Promote heritage based sustainable tourism?</li> </ul>
	To provide the supply of affordable housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide housing designed for the needs of older people and people with disabilities?</li> <li>• Provide affordable housing for all sectors of the community, but particularly for families with children and young people starting out?</li> <li>• Site new housing in deliverable locations linked to identifiable need?</li> <li>• Reduce homelessness?</li> </ul>
	To alleviate deprivation and poverty and improve social inclusion	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the promotion of healthier lifestyles, improve access to health care, and reduce health inequalities.</li> <li>• Help those on lower incomes?</li> <li>• Contribute towards local regeneration initiatives or benefit areas suffering from economic deprivation?</li> <li>• Reduce unemployment and encourage higher incomes?</li> <li>• Reduce the number of unfit homes?</li> </ul>
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	To support strong, safe, vibrant and healthy communities and enable all residents to live in a decent and affordable home that meets current and future needs	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create pleasant and healthy streets, public places and areas of natural environment?</li> <li>• Promote the provision of a range of the highest quality health, educational, artistic, cultural, social and general community facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors?</li> <li>• Enhance a sense of safety and security and deter/prevent crime?</li> <li>• Reduce social isolation and strengthen the links between communities?</li> <li>• Consider the size, type, and tenure of the housing mix in the area?</li> <li>• Change the imbalance towards student accommodation back to a sustainable balanced community?</li> <li>• Encourage the conversion of House in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) back to family homes?</li> <li>• Strengthen the current interim student accommodation policy?</li> <li>• Encourage graduates to live and work within Our Neighbourhood?</li> </ul>

SA theme	SA objective	Assessment questions
	To provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, leisure, social and cultural well-being	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain and improve existing artistic, cultural, social and community facilities, including open spaces?</li> <li>• Provide new leisure or cultural activities?</li> <li>• Support and widen community uses through shared facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the built environment to increase community participation in generating and experiencing the arts?</li> <li>• Ensure that residents and visitors can access information about the City in an accessible, central location?</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	To identify and coordinate development requirements, including the provision of a modern transport and communications infrastructure	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that new developments are served by sustainable transport?</li> <li>• Support sustainable economic growth?</li> <li>• Avoid unnecessary travel resulting from new developments?</li> <li>• Reduce road congestion?</li> </ul>
	To encourage and increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make transport healthier and safer for all?</li> <li>• Improve the integration of public transport services?</li> <li>• Reduce road congestion?</li> <li>• Avoid unnecessary travel resulting from new developments?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact of traffic, especially HGVs, on communities?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact of traffic on the historic environment?</li> </ul>

## 4. What has plan making / SA involved to this point?

### Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the SA Report must include:
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
  - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives/ an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The 'narrative' of plan-making/ SA up to this point is told within this part of the SA Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the current version of the DCNP has been informed by an assessment of alternative locations for non-strategic scale development in the DCNP area.

### Overview of plan making/ SA work undertaken since 2014

- 4.3 Plan-making for the DCNP has been underway since 2014. Initial work incorporated the inauguration of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum (DCNPF) (January 2014) and engagement with DCC. A range of consultation events have since been carried out for the DCNP to engage the community and enable their input into the plan making process. This has included public meetings, leaflets, surveys and community events.
- 4.4 The following sections discuss the evolution of the DCNP in association with the SA process.

### Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the DCNP

- 4.5 A key element of the SA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the DCNP. The SEA Regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the SA Report should present an appraisal of the '*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*'.
- 4.6 The following sections therefore describe how the SA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the DCNP area. As the delivery of new development through the DCNP is what is most likely to have a significant effect on SA objectives, it was determined that this issue should be the primary focus of the consideration of alternatives through the SA process. The potential sites and spatial strategy options (packages of sites) for delivering development in line with the DCNP objectives, will directly or indirectly influence the topic areas identified above and the Parish Council's preferred approach.
- 4.7 Alternative approaches have also been considered in relation to the designation of Local Green Space (LGS) in the DCNP area, given this is a contentious issue for the Parish Council and local residents.

### Assessment of alternatives for Observatory Hill LGS

- 4.8 The use of LGS is significant issue in the DCNP area given the development aspirations of Durham University alongside the Outstanding Universal Value associated with the historic environment and its setting.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, the Open Space Needs Assessment (2018) has identified that there is already an existing quantitative shortfall in the provision of all types of open space in the Durham City area. The impact of any future housing growth is also likely to

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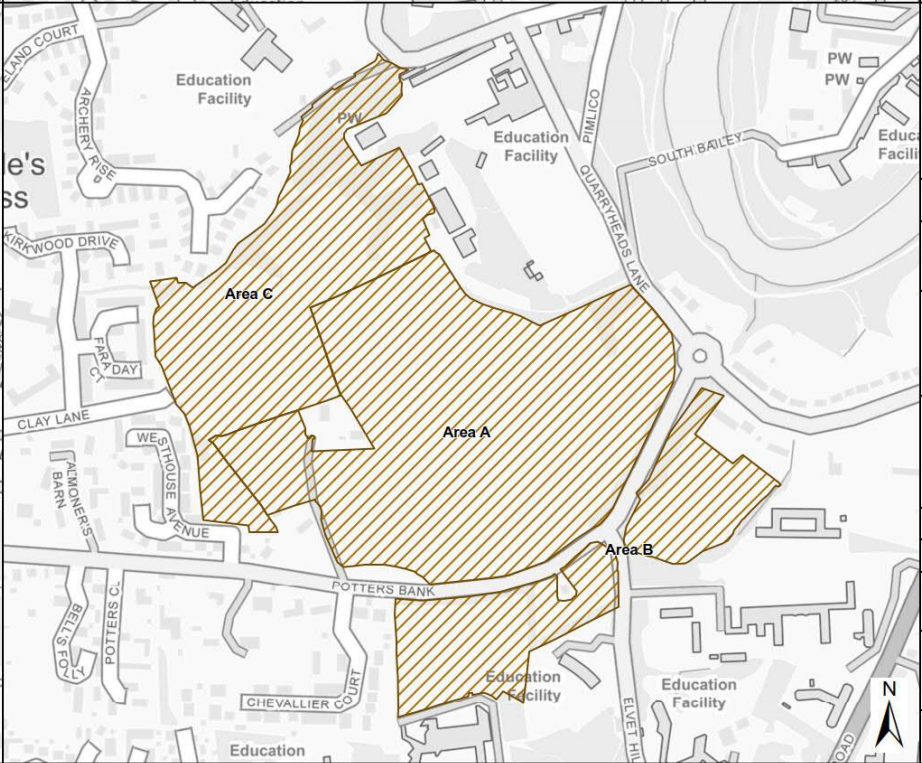
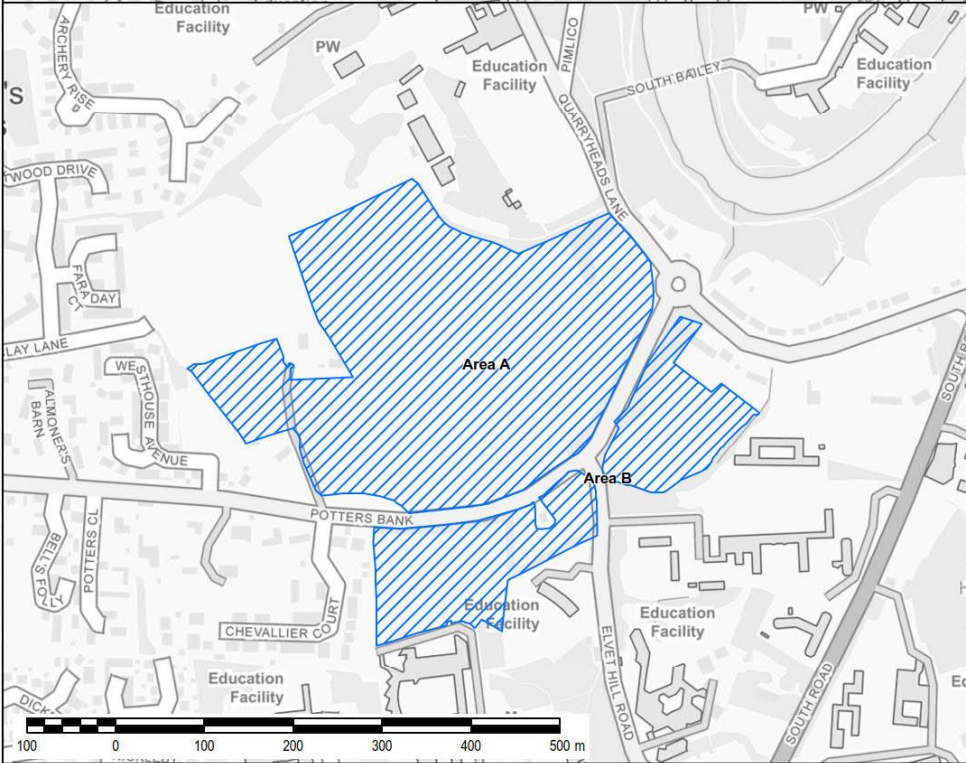
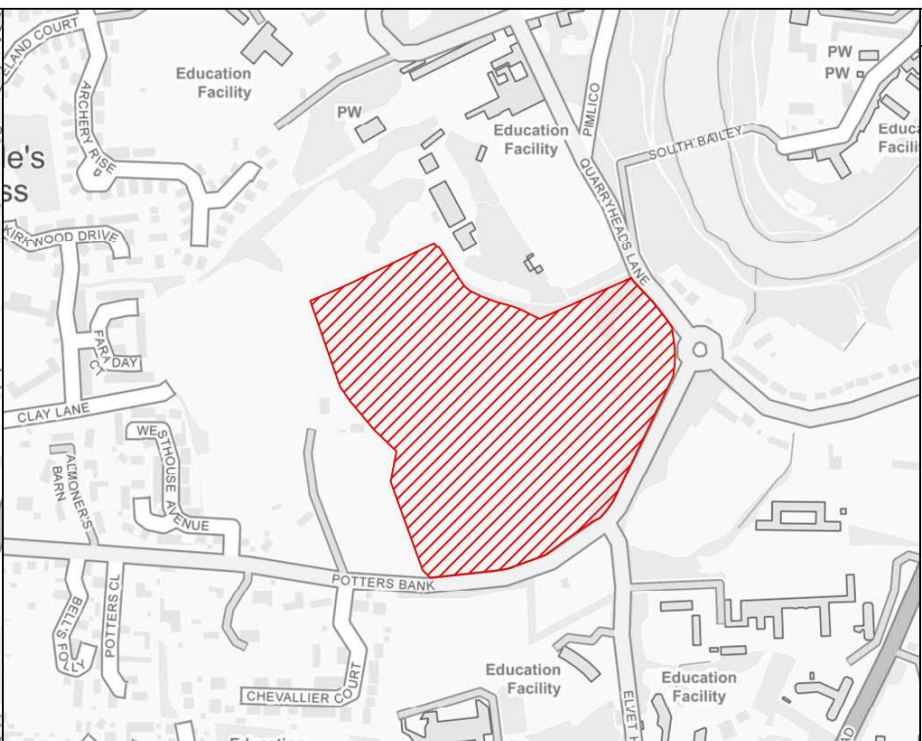
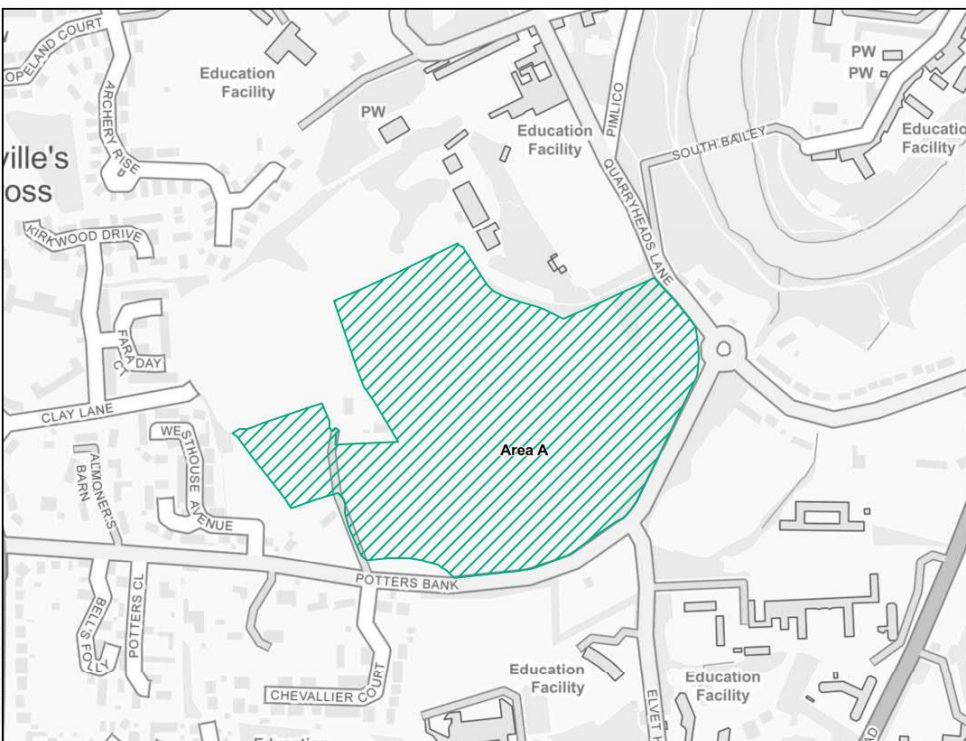
<sup>6</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Centre (2019) Durham Castle and Cathedral [online] available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/370> last accessed 22/01/19



exacerbate this situation. Therefore, the need to protect existing open space and provide open space on site in new development is a key priority for the area.

- 4.9 National policy makes provision for local communities to identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection. However, these green areas may also be of use for development purposes. The challenge is therefore protecting green areas when there is an increasing demand for development, together with the scarcity of land within the City.
- 4.10 To support decision-making on this element, the SA process considered three broad options relating to the designation of Observatory Hill Local Green Space (LGS) through the DCNP. The three options are as follows:
- **Option 1:** The original proposal in the Consultation Draft Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017)
  - **Option 2:** Option 1 with the removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House.
  - **Option 3:** Option 1 plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery (all located on the south / south east side of Potters Bank)
- 4.11 A detailed high-level appraisal was undertaken for the options outlined above and presented within the SA Report accompanying Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019).
- 4.12 A number of representations received during the Regulation 14 consultation (from Residents' Groups and others) suggested that the Observatory Hill LGS should be extended through the DCNP to include the fields behind Durham School
- 4.13 As a result of these representations it was considered appropriate to identify and appraise an additional option for the designation of Observatory Hill LGS through the SA process. The previous appraisal presented in the SA Report accompanying the Regulation 14 DCNP has been revised to include consideration of the new option. This is presented in **Table 4.1** below. The location of all four options are presented in **Figure 4.1**.

File Name: \\bs-wf-0044100 - Management Services\004 - Information Systems\6107187 - Neighbourhood Plan\_CBE\_2018\_2022\02 - Mosaic\Durham City NP\Framt\19202 - Figure 4.1 - Observatory Hill LGS Options.mxd



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**LEGEND**

**Local Green Space Options:**

- Option 1: Original proposal in the Consultation Draft Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017) (Area A)
- Option 2: Option 1 with the removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House
- Option 3: Option 1 plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery (Area B)
- Option 4: Option 3 plus the extensions comprising Clay Lane and land south east of Clay Lane (Area C)

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Purpose of Issue	FINAL
Client	DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PLANNING FORUM
Project Title	DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

Drawing Title	FIGURE 4.1 OBSERVATORY HILL LGS OPTIONS ASSESSED FOR SA						
Drawn	NS	Checked	AM	Approved	RC	Date	23/09/2019
AECOM Internal Project No.	60538603	Scale @ A3	1:11,835				

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4.14 **Table 4.1** comprises a row for each of the objectives that make up the SA Framework (see **Table 3.1**). Within each row the alternatives are ranked in order of relative performance (with ‘ = ’ used to denote instances where the alternatives perform on a par, i.e. it not possible to differentiate between them). If an option is ranked as 1 then it is preferred to an option that is ranked 2. **Table 4.1** also identifies if an option is likely to have a significant effect. Please note that the rank is not linked to the potential for a significant effect.

**Table 4.1 Assessment of the Observatory Hill LGS options**

<b>Observatory Hill LGS assessment findings and conclusions</b>					
<b>SA Objective</b>		<b>Categorisation and rank</b>			
		Option 1: The Original proposal in 2017 DCNP	Option 2: Option 1 with removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House	Option 3: Option 1 plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery	Option 4: Option 3 plus the extensions comprising Clay Lane and land south east of Clay Lane
Air quality	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Climate change	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Landscape and historic environment	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Land, soil and water resources	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Population and community	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Health and wellbeing	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Transportation	<b>Rank of preference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Significant effect?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

- 4.15 Option 4 is the best performing option in terms of the majority of the SA objectives. In relation to the biodiversity SA objective, Option 4 is best performing as it significantly extends Observatory Hill LGS which will ensure the greatest amount of space is protected from development, providing long-term habitats and wildlife corridors. Notably, local evidence suggests that Clay Lane provides a considerable habitat for wildlife that includes badgers, foxes, bats and the occasional weasel. These habitats and corridors could provide important functions, including supporting the diverse plant community present, facilitating movement of wildlife between areas, and providing a buffer zone to limit the impact of development on nearby ecologically rich /wildlife sites.<sup>7</sup> This will also lead to positive effects in terms of the climate change and health and wellbeing SA objectives which are discussed further below. It is recognised that positive effects in this respect are also anticipated for Option 3, followed by Option 1 to a lesser extent.
- 4.16 The designation of LGS (all options) will have minor positive effects in terms of promoting climate change mitigation in the DCNP area through assisting carbon sequestration and promoting walking and cycling through the public realm. In terms of climate change adaptation, the designation of LGS will help the plan area adapt to the effects of climate change. This includes through contributing towards the regulation of extreme temperatures and regulating surface water run-off. Option 4 is therefore best performing against the climate change objective for the reasons stated above, followed by Option 3 and to a lesser extent Option 1. Effects are not expected to be noteworthy under Option 2 as this option designates a smaller area of LGS than other options; and also seeks to designate an area smaller than that identified in the City of Durham Local Plan as a protected open space (saved policy E5). It is noted that the area identified in saved policy E5 aligns with Option 1.
- 4.17 If development were to come forward as a result of Option 2, this would adversely affect climate change mitigation through an increased level of greenhouse gas emissions. This is due to facilitating an enlarged built footprint of the DCNP area.
- 4.18 The emerging Local Plan (2018) highlights the importance of green spaces for shaping the character of the City and creating high quality well designed places. Designating Observatory Hill as LGS (Options 1, 3 and 4) will extend the existing Green Infrastructure of the local area, preserving and enhancing the existing green networks throughout Durham City. This is supported by Local Plan (2004) saved Policy E5 (Open Spaces within Durham City), which *“does not permitting any development at Observatory Hill or along the riverbanks except for minor development related to either the use of existing buildings or outdoor sport and recreational use”*, protecting the land proposed though Option 1.
- 4.19 The LGS extensions proposed through Options 3 and 4 are also included within saved Policy E5 (Mount Oswald-Elvet Hill Parkland Landscape Area). In this context, DCC highlight that Observatory Hill forms part of a wider tract of open land– which includes notable areas such as the field falling from Elvet Hill / St Aidan’s south of Potter’s Bank, St Cuthbert’s Cemetery, and the field north-west of St Mary’s crossed by footpath 40. These all play a similar function and were also afforded protection under Policy E5 of the Local Plan (2004), being mapped as part of the wider Mount Oswald / Elvet Hill (Policy E5.2).
- 4.20 Policy E5 states that development of the Mount Oswald-Elvet Hill Parkland Landscape Area *“is only permitted where:*
- a) *It does not exceed the height of surrounding trees and is sympathetic to its landscape setting; and*
  - b) *itis of a low density and sets aside most of the site for landscaping/open space.”*
- 4.21 It is therefore considered that land in the south/ east of Observatory Hill – the former parkland setting of the Observatory (proposed extension through Options 3 and 4) – should not be excluded from the LGS designation considering its function identified through the Local Plan (2004). Options 3 and 4 therefore perform most positively against the landscape SA objective.

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<sup>7</sup> Emeritus Professor Brian Whitton (2018) Plant memories of the upper part of Observatory Hill

- 4.22 The DCNP seeks to further the protection provided by Policy E5, recognising that green infrastructure is an important element of place making for the DCNP area, as evidenced through the DCNPF's priority survey (2015) where respondents were concerned with *"loss of / lack of open and green spaces and threats to Green Belt land"* and seek to prioritise *"the protection of green spaces/green belt and the environment"*.
- 4.23 Observatory Hill is an open area of land within both the inner bowl of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and the Durham City Conservation Area. The WHS Management Plan (2017) identifies that green areas provide a *"vital part of the character of the WHS as a whole"* and *"provide an important contribution to the urban landscape of the WHS."* Designating this area as LGS through Options 4, 3 and 1 will therefore contribute positively towards maintaining and enhancing the intrinsic qualities of the Conservation Area and WHS, and their setting. Positive effects are therefore anticipated in relation to the landscape and historic environment SA Objective in this respect.
- 4.24 **Table 4.1** above illustrates that positive effects for the landscape and historic environment SA theme are likely to be greatest under Option 4, followed by Option 3. This is given the extended areas of land proposed for designation and the important characteristics of these additional areas. As identified by Durham City Council (2017), within Options 3 and 4, Bow Cemetery and the adjacent fields provide one of the key 'green fingers/ wedges' that contribute inherently to the character of Durham City, and the WHS. Further to this, under Option 4, it is recognised that Clay Lane together with adjacent woodland and hedgerows acts as a green corridor, safeguarding a significant area of the rim of the WHS. This will lead to positive effects of greater significance in terms of protecting the setting of the WHS.
- 4.25 In terms of the functionality of Bow Cemetery; it is recognised that historic cemeteries are used for the business of burying and mourning and are identified by Historic England as valued as places for quiet reflection, as green spaces, and for their wildlife interest.<sup>8</sup> Bow Cemetery provides an attractive wildlife feature adjacent to Bow Cottage, a Grade II listed building present at the site. Options 3 and 4 will therefore contribute positively towards protecting the setting of this heritage feature. Option 4 extends adjacent to Durham School, and will therefore also contribute positively towards protecting the setting of the Grade II Listed Durham School Luce Music Centre and Porters Lodge Adjoining, and Durham School South Building, Frontage Building and Gateway. This will lead to positive effects against the landscape and heritage SA objectives.
- 4.26 Option 2, through the removal of the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House, may facilitate the delivery of built development at this location. This may result in adverse effects in relation to the area's historic environment and townscape. This includes the loss of the existing green space which provides a landscaping function, complementing the setting of heritage features in the area. There may also be negative effects in relation to valued local landscape character and viewpoints. Option 2 is therefore worst performing against the landscape and heritage SA objectives.
- 4.27 All Options will positively affect natural resources through providing protection from development for LGS, maintaining the area's natural environment. However, Options 4, followed by 3, and then 1 will perform most positively in this respect due to the larger area of LGS being designated. Option 2 may facilitate built development at the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House, which would likely result in loss of greenfield land in the Neighbourhood Plan area, having a negative effect on the natural resources SA objective.
- 4.28 Option 2 may facilitate built development, including housing at the western field beside the private road running past Observatory House. This would contribute positively towards meeting local housing need. In this context, Option 2 also has the potential to facilitate the delivery of community facilities/ infrastructure, for example, expanding Durham School. This would lead to positive effects in terms of population and community, and health and wellbeing SA themes, providing residents with improved educational facilities. In contrast, it is noted that concerns

<sup>8</sup> Historic England (2019) The Importance of Historic Cemeteries and Burial Grounds [online] available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/cemeteries-and-burial-grounds/importance/> last accessed 02/01/2019

have been raised relating to Options 3 and 4 limiting the flexibility of the site to accommodate any future expansion of Durham school. Option 4 performs most negatively against the population and community and health and wellbeing SA objectives in this respect as it protects the largest area of land from development, and therefore restricts additional future growth. This is followed by Option 3, and subsequently Option 1.

- 4.29 While it is recognised that Observatory Hill is located within the Durham City Conservation Area (discussed above), in line with the PPG (2014, Paragraphs 010 and 011) it is considered that LGS designation would be acceptable, given it will provide additional local benefit to the community. Designating LGS will positively affect the local community through providing natural and semi-natural urban green spaces that are of personal value, contributing to residents' quality of life, improving mental and physical health, and delivering overall neighbourhood satisfaction. Particular functions include providing spaces for social mixing/ interaction, outdoor sport/ activity, enjoying wildlife, learning, and relaxation. Direct positive effects are therefore anticipated in relation to the population and community, health and wellbeing SA objectives, with indirect positive effects likely for a number of other SA objectives. Effects are expected to be greatest under Option 4, followed by Option 3 and the Option 1.
- 4.30 While positive and negative effects have been identified against the population and community and health and wellbeing SA objectives, it is considered that Option 4 is worst performing against the population and community SA objective due to the loss land to deliver housing, and the effect on ability for the DCNP area to accommodate long term population growth. Option 2 is therefore best performing against this SA objective as it designates the smallest proportion of land. However, in terms of the health and wellbeing SA objective, it is considered that Option 4 is best performing given the health and wellbeing benefits provided through extending the LGS designation; providing increased access for residents and visitors alike, as discussed above. Option 2 performs least well in this respect, followed by Option 1.
- 4.31 It is recognised that the additional land proposed for designation under Options 3 and 4 within the ownership of Durham Cathedral is currently subject to a farming tenancy and is therefore subject to farming practices. Concerns regarding public safety given the presence of livestock and farm vehicle movement should not be overlooked; however, it is noted that there are existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) throughout the site which, according to local residents are widely utilised for numerous activities including walking, dog walking, exercise, picnics, sledging and photography. In this context, it is recognised that Option 4 also includes Clay Lane (Public Footpath No. 15) which has been an important pedestrian route into Durham since the medieval period and continues to serve as a major pedestrian artery into the City centre.
- 4.32 The designation of LGS has the potential to contribute towards the maintenance and enhancement of the existing PRoW network discussed above, integrating green infrastructure within the urban area to improve sustainable travel. LGS will improve the attractiveness of the area, supporting walking and cycling through the public realm, and improving connections throughout the DCNP area. Positive effects in this respect relate to the transport and health and wellbeing SA objectives. As above, effects are anticipated to be greatest under Option 4, followed by Option 3 and subsequently Option 1.
- 4.33 It is also noted, in terms of the transportation SA objective; that any new development which may be facilitated through Option 2 could result in the loss of green areas which contribute to the attractiveness of the public realm and encourage sustainable travel. Additionally, new development may result in increased vehicles on the road network and while this may not be a significant increase, would nonetheless contribute towards more vehicles and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Option 2 therefore performs least well against the transportation SA objective.
- 4.35 In conclusion, while the appraisal has identified that there is a potential for minor positive and negative effects as a result of the LGS options, it is considered that none are likely to be significant. As identified in the emerging Local Plan (2018) and in accordance with the NPPF (2018), Observatory Hill is eligible for designation given it is demonstrably special to the local community, it is local in character, and in close proximity to the community it serves. The appraisal narrative and **Table 4.1** have sought to highlight some of the differences between the options for designation, notably the positive effects to be provided to the local community,

landscape and historic environment. These are identified as most positive under Option 4, followed by 3, and to a lesser extent Option 1. Additionally, the delivery of Options 4, 3 and 1 would further support the richness of wildlife in the DCNP area and support the recreational value of the site (including improving the PRow network). While it is recognised that Option 2 would address identified safety concerns and maintain the flexibility of the site for future development, it is considered that these issues can be sufficiently addressed and are outweighed by the benefits discussed above.

### **Option taken forward for the DCNP**

4.36 The City of Durham Parish Council has concluded that the use of Observatory Hill should reflect Option 4 comprising Observatory Hill itself (Area A) plus the extension of the two fields and Bow Cemetery (Area B) plus the extension comprising Clay Lane and land south east of Clay Lane (Area C) as this Option achieves the highest scores against seven of the eight SA objectives. In effect, the Parish Council feels that the purpose and benefits of designating a Local Green Space in this general location are best realised by adopting the largest of the boundary options. It is acknowledged by the Parish Council that choosing this option does not facilitate built development, including housing, but it is considered that this does not override the many sustainability objectives that Option 4 delivers and would be delivered under Options 3 and 1 too if Option 4 is considered to be too large a designation area for an LGS.

## Assessment of housing sites for allocation through the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.37 As discussed in Section 2.1, the DCNP been prepared in conjunction with the provisions of the emerging CDP. As identified in the Submitted County Durham Plan (June, 2019), for Durham City this incorporates the delivery of 50 residential units on the Former Skid Pan site (Policy 5 (Housing Allocations)), and six sites for purpose-built student accommodation (Policy 17 (Durham University Development, Purpose Built Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation)).
- 4.38 In terms of the housing number for delivery within the DCNP area, the CDP does not provide a figure. The DCNPF therefore requested that DCC provide an indicative housing target for the DCNP area, based on the latest evidence of local housing need and the spatial strategy as set out in the Submitted County Durham Plan (June, 2019). In this context, any allocations in the Preferred Options Plan along with any commitments within a DCNP area, represent the indicative housing requirement figure for a neighbourhood plan.
- 4.39 **Table 4.2** shows the housing requirement breakdown for DCNP area, as provided by DCC. It is noted that this neighbourhood housing requirement figure is expressed as a minimum; therefore, Neighbourhood Plans can seek additional growth and identify further allocations (on suitable sites).

**Table 4.2 Durham City Neighbourhood Area housing requirement**

Housing requirement	Units	Comment
Draft Plan allocations	50	Former Skid Pan (CDP Policy H1 – Housing Allocations)
Total commitments	1,247	608 units on sites started and 639 on sites not started
<b>Total housing requirement for DCNP area</b>	<b>1,297</b>	

- 4.40 **Table 4.2** shows that the indicative housing requirement is already being met by existing commitments and the allocation in the Preferred Options Document. Despite this, the DCNPF are keen to take a proactive approach to development in the Neighbourhood Plan and seek to provide for additional growth above the 1,297 housing figure provided by DCC. This is with the combined intention of securing additional community infrastructure; protecting and enhancing the distinct historic environment, the natural environment, and open spaces; and ultimately supporting the vitality of the City.
- 4.41 A Site Assessment Report Addendum (2018) has been carried out by AECOM, which provides a clear appraisal of the suitability of sites available for potential housing development within the DCNP area. This report is an Addendum to the Site Assessment Report produced by AECOM and published in March 2017.
- 4.42 Eight sites have been considered through the Site Assessment Report Addendum. The findings of the assessment show that four of the eight sites considered are suitable for housing and are realistic candidates for consideration through plan-making. These are:
- John Street;
  - Offices at Diamond Terrace;
  - 24 (a, b, & c) The Avenue; and
  - Main Street USA.
- 4.43 In addition to these four sites, a further site, Lovegreen, could potentially be suitable for taking forward for the purposes of the DCNP if the outstanding issues are addressed.



4.44 Three sites are identified as not currently suitable for allocation:

- Former Shell Garage, A167;
- Small site next to Sainsbury supermarket on A167; and
- Land at Green Lane.

4.45 Former Shell Garage and Small site next to Sainsburys supermarket are not currently suitable as the site owners have not identified the sites as being available. It is noted that if either of the sites do become available by Regulation 16 (of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended) then the SA Report will be updated to include these sites.

4.46 In light of the conclusions of the Site Assessment Report Addendum (2018), **Table 4.3** identifies the four suitable sites and one potentially suitable site that have been further considered and reviewed by the City of Durham Parish Council for promoting development for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.47 **Table 4.3** also includes the site capacities identified by i) the AECOM Site Assessment Report Addendum and ii) the current version of the DCNP (where available). Plan making has developed further since the delivery of the Site Assessment Report Addendum (2018) to land on the site capacities set out within the DCNP. This has included discussions with landowners and the local community. The assessment carried out within this SA Report will therefore consider the DCNP site capacities where available, given the presumption can be made that this reflects the most likely scenario for development.

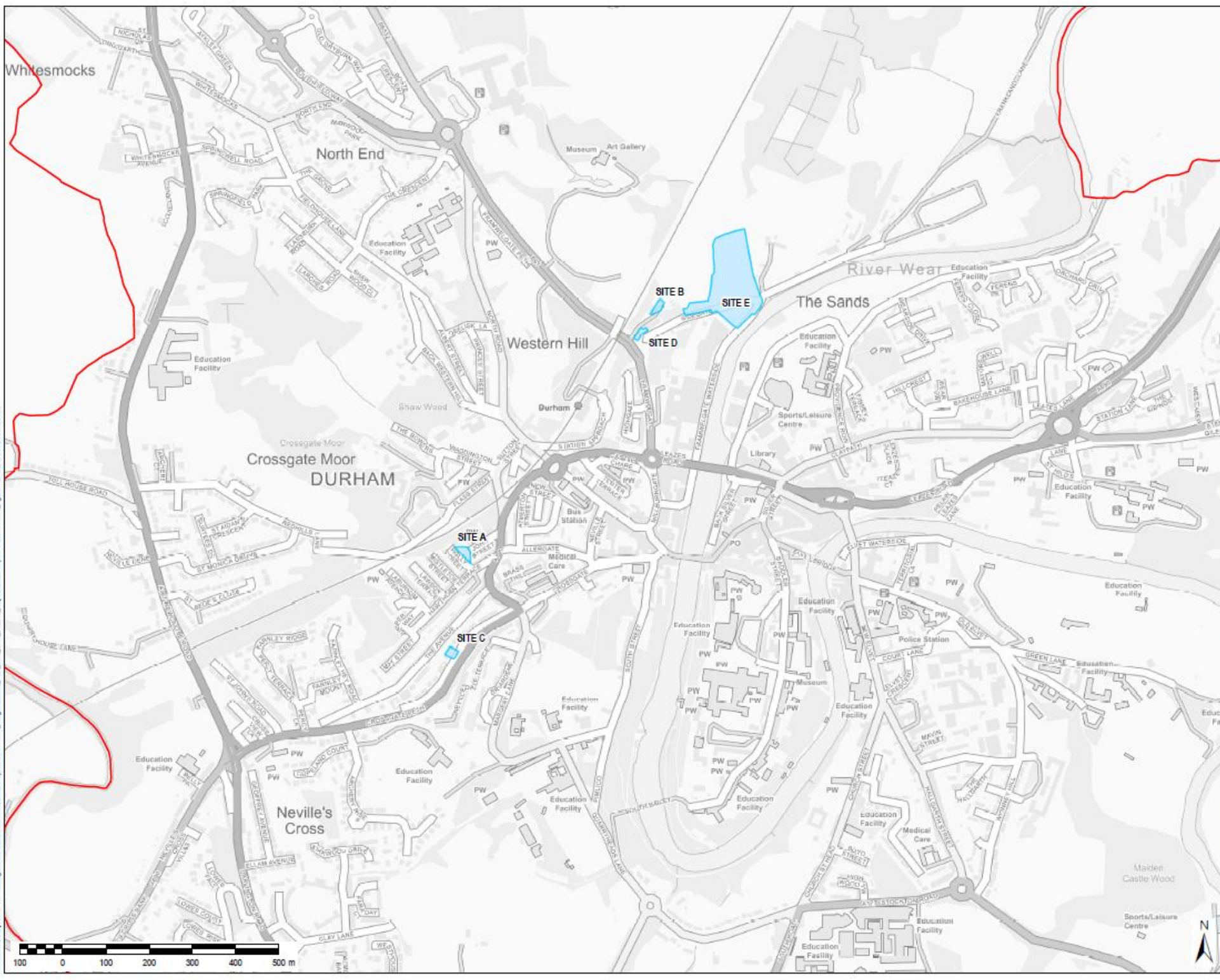
4.48 **Table 4.3: Sites considered for development through the DCNP**

Site	Site Assessment Report Addendum capacity	DCNP capacity
<b>Site A:</b> John Street	2	22
<b>Site B:</b> Offices at Diamond Terrace	1	N/A
<b>Site C:</b> 24 (a, b & c) The Avenue	1	12
<b>Site D:</b> Main Street USA	3	2
<b>Site E:</b> Lovegreen	80	N/A

4.49 The locations of these sites are presented in **Figure 4.2**.

4.50 To support the consideration of the suitability of these sites, the SA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the five sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework of objectives and decision-making assessment questions developed during SA scoping (**Section 3.3**) and the baseline information.

4.51 **Tables 4.4 - 4.8** below present a summary of this appraisal and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SA themes.



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**LEGEND**

- Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Site Option
- Site A: John Street
- Site B: Offices at Diamond Terrace
- Site C: 24 (a, b, & c) The Avenue
- Site D: Main Street USA
- Site E: Lovegreen

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Purpose of Issue  
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Client  
**DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PLANNING FORUM**

Project Title  
**DURHAM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

Drawing Title  
**FIGURE 4.2 HOUSING SITES ASSESSED FOR SA**

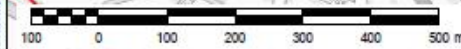
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**FIGURE 4.2**

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**Table 4.4 Site A John Street**

SA theme	Commentary, Site A, John Street
Air quality	<p>The site is located adjacent to the Durham City AQMA; which extends along the A690. 22 new flats at this location would likely lead to increased vehicular use within the AQMA, resulting in heightened levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, and may lead to adverse effects on air quality; however it is uncertain if this would be a negative effect of significance.</p>
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>There are no significant biodiversity constraints present on the site. The site is not located in close proximity to internationally or nationally biodiversity sites, nor within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ). In terms of locally designated sites the site is within 350m of Flass Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The site is promoted through the DCNP for 22 new flats, and therefore may lead to adverse effects on the LNR, for example through disturbance during construction. However, Given the City setting of the site, and assuming there is suitable mitigation at the project level, a residual neutral effect is anticipated. In terms of habitats, the site is located adjacent to an area of Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous Woodland. Development has the potential to have impacts on this habitat and associated species, for example through disturbance. The site also includes some areas of scrub grassland which may hold biodiversity value. However, it is noted that the site is predominately previously developed land; the regeneration of which has the potential to help to reduce the significance of adverse effects on biodiversity.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the City, although these are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is of low risk of flooding.</p>
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The County Durham Landscape Assessment (2018) identifies that the site is located within the Urban Broad Character Area. Development of this brownfield site would act as infill between the existing residential development, and would therefore be in keeping with the surrounding urban landscape.</p> <p>The site is located within Durham City Conservation Area. Development therefore has the potential to impact upon the Conservation Area itself. Positive effects could be delivered if high quality design standards were adhered to which maintain and enhance the Conservation Area's special qualities and distinctiveness. However, considering the site is proposed for 22 flats, depending on the height of the new development it could adversely impacts views into and out of the Conservation Area, and may also impact upon setting.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if an allocation at this site will lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land as recent land classification has not been carried out in this location. According to pre-1988 agricultural land classification this land is classified as urban. Development is therefore not expected to lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, there is some uncertainty given the evidence available.</p> <p>The site is not located in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>
Population and Community	<p>With a proposed capacity of 22 flats, development of the site will contribute positively towards the local housing needs of the area. While it is noted that there is no outstanding identified housing 'need' to be met in the DCNP area, residential development would nonetheless contribute positively towards the growth and vitality of the City.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to existing residential development within Durham City and is therefore expected to positively integrate with the local community. The site also has reasonable access to services and facilities in Durham being within 800m of the City centre, schools and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station and its accompanying bus stop. However, the railway station bus connects only with Durham Cathedral and the University Science Park. There are however footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p>

SA theme	Commentary, Site A, John Street	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site has limited access to local health services, being 1.3km from Claypath medical centre. This is the only GP service within the DCNP area and provides for local residents as well as for the student population. It is noted that there are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for additional GP surgeries to meet local need. The site is within 1.5km of wider health facilities located at University Hospital of North Durham.</p> <p>In terms of access to open space, the site is within 600m of Wharton Park, within 800m of Freeman’s Quay Leisure Centre, and within 300m of allotment space on Margery Lane. The site is also within 800m of Durham Castle and Durham Museum and Heritage Centre. Being well located in terms of cultural, sport, and recreation facilities will lead to positive effects in terms of residents’ overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station, within 200m of a bus stop on the A690, and has access to a PRow adjacent to the site.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located relatively close to the City centre, its amenities, local bus routes, and a PRow. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station, with footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to the A690 (which falls within an AQMA). It is therefore considered that the development of 22 new flats may lead to a minor increase in vehicular use of this road, leading to increased traffic and subsequent minor adverse effects on quality but this is uncertain at this stage.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.5 Site B Offices at Diamond Terrace**

SA theme	Commentary, Site B, Offices at Diamond Terrace
Air quality	The site is located approximately 120m north of Durham City AQMA; which includes a section of the A691 (Framewell Gate), extending south to the Leazes Road roundabout. However it is considered that the delivery of one new dwelling at this location would not lead to significant effects on air quality.
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>The site is not located in close proximity to international or national biodiversity sites, nor within a SSSI IRZ. In terms of locally designated sites the site is within 650m of Flass Vale LNR. As the indicative capacity of the site is approximately one dwelling, development is not expected to significantly impact upon the LNR.</p> <p>In terms of habitats, the site is located adjacent to an area of woodland which coincides with the River Wear Wildlife Corridor. Development has the potential to adversely impact this habitat and associated species through disturbance. However, given the City setting of the site and assuming there is suitable mitigation at the project level, a neutral effect is anticipated. The site also includes some patches of scrub grassland which may hold biodiversity value. However, it is noted that the site is predominately previously developed land; the regeneration of which has the potential to help to reduce the significance of adverse effects on biodiversity.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the City, although these are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is of low risk of flooding.</p>
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The County Durham Landscape Assessment (2018) identifies that the site is located within the Urban Broad Character Area. This brownfield site is located on the edge of undeveloped greenfield land, however existing residential land sits in close proximity to the site. Development would therefore be in keeping with the urban landscape.</p> <p>The site is located within Durham City Conservation Area. Development therefore has the potential to impact upon the Conservation Area itself. Positive effects could be delivered if high quality design standards were adhered to which maintain and enhance the Conservation Area's special qualities, distinctiveness and setting.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if an allocation at this site will lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land as recent land classification has not been carried out in this location. According to pre-1988 agricultural land classification this land is classified as urban. Development is therefore not expected to lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, there is some uncertainty given the evidence available.</p> <p>The site is not located in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>
Population and Community	<p>With a suggestive capacity of one dwelling, development of the site will contribute positively towards the local housing needs of the area. However, it is noted that this is not expected to be significant. Nonetheless, despite there being no outstanding identified housing 'need' to be met in the Neighbourhood Plan area, residential development would contribute positively towards the growth and vitality of the City.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to existing residential development on the edge of Durham City, linking directly to the A691. The site is therefore expected to positively integrate with the City itself, having reasonable access to services and facilities located in City centre. The site is also well located for access to schools and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station and its accompanying bus stop. However, the railway station bus connects only with Durham Cathedral and the University Science Park. There are however footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site has good access to health services, being within 800m of Claypath medical centre. This is the only GP service within the DCNP area and provides for local residents as well as for the student population. It is noted that there are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for additional GP surgeries to meet local need. The site is also within 1.3km of University Hospital of North Durham.</p> <p>In terms of access to open space, the site is within 300m of The Sands, which forms part of the River Wear Corridor. The site is also within 300m of Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre and 350m from Akeley Heads Recreation Ground. Being well located in terms of community, sport, and recreation facilities will lead to positive effects in terms of residents' overall health and wellbeing.</p>

SA theme	Commentary, Site B, Offices at Diamond Terrace	
	The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station, bus stops, cycle and footpaths, and is well connected with the City centre.	
Transportation	The site is located relatively close to the City centre, its amenities, local bus routes. And PRoW. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station, with footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.6 Site C 24 (a, b, & c) The Avenue**

SA theme	Commentary, Site C, 24 (a, b, & c) The Avenue
Air quality	The site is located adjacent to the Durham City AQMA; which extends along the A690. However, it is considered that the delivery of twelve new apartments at this location would not lead to significant effects on air quality but there is an element of uncertainty at this stage.
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>The site is no located in close proximity to international or national biodiversity sites, nor within a SSSI IRZ. In terms of locally designated sites the site is within 500m of Flass Vale LNR. However, it is not considered that the delivery of twelve new apartments would significantly impact upon the LNR.</p> <p>In terms of habitats, the site is heavily vegetated, predominately made up of scrub grassland, with sparse hedges and trees along the site boundary. Development would likely adversely impact these habitats and any associated species either directly through habitat loss or indirectly through disturbance. It is noted that the Site Assessment Report Addendum (2018) identifies the site as a potential home for bat species and therefore further ecological assessment of the site would be required.</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the City, although these are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is of low risk of flooding.</p>
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The County Durham Landscape Assessment (2018) identifies that the site is located within the Urban Broad Character Area. The site is a mixture of greenfield and brownfield land and is located in a residential area with terraced properties to the south and north, and detached properties to the south. Development may impact upon views from residences from Crossgate Peth and Hawthorne Terrace (lane to rear); however, given the urban context it is not expected that development would lead to significant adverse effects on landscape.</p> <p>The site is located within Durham City Conservation Area. Development has the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself. Positive effects could be delivered if high quality design standards were adhered to which maintain and enhance the Conservation Area's special qualities, distinctiveness and setting.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if an allocation at this site will lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land as recent land classification has not been carried out in this location. According to pre-1988 agricultural land classification this land is classified as urban. Development is therefore not expected to lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, there is some uncertainty given the evidence available.</p> <p>The site is not located in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>
Population and Community	<p>The delivery of twelve new apartments will contribute positively towards the local housing needs of the area. While it is noted that there is no outstanding identified housing 'need' to be met in the DCNP area, residential development would nonetheless contribute positively towards the growth and vitality of the City.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to existing residential development within Durham City and is therefore expected to positively integrate with the local community. The site also has reasonable access to services and facilities in Durham being within 800m of the City centre, schools and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The site is located close to public transport links in the form of local footpaths, cycle routes, bus routes, and Durham railway station.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site has limited access to local health services, being 1.35km from Claypath medical centre. This is the only GP service within the DCNP area and provides for local residents as well as for the student population. It is noted that there are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for additional GP surgeries to meet local need. The site is also within 1.7km of University Hospital of North Durham.</p> <p>In terms of access to open space, the site is within 800m of Wharton Park and is also within 200m of allotment space on Margery Lane. The site is also within 800m of Durham Castle and Durham Museum and Heritage Centre. The site however has limited access to sports facilities. Nonetheless, being well located in terms of cultural, and recreation facilities will lead to positive effects in terms of residents' overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station, within 100m of a bus stop on the A690. network.</p>

SA theme	Commentary, Site C, 24 (a, b, & c) The Avenue	
Transportation	<p>The site is located relatively close to the City centre, its amenities, local bus routes and PRow. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station, with footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to the A690 (which falls within an AQMA). It is however considered that the delivery of twelve new apartments would not lead to a significant increase in traffic nor deliver significant adverse effects on air quality but there is an element of uncertainty at this stage.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects



**Table 4.7 Site D Main Street USA**

SA theme	Commentary, Site D, Main Street USA	
Air quality	<p>The site is located approximately 80m north of Durham City AQMA; which includes a section of the A691 (Framewell Gate), extending south to the Leazes Road roundabout. However it is considered that the delivery of three new dwellings at this location would not lead to significant effects on air quality.</p>	
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>The site is not located in close proximity to international or national biodiversity sites, nor within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone. In terms of locally designated sites it is within 600m of Flass Vale LNR. As the indicative capacity of the site is approximately three dwellings, development is not expected to significantly impact upon the LNR.</p> <p>In terms of habitats, the site is heavily vegetated, predominately made up of scrub grassland, with sparse hedges and trees along the site boundary. Development has the potential to adversely impact these habitats and any associated species through disturbance. However, given the City setting of the site and assuming there is suitable mitigation at the project level, a neutral effect is anticipated. The site also includes some patches of scrub grassland which may hold biodiversity value. However, it is noted that the site is predominately previously developed land; the regeneration of which has the potential to help to reduce the significance of adverse effects on biodiversity.</p>	
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village, although these are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is of low risk of flooding.</p>	
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The County Durham Landscape Assessment (2018) identifies that the site is located within the Urban Broad Character Area. The site is predominately brownfield land and would be in keeping with the existing built form, including the adjacent existing residential development and the A619. Given the sites topography (gently sloping from the south) development may impact upon views from adjacent housing. However, given the urban context it is not expected that development would lead to significant adverse effects on landscape.</p> <p>The site is located within Durham City Conservation Area. Development has the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself. Positive effects could be delivered if high quality design standards were adhered to which maintain and enhance the Conservation Area's special qualities, distinctiveness and setting.</p> <p>The site's location and visibility make it sensitive in relation to the consideration of the Durham City WHS. Development of the site has the potential to adversely impact the setting of this internationally designated feature.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>It is not possible to confirm if an allocation at this site will lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land as recent land classification has not been carried out in this location. According to pre-1988 agricultural land classification this land is classified as urban. Development is therefore not expected to lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, there is some uncertainty given the evidence available.</p> <p>The site is not located in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>With a suggestive capacity of three dwellings, development of the site will contribute positively towards the local housing needs of the area. However, it is noted that this is not expected to be significant. Nonetheless, despite there being no outstanding identified housing 'need' to be met in the Neighbourhood Plan area, residential development would contribute positively towards the growth and vitality of the City.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to existing residential development on the edge of Durham City, linking directly to the A691. The site is therefore expected to positively integrate with the City itself, having reasonable access to services and facilities located in City centre. The site is also well located for access to schools and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station and its accompanying bus stop. However, the railway station bus connects only with Durham Cathedral and the University Science Park. There are however footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p>	

SA theme	Commentary, Site D, Main Street USA		
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site has good access to health services, being within 800m of Claypath medical centre. This is the only GP service within the DCNP area and provides for local residents as well as for the student population. It is noted that there are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for additional GP surgeries to meet local need. The site is within 1.3km of University Hospital of North Durham.</p> <p>In terms of access to open space, the site is within 350m of The Sands, which forms part of the River Wear Corridor. The site is also within 350m of Freeman’s Quay Leisure Centre and 500m from Akley Heads Recreation Ground. Being well located in terms of community, sport, and recreation facilities will lead to positive effects in terms of residents’ overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station, bus stops, cycle and footpaths, and is well connected with the City centre.</p>		
Transportation	<p>The site is located relatively close to the City centre, its amenities, and local bus routes. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station, with footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p>		
<b>Key</b>			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

**Table 4.8 Site E Lovegreen**

SA theme	Commentary, Site E, Lovegreen
Air quality	<p>The site is located approximately 250m northeast of Durham City AQMA; which includes a section of the A691 (Framewell Gate), extending south to the Leazes Road roundabout. The delivery of 80 new dwellings at this location would likely lead to increased vehicular use within the AQMA, resulting in heightened levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, and an overall adverse effect on air quality.</p>
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>The site is not located in close proximity to international or national biodiversity sites, nor within a SSSI IRZ. In terms of locally designated sites the site is within 750m of Flass Vale LNR. As the indicative capacity of the site is approximately 80 dwellings, development has the potential to lead to adverse effects, for example through disturbance associated with construction.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the site is made up of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, with a small area of Priority Habitat Woodpasture and Parkland to the north east of the site. This coincides with the River Wear Wildlife Corridor. The Wildlife Corridor and Priority Habitats are likely to be rich in biodiversity, with the potential for Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species to be present. Development of the site for residential development therefore has the potential to adversely impact upon the habitats, through recreational disturbance, habitat fragmentation and/or loss, and increased levels of atmospheric pollution.</p> <p>The Lovegreen Feasibility Report (2017) identifies the site as a potential habitat for protected species (bats/badgers), and as a habitat for a colony for a rare species of woodlouse. Discussions with the County Ecology department have identified the need for further ecological impact assessments to be carried out.</p> <p>The remainder of the site is previously developed land (a car par, single dwelling and primary substation).</p>
Climate Change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the City, although these are unlikely to be significant.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, there is an area of Flood Zone 2 located within the site, to the south of Sidegate. This is of medium risk of flooding. The southern extent of the site to the north of Sidegate is also located within Flood Zone 2.</p>
Landscape and Historic Environment	<p>The County Durham Landscape Assessment (2018) identifies that the site is located within the partially Urban Broad Character Area, and partially within the Northern Wear Valley Broad Character Area (to the north of the site).</p> <p>The site is located within Durham City Conservation Area. Development has the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself, including its special qualities, distinctiveness and setting.</p> <p>The site's location and visibility make it sensitive in relation to the consideration of the Durham City WHS. Development of the site has the potential to adversely impact the setting of this internationally designated feature.</p> <p>The site is located within 70m of the Grade I listed building Crook Hall, and within 80m of two Grade II listed buildings (Barn West of Crook Hall and Barn North of Crook Hall). Development of the site has the potential to adversely impact the setting of these heritage features.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (England) this land is classified as urban. Post 1988 Agricultural Land Classification (England) is not available in this location. Nonetheless it is recognised that development of the site would lead to loss of greenfield land. The site is not located in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.</p>
Population and Community	<p>The Site Assessment Addendum indicates an indicative capacity of 80 dwellings for this site. Development of the site will therefore contribute positively towards the local housing needs of the area. While it is noted that there is no outstanding identified housing 'need' to be met in the Neighbourhood Plan area, residential development would nonetheless contribute positively towards the growth and vitality of the City.</p> <p>Given its size, is assumed that any proposal for development at this site could contribute to the improvement of existing or provision of new services/facilities. At this stage the level of improvements or provision that could be delivered is not known.</p> <p>The site is located adjacent to existing residential and commercial development on the edge of Durham City, linking directly to the A691 via Sidegate. The site is therefore expected to positively integrate with the City itself, having reasonable access to services and facilities located in City centre.</p>

SA theme	Commentary, Site E, Lovegreen	
	<p>Residents may utilise the Frankland Lane/ Weardale Way long-distance path which connects the site with the City Centre, extending along the River Wear and past the Cathedral. The site is also well located for access to schools and recreational facilities.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station and within 800m of numerous bus stops. The bus stops on Freeman’s Place connect the site with the Cathedral.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site has good access to health services, being within 800m of Claypath medical centre. This is the only GP service within the DCNP area and provides for local residents as well as for the student population. It is noted that there are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for additional GP surgeries to meet local need. The site is also within 1.5km of University Hospital of North Durham.</p> <p>In terms of access to open space, the site is within 100m of The Sands, which forms part of the River Wear Corridor. The site is also within 200m of Freeman’s Quay Leisure Centre and 600m from Akley Heads Recreation Ground. Being well located in terms of community, sport, and recreation facilities will lead to positive effects in terms of residents’ overall health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The site has good access to public transport links, being within 800m of Durham railway station, within 800m of numerous bus stops, and in close proximity to the Frankland Lane/Weardale Way long-distance path which connects the site with the City Centre.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site is located relatively close to the City centre, its amenities, and local bus routes. and PRoW. The site is also well located in terms of access to Durham railway station, with footpaths and cyclepaths running along the A690 and A691 connecting the railway station with the City centre.</p> <p>It is anticipated that residents would utilise the A690 which is located 250m from the site (and falls within an AQMA). It is therefore considered that the development of 80 new dwellings may lead to an increase in vehicular use of this road, leading to increased traffic and subsequent adverse effects on air quality.</p>	
<b>Key</b>		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

## Summary of SA site appraisal findings

4.52 **Table 4.9** below presents a summary of the findings of the site appraisal undertaken through the SA process.

**Table 4.9 Summary of SA site appraisal findings**

Site	Air quality	Biodiversity and geodiversity	Climate change	Landscape and Historic Environment	Land, soil and water resources	Population and community	Health and wellbeing	Transport
Site A	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Blue
Site B	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site C	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Blue
Site D	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site E	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Red

- 4.53 Sites B, C, and D perform well against the SA Objectives, with Site E being the least well performing option. All sites performed positively against the Health and wellbeing and Population and community SA Objectives given they are well located in terms of access to sustainable transport, the City centre, services and facilities, and sport and recreation (including open space). These positive effects have also been identified in relation to the Transportation objective for Sites B and D.
- 4.54 Site E is identified as having the potential for a negative effect against the transportation and air quality SA objectives given that it is close to the AQMA and the scale of development proposed (80 new flats/apartments respectively), which would likely lead to increased vehicular use within the AQMA, resulting in indirect adverse effects on local air quality. While the other sites are also in close proximity to the AQMA they could only accommodate a smaller scale of development which is less likely to result in a negative effect of significance. However, it should be noted that there is an element of uncertainty for Sites A and C.
- 4.55 Sites E and D perform negatively against the Landscape and Historic Environment SA Objective due to potential adverse effects on the setting of the Durham City WHS and Conservation Area. It is however noted that for all sites the potential for positive effects have been recognised in this respect if high quality design standards were adhered to which maintain and enhance the Conservation Area's special qualities, distinctiveness and setting.
- 4.56 In terms of the land, soil and water resources, uncertainty relates to the evidence base, given recent land classification has not been carried out in this location. However in the case of Site E, the loss of greenfield land is considered more of a certainty given the extent within the footprint of the site.
- 4.57 Site E performs negatively against the Biodiversity SA Objective due to the impact upon Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, which coincides with the River Wear Wildlife Corridor; and given the scale of development proposed. Sites with a significantly smaller development capacity have been assessed as neutral and uncertain in this respect given mitigation will likely sufficiently address these issues at the project level.
- 4.58 Given the scale of development proposed and areas of flood risk, only Site E is anticipated to lead to negative effects in terms of the Climate Change SA Objective.

## Choice of sites taken forward for the DCNP

- 4.59 The following text has been provided by the City of Durham Parish Council regarding the choice of sites taken forward as a proposed allocation within the DCNP.
- 4.60 When work started on the Neighbourhood Plan there were sites within the urban area capable of providing over 1,500 additional dwellings. However, many of these have subsequently been approved for

the construction of Purpose Built Student Accommodation. The few remaining areas of land potentially suitable for housing development are therefore extremely precious.

- 4.61 The County Council's estimate is that a minimum of 1,297 new dwellings are required in the DCNP area and that this requirement is already met by 639 on sites now under construction, 120 with planning permission but not yet under construction, and 488 with planning permission. Any additional suitable sites would be useful in case of non-delivery of some of the approved sites and would provide flexibility and a contingency provision. Accordingly, further sites; however small, have been sought, as detailed below in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10 Reason for selection/ rejection of sites**

Site	Indicative capacity (dwelling units)	Reason for selection/ rejection
<b>Site A - John Street</b>	22	<b>Allocated:</b> the land has previously had the benefit of planning permission for 22 residential apartments. It is in a central location near to city centre shops and the bus station. A good site for older people or for young professionals/young couples starting out.
<b>Site B - Offices at Diamond Terrace</b>	5	<b>Not allocated:</b> Offices at Diamond Terrace had been included in the Consultation Draft Neighbourhood Plan (November 2017). Unfortunately the County Council in July 2018 approved a planning application for the site for the construction of a 3 storey office building 9.5 metres high and extending 5 metres into the Green Belt. Accordingly, the site is no longer available for housing development and was excluded from the subsequent Draft Plan.
<b>Site C - 24 a, b and c The Avenue</b>	12	<b>Allocated:</b> twelve apartments have an extant planning permission but have not commenced, and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan allocates the site to confirm the principle of this development.
<b>Site D Main Street USA</b>	5	<b>Allocated:</b> this site could provide for 5 terraced houses as a continuation of the adjacent Diamond Terrace, provided that rights of way and trees and surrounding woodland are protected. The site's location and visibility make it very sensitive in relation to the paramount consideration of safeguarding the setting of the World Heritage.
<b>Site E - Sidegate electricity sub-station (part of Lovegreen)</b>	12	<b>Not allocated:</b> this site is not a formal allocation because of constraints including the fact that it lies within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3. Subject to the Sustainability Appraisal, if the constraints can be mitigated It would be suitable for terraced houses matching nearby Sidegate, provided that development proposals protect surrounding trees and woodland habitats and carry out a site-specific flood risk assessment.
<b>Site E - Council-owned car park, Sidegate (part of Lovegreen)</b>	20	<b>Not allocated:</b> this site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available. It is suitable for two or three rows of terraced houses; provided that development proposals protect surrounding trees and woodland habitats.
<b>Small site next to Sainsbury supermarket on A167</b>	2	<b>Not allocated:</b> This site is not identified as not currently suitable within the Site Assessment Addendum (2018) and therefore has not been assessed through the SA process. This site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available.

However, the aspiration is that if the site becomes available from the owner it should be included as an allocation in the final Plan. It is suitable for 1 or 2 family houses, average

		density 2 storey houses; need to protect the mature black poplar tree.
<b>Former Shell Garage, A167</b>	4	<p><b>Not allocated:</b> This site is not identified as not currently suitable within the Site Assessment Addendum (2018) and therefore has not been assessed through the SA process. This site is not a formal allocation at this stage because the owner has not declared that it is available.</p> <p>However, the aspiration is that if the site becomes available from the owner it should be included as an allocation in the final Plan. Although previously approved for 8 units, the surrounding house-style indicates that 4 average-to-low density 2 storey houses would be more suitable, with access via St Johns Road rather than the A167; important to keep trees on the boundary of the site; may be costly to develop to deal with underground fuel storage tank.</p>

## Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan and development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 4.62 To support the implementation of the vision for the DCNP, discussed in **Section 2.13**, the DCNP puts forward 29 policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 4.63 The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are set out in **Table 4.11** below.

**Table 4.11 Durham City Neighbourhood Plan policies**

<b>Theme 1: A City with a Sustainable Future</b>	
<b>Policy S1</b>	Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions
<b>Policy S2</b>	The Requirement for Masterplans
<b>Theme 2a: A Beautiful and Historic City – Heritage</b>	
<b>Policy H1</b>	Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site
<b>Policy H2</b>	The Conservation Areas
<b>Policy H3</b>	Our Neighbourhood Outside the Conservation Areas
<b>Policy H4</b>	Heritage Assets
<b>Theme 2b: A Beautiful and Historic City – Green Infrastructure</b>	
<b>Policy G1</b>	Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure
<b>Policy G2</b>	Designation of Local Green Spaces
<b>Policy G3</b>	Creation of the Emerald Network
<b>Policy G4</b>	Enhancing the Beneficial Use of the Green Belt
<b>Theme 3: A City with a Diverse and Resilient Economy</b>	
<b>Policy E1</b>	Larger Employment Sites
<b>Policy E2</b>	Other Employment Sites
<b>Policy E3</b>	Retail Development
<b>Policy E4</b>	Evening Economy
<b>Policy E5</b>	Visitor Attractions
<b>Policy E6</b>	Visitor Accommodation
<b>Theme 4: A City with Attractive and Affordable Places to Live</b>	
<b>Policy D1</b>	Land for Residential Development
<b>Policy D2</b>	Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)
<b>Policy D3</b>	Student Accommodation in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
<b>Policy D4</b>	Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities
<b>Policy D5</b>	Affordable Housing
<b>Policy D6</b>	Building Housing to the Highest Standards
<b>Theme 5: A City with a Modern and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure</b>	
<b>Policy T1</b>	Sustainable transport accessibility and design



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**Policy T2** Residential Car Parking

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**Policy T3** Residential Storage for Cycles and Mobility Aids

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**Theme 6: A Theme with an Enriched Community Life**

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**Policy C1** Provision for Arts and Culture

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**Policy C2** Provision of New Community Facilities

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**Policy C3** Protection of an Existing Community Facility

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**Policy C4** Health Care and Social Care Facilities

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## Preliminary assessment of the Pre-Submission DCNP

4.64 A detailed high-level appraisal was undertaken for the Pre-Submission Regulation 14 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, including an assessment of individual sites and policies outlined above. This appraisal is presented within the SA Report accompanying Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan (April 2019).

4.65 The following recommendations were made for improving the sustainability performance of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- There is potential for the inclusion of a commitment to 'biodiversity net gain' to strengthen the DCNP; likely within Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions), Policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure), or Policy G3 (Creation of the Emerald Network). Securing net gain can include through measures such as connecting sites, habitat restoration and habitat re-creation. Securing biodiversity net gain will improve resilience to current and future pressures; as identified through the NPPF (para 170) (2018), and the Governments 25-year Environment Plan (2018).
- Policy D6 (Building Housing to the Highest Standards) supports an energy efficient built environment through requiring that *"all new housing, and extensions and other alterations to existing housing, must be of high quality design relating to functionality, adaptability and resilience."* However, this could be positively improved by including a specific reference to supporting design features that improve energy efficiency and reduces carbon dioxide emissions.
- It is considered that Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development) could be improved to demonstrate that the important heritage features have been/will be considered through the development process. This is considering that all three site allocations are located within the Durham City Conservation Area and have the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself, including its special qualities, distinctiveness and setting. Additionally, the location and visibility of Main Street USA indicate that it is also likely to be sensitive in relation to the consideration of the WHS. In accordance with advice from Historic England, it is considered that Policy D1 could be positively improved by referencing the Conservation Area Appraisals and World Heritage Site Management Plan. This will provide an appropriate basis for the protection and enhancement of the heritage assets.
- The sensitivity and vulnerability of the historic environment is further recognised through Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions) and S2 (The Requirement for Masterplans), requiring high-quality design be delivered through new development. It is considered that these DCNP policies may also be strengthened through referencing the WHS Management Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals.

4.66 The DCNP has subsequently been amended to take the above recommendations into account where possible.

## 5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

### Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings in relation to the Submission version of the DCNP. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the DCNP under the eight SA theme headings; and
- The overall conclusions at this current stage..

### Appraisal method

5.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SA and that are linked to the SA objectives, see **Table 3.2**.

5.3 For each theme 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

5.4 Every effort is made to identify/ evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

## Appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan

### Air quality

5.5 An Air Quality Monitoring Area (AQMA) was declared in May 2011, and extended in July 2014, for those parts of the DCNP area where air quality is a risk to human health (i.e. the A690 from Gilesgate roundabout to Stonebridge; Gilesgate Bank (leading to Sunderland Road and Marshall Terrace); New Elvet; Claypath; Framwellgate Peth).<sup>9</sup> In order to address the issues an Air Quality Action Plan was approved by DCC in June 2016.<sup>10</sup> This is line with the UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide.<sup>11</sup>

5.6 It is recognised that the DCNP has limited means for addressing this issue as the cause is principally vehicular traffic exhaust emissions. Nonetheless, the land use, traffic and development management dimensions within the Action Plan (2016) are reflected in a number of DCNP policies, contributing positively towards improving local air quality. In this context, Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design) promotes sustainable transport accessibility and design, which will encourage the uptake of sustainable travel, reducing reliance on the private vehicle, and therefore leading to a potential reduction in transport emissions.

<sup>9</sup> Durham County Council (2011); (2014) Durham City Air Quality Management Area Order 2011; and 2014 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3825/Air-quality-in-Durham-City>> last accessed 19/11/18

<sup>10</sup> AECOM (2016) Durham County Council air quality action plan for Durham City [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3825/Air-quality-in-Durham-City>> last accessed 19/11/18

<sup>11</sup> Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Department for Transport (2017) Air Quality Plan for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in UK [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017>> last accessed 19/11/18

- 5.7 Policy T2 (Residential Car Parking) and Policy T3 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design) also have a strong focus on promoting sustainable transport use, including through seeking to limit on-street parking provision in residential areas and enhance opportunity for walking and cycling.
- 5.8 Air quality in Durham City will also be supported by the policies which promote enhancements to the existing supply of green spaces across the DCNP area. This includes policies G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure); G2 (Designation of Local Green Spaces); and G3 (Creation of the Emerald Network). In addition to encouraging walking and cycling through enhanced connections and improvements to the public realm, the provision of new open space and planting and landscaping will support the dissipation and absorption of pollutants.
- 5.9 Looking specifically at the housing site allocations Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development), all three housing sites are located in close proximity to an AQMA which coincides with the A690. While the proposed development sites are not delivering a significant level of new housing (35 new flats/ apartments/ dwellings in total) it is nonetheless considered that development has the potential to lead to minor adverse effects. Notably, the development of 22 new flats at John Street which is located adjacent to the AQMA and the A690 would likely lead to increased vehicular use within the AQMA, resulting in heightened levels of NO<sub>2</sub>, and may lead to minor adverse effects on air quality.
- 5.10 Mitigation provided through Policy D1 and other DCNP policies (discussed above) should however ensure any adverse effects are lessened. For example, in accordance with Policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure), Policy D1 requires that *“adequate green and open space is included”* in development proposals. The provision of new green space and planting and landscaping will support the dissipation and absorption of pollutants.
- 5.11 Overall, it is considered likely that poor air quality will continue to be a key issue for Durham City, and while the proposals within the DCNP will increase traffic within the DCNP area and the AQMA, it is unlikely to be of significance. The DCNP policies seek to support the delivery of green infrastructure and encourage sustainable travel, and overall it is unlikely to lead to residual negative effects. A **neutral effect** on the air quality SA objective is anticipated.

## Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 5.12 There are no European or nationally designated sites for biodiversity within the DCNP area. In terms of locally designated sites there are two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) (Akley Wood and Flass Vale), and eleven Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) located throughout the DCNP area. In terms of the housing site allocations identified through Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development), these are not located within or in close proximity to any of the locally designated biodiversity sites.
- 5.13 The City of Durham Local Plan (2004) saved policies provides protection for biodiversity. Particularly, Policy E16 (Nature Conservation – The Natural Environment) seeks to *“as far as possible avoid any unacceptable harm to nature conservation interests as a result of the development”* and *“include compensation measures to offset any harm to identified nature conservation interests which cannot be completely avoided or mitigated”*. This is supported by Policy E19 (Wildlife Corridors) and E20 (Local Nature Reserves), and policies 28 (Green Infrastructure) and 43 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the emerging Local Plan (2018) which further seek to avoid adverse effects on biodiversity features and ecological networks.
- 5.14 It is considered that the DCNP Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions), (Policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure), and Policy G3 (Creation of the Emerald Network)) reinforces saved and emerging Local Plan policies, seeking to avoid a net loss of biodiversity. In line with Policy G3, *“proposals for the purpose of improving the biodiversity of sites in the Emerald Network will be supported.”* Emerging Local Plan Policy 43 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) actively supports opportunities for biodiversity net gain, and this is reflected through DCNP Policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure) which states that *“In order to enhance the nature conservation value of Our Neighbourhood and provide net gains for biodiversity, proposals that:*
- *restore damaged habitats; or*

- *re-create lost habitats; or*
  - *create new wildlife habitats, particularly habitats supporting local protected and priority species*
- 5.15 *will be encouraged and supported.*” Securing biodiversity net gain will lead to long term positive effects through improving resilience to current and future pressures; as identified through the NPPF (para 170) (2019), and the Governments 25-year Environment Plan (2018).
- 5.16 At the local level, further to the direct effects of policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure), positive indirect effects are anticipated for the biodiversity SA objective in relation to a number of DCNP policies, including Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions), G2 (Designation of Local Green Spaces), G3 (Creation of the Emerald Network), G4 (Enhancing the Beneficial Use of the Green Belt), Policy H2 (The Conservation Areas) and Policy H3 (Our Neighbourhood Outside the Conservation Areas). These policies provide indirect support for biodiversity by offering further protection of landscape and heritage features, and natural spaces that contribute to ecological connectivity.
- 5.17 Specifically, the designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) (Policy G2) provides local protection to the natural environment. This will help to maintain / improve habitat connectivity, ensuring that any development in the area should aim to support the integrity and connectivity of ecological networks in the DCNP area.
- 5.18 Overall, it is considered that existing policy provisions afforded by the higher level NPPF (2018) and saved policies of the Local Plan (2004), and emerging Local Plan (2018) will ensure that development does not lead to any significant negative effects on biodiversity. The DCNP could enhance biodiversity at the local level, taking a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.
- 5.19 The DCNP is therefore predicted to have a residual **neutral effect** on biodiversity.

## Climate change

- 5.20 Durham County Council addresses the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change in its 'Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan' (County Durham Environment Partnership, 2015). This key document provides a context for consideration of sustainable development in the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan and the two documents are complementary when taken together.
- 5.21 In terms of climate change mitigation, road transport is the dominant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the DCNP area; particularly given the AQMA present (declared in May 2011 and extended in July 2014). The Durham County Council Air Quality Action Plan for Durham City (2016) therefore underpins a number of DCNP policies, namely Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions), policies G1 – G4, and policies T1 – T3.<sup>12</sup> These policies seek to deliver a cleaner and more attractive sustainable environment; promoting development which encourages sustainable travel choices, leading to reduced carbon emissions.
- 5.22 It is recognised that Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development) has the potential to lead to adverse effects on climate change through the delivery of new housing development. This would likely lead to increased traffic levels, notably along the A690 which coincides within the AQMA, resulting in heightened levels of NO<sub>2</sub>. However, given the level of development proposed (35 new homes) and the mitigation set out within the supporting DCNP policies (discussed above and below), the impact is anticipated to be negligible.
- 5.23 Energy efficiency is identified within the DCNP as a key principle of importance to the local community. In this context, Figure 1: The Climate Crisis and the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the relevant policy provisions of the higher level planning framework, including further provisions provided through the NPPF

<sup>12</sup> AECOM (2016) Durham County Council air quality action plan for Durham City [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3825/Air-quality-in-Durham-City>> last accessed 19/11/18

(2018), the Durham Climate Change Strategy (2015) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (2014).<sup>13,14</sup> DCNP Policy D6 (Building Housing to the Highest Standards) supports an energy efficient built environment through requiring that “*all new housing, and extensions and other alterations to existing housing, must be of high quality design relating to functionality, adaptability and resilience.*” However, this could be positively improved by including a specific reference to supporting design features that improve energy efficiency and reduces carbon dioxide emissions.

- 5.24 The issue of climate change adaptation is addressed in the DCNP through protecting the green infrastructure and flood plains. The DCNP highlights the need to address localised flood risk; recognising that the River Wear flows through the DCNP area and there are Zone 3 Flood Risk areas on both banks, with existing developments suffering repeated flooding from runoff and from the river. Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions) therefore requires that new development avoid sites in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and incorporate sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) where necessary. This is underpinned by the provisions of the NPPF (2018), and further supported by saved Durham City Local Plan (2004) and emerging Local Plan (2018) policies; particularly saved Policy U9 (Watercourses) and emerging Policy 37 (Water Management). In terms of the allocations within the DCNP, none are located within an area of fluvial flood risk.
- 5.25 Policies G1 – G4 seek protect and enhance the network of green spaces and corridors across the DCNP area. Delivering enhancements to the green infrastructure network will be a key means of helping the DCNP area adapt to the effects of climate change, leading to long-term minor positive effects. This includes through helping to regulate extreme temperatures and regulate surface water run-off.
- 5.26 In conclusion, whilst the above approaches will contribute positively towards addressing climate change, and responding to the climate change emergency, these are not seen to be significant in the context of the SA process. As such, the DCNP is predicted to have a residual **neutral effect** on climate change. There is the potential for some minor long term positive effects, but these are uncertain at this stage and dependent on the implementation of proposed measures.

## Landscape and historic environment

- 5.27 Durham City’s landscape is characterised by the deeply incised valley of the River Wear, which creates the dramatic setting of the Durham City World Heritage Site (WHS). In line with the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment (2008) and County Durham Landscape Strategy (2008), the DCNP seeks to ensure that the key qualities of the River Wear gorge and of the landscapes within the DCNP area are suitably protected.<sup>15,16</sup> In this context, Policy S2 (The Requirement for Masterplans) requires that “*a masterplan for all major development sites will be required to ensure the highest quality design in our historic neighbourhood.*” Notably, in accordance with Policy S2, masterplans must “*minimise any impact on views and setting of the World Heritage site and avoid harm to the amenities of neighbouring areas, particularly Conservation Areas*” and “*demonstrate that [the particular development site] adds distinction to the City’s landscape and townscape within the site*”
- 5.28 The City’s surrounding landscape is further protected through policies within Theme 2a (A Beautiful and Historic City – Heritage). In this context, Policy H1 (Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site) requires that proposals for development “*must be shown to sustain, conserve and enhance the asset’s setting and views.*” This includes landscape setting; which contributes to the WHS’s Outstanding Universal Value (UNESCO, 2008).
- 5.29 As a large proportion of the DCNP area is contained within the inner setting of the WHS, with many important viewpoints contributing significantly to its setting. The DCNP identifies that these viewpoints

<sup>13</sup> Durham County Council (2015) County Durham Climate Change Strategy [online] available at: <<http://www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk/article/8521/Documents>> last accessed 23/11/18

<sup>14</sup> Durham County Council (2015) Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 [online] available at: <<http://www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk/article/8453/Sustainable-Community-Strategy>> last accessed 23/11/18

<sup>15</sup> Durham County Council (2008) The County Durham Landscape character assessment [online] available at: <<http://www.durhamlandscape.info/article/10009/County-Durham-Landscape-Character>> last accessed 23/11/18

<sup>16</sup> Durham County Council (2008) The County Durham Landscape Strategy [online] available at: <<http://www.durhamlandscape.info/article/10010/County-Durham-Landscape-Strategy>> last accessed 23/11/18

must therefore be protected from inappropriate development, as identified within the County Council's Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and WHS Management Plan (2017)). Green Belt comprises a significant proportion of the DCNP area; the essential characteristics being their openness and their permanence (NPPF, 2018). Protecting the Green Belt through Policy G4 (Enhancing the Beneficial Use of the Green Belt) will contribute towards conserving and enhancing the setting of the WHS, and the character of the City as a whole. It is recognised that there are higher level protections afforded to the Green Belt, notably the NPPF (2018), saved Local Plan (2004) Policy E1 (Durham City Green Belt) and emerging Local Plan (2018) Policy 21 (Green Belt). Reinforcing the higher-level protections afforded to the landscape will support the conservation and enhancement of the special character of the area; highlighting the importance of the green setting.

- 5.30 The remaining policies (G1 – G3) within Theme 2b (A Beautiful and Historic City – Green Infrastructure) provide some further protection to the landscape, recognising the importance of the surrounding green wooded hills, ridge lines and green fingers of land which penetrate into the City and create a unique setting for the Cathedral and Castle. A number of the Green Spaces of “*significant environmental, landscape or historical value*” within the DCNP area are designated as Local Green Spaces through Policy G2 (Local Green Spaces). This provides a level of protection and support for improvement, to the local landscape, with the potential for long term positive effects.
- 5.31 The heritage of the DCNP area includes Durham Cathedral and Castle WHS, two Conservation Areas (Durham City and Burnhall), listed buildings (including Grades I, II\* and II), a statutory designated registered park and garden and registered battlefield, archaeology (either scheduled monuments or non-designated remains), and many locally cherished buildings and sites. The DCNP recognises the sensitivity and vulnerability of the historic environment, particularly the issues that arise from the capacity to accommodate change. It is recognised that the significance of any heritage asset can be generated by its setting; a very important issue for the DCNP. Given the national and local importance of the historic assets and environment, Policies H1 – H4 seek to establish robust standards for development proposals, underpinned by the aims and objectives of the WHS Management Plan (2017) and Durham City Conservation Area Appraisal (2016). Specifically, Policy H1 (Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site) requires proposals for development to include “*high quality design*”, use “*materials and finishes appropriate to the vernacular, context and setting*”, and seek “*balance in terms of scale, density, massing, form, layout, landscaping and open spaces*”. This complies with the Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham (2014) and will contribute positively towards providing the strongest possible protection and enhancement measures for the heritage assets and townscape qualities in the DCNP area.<sup>17</sup>
- 5.32 Theme 3 (A City with a Diverse and Resilient Economy) recognises that the City's heritage is a major contribution to the tourist economy, with Durham Cathedral regularly cited as one of the greatest ecclesiastical buildings of Europe. A main aim of the WHS Management Plan (2017) is to “*support visitor and communities' access, their enjoyment of the Site and its benefits*”. Therefore, the DCNP seeks to improve facilities and the attractiveness of the City's tourism attractions, particularly through Policy E5 (Visitor Attractions). This will contribute positively towards protecting and enhancing the areas historic core and ensuring its permanence as a tourist attraction. Additionally, where development does impact upon a heritage asset, in line with Policy H4 (Heritage Assets) proposals “*should demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the asset and give details of how the development proposal will impact on the asset and / or its setting.*” It is also highlighted through Policy H4 that “*Harm to a non-designated heritage asset, or an important element of a non-designated heritage asset, should be avoided if viable or practicable.*” This is of particular importance considering the number of heritage assets at risk as identified by DCC and Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. This will contribute positively towards ensuring that the unique historic environment of national and international importance is protected and enhanced.
- 5.33 In terms of the allocations within the DCNP, all three site allocations are located within the Durham City Conservation Area and therefore have the potential to adversely impact upon the Conservation Area itself, including its special qualities, distinctiveness and setting. The location and visibility of Main Street USA mean that development at this site could have impacts on the setting of the WHS. Policy D1 (Land

<sup>17</sup> County Durham Partnership (2014) The Sustainable Community Strategy for County Durham 2014 – 2030 [online] available at: <<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s39686/SCS.pdf>> last accessed 11/12/18

for Residential Development) seeks to address potential adverse effects, requiring that new development be of high quality design, using “a style sympathetic to that of existing housing in the local area” and include “adequate green and open space”. Policy D1 further requires that development for housing “ensure no adverse impact on the Conservation Areas and the World Heritage Site.” Acknowledging the importance of these heritage assets and the need to ensure their protection will likely sufficiently mitigate against any residual adverse effects. This is in accordance with the objectives of the Conservation Area Appraisals and World Heritage Site Management Plan.

- 5.34 Assuming the above recommendation will be incorporated into Policy D1, it is considered that the DCNP, alongside the higher-level policy suite, provides a robust framework for the protection and enhancement of landscape character and the historic environment. However, careful consideration will need to be given to heritage features (namely the WHS and Conservation Areas) in the design and layout of any new development; particularly the allocations proposed within Durham City Conservation Area. **Uncertain minor negative effects** are therefore anticipated due to the sensitivity of the historic environment and the potential for site allocations to adversely impact upon the setting of the WHS and/or the Durham City Conservation Area. It is however noted that the any mitigation provided may result in a residual neutral effect; however, this is uncertain at this stage.

## Land, soil and water resources

- 5.35 Recent land classification has not been carried out in relation to the sites allocated within the DCNP. However according to pre-1988 agricultural land classification all sites are located on land classified as urban; with a significant proportion being located on brownfield land. Development is therefore not expected to lead to a loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. However, there is some minor uncertainty given the evidence available.
- 5.36 The River Wear lies in the Northumbria River Basin District. A management plan for this river basin has been produced (2016); and the DCNP seeks to ensure any new development aligns with the framework identified for protecting and enhancing the local water resource.<sup>18</sup> In this context Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions) requires that new development “avoid air, land and water pollution”, and “efficiently utilise land and water”.
- 5.37 The DCNP’s wider focus on supporting green assets and facilitating enhancements to the Green Infrastructure network will further support the quality of land and water resources. This will promote the ability of natural processes to support soil and water quality. Key policies in this regard include Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions) and those listed within Theme 2b (A Beautiful and Historic City – Green Infrastructure) (Policies G1 – G4).
- 5.38 Overall, the DCNP is predicted to lead to **long term significant positive effects** in relation to this SA theme, due to the development of brownfield land and protection of local green assets.

## Population and community

- 5.39 Although the housing requirement for the DCNP area is being met through existing commitments and the allocation in the CDP Preferred Options document (2018); the DCNP allocates an additional three housing sites for development to boost supply and provide flexibility and contingency in case of non-delivery. Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development) allocates approximately 36 dwellings (a mixture of houses and apartments), at John Street, Main Street USA, and The Avenue, contributing towards meeting the local housing needs of the area. This will lead to long term positive effects in this respect.
- 5.40 The DCNP identifies a further four sites for allocation, with the intention being that they are allocated in the final DCNP if the issues identified can be resolved. These issues include availability of sites and environmental constraints such as flood risk. To maximise the contribution that these and any other sites

<sup>18</sup> The Environment Agency (2016) Northumbria River Basin District Management Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northumbria-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>> last accessed 26/11/18

make towards appropriate residential developments, Policy D1 (Land for Residential Development) offers support for high densities *“in areas that are characterised by existing higher densities”*, provided that *“adequate green and open space provision”* is included. This is supported by Policy D6 (Building Housing to the Highest Standards), contributing positively towards delivering high quality development that is well-located to the existing built up area.

- 5.41 It is recognised that high-quality design is further required through Policy S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions) and S2 (The Requirement for Masterplans). In this context, Policy S1 requires that new development *“harmonises with its context in terms of scale, layout, density, massing, height, materials, colour, and hard and soft landscaping”*. This positively acknowledges the sensitivity and vulnerability of the historic environment, particularly the issues that arise from the capacity of this environment to accommodate change. The DCNP policies positively establish the standards and limits placed upon development proposals, as identified through higher-level policy. This will lead to positive effects in terms of ensuring new development harmonises with the area rather than overwhelming it. It is considered that the DCNP policies may benefit in this respect from further reference to the WHS Management Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals.
- 5.42 Appropriate housing development to meet the different needs of the population in the area is greatly affected by pressures for Durham University student accommodation; particularly given that the 2,029 student houses and flats represents 30% of all residential properties in the DCNP area. In this context, DCNP Policy D2 (Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)) supports the PBSA allocations set out within the CDP Preferred Options document (2018); however, outside of these allocations sets criteria for new, extensions to, or conversions of PBSA. This is with the intention of *“promoting the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities and maintain an appropriate housing mix.”*
- 5.43 The loss of family housing due to conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) is also a key issue in this respect given the anticipated high rate of growth of Durham University student numbers. Policy D3 (Student Accommodation in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)) therefore seeks to limit development in this respect, requiring that in all cases development will not be permitted if (amongst other requirements) *“more than 10% of the total number of residential units including those in Purpose Built Student Accommodation within 100 metres of the application site are already in use, or have planning permission for use, as HMOs or student accommodation exempt from council tax charges”*. This is in accordance with the emerging Local Plan Policy 17 (Durham University Development, Purpose Built Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation) and will contribute positively towards addressing the long-standing issues of 'studentification' and the resulting unbalanced community.
- 5.44 The DCNP requires that new development cater for a wide range of housing needs, notably those of the student population, families, and of the elderly. In this context, Policies D4 (Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities) and D5 (Affordable Housing) seek to address the issues in terms of affordability of the existing and future housing stock and the needs arising from the population age structure in the DCNP area. This is in line with requirements set by the higher level saved Local Plan (2004) policies (including Policy H12 Affordable Housing) and emerging Local Plan (2018) policies (including Policy 16 Addressing Housing Need and Policy 20 Type and Mix of Housing), with the potential for long term positive effects for communities and quality of life.
- 5.45 The DCNP recognises that Durham City is an important provider of jobs for the wider County and beyond. Policy E1 (Larger Employment Sites) supports existing business sectors; namely Durham University (providing over 8,000 jobs), Durham County Council (providing 2,000 jobs), University Hospital of North Durham (sharing the major part of 7,000 jobs in the Foundation Trust's area), and Government offices (providing over 700 jobs). Given the level of economic activity and therefore opportunity for growth within the area, the DCNP sets out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic development. Policies E1 (Larger Employment Sites), E2 (Other Employment Sites) and E3 (Retail Investment) identify sites and set criteria for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.
- 5.46 Policies E1 and E2 make provision for new employment opportunities, utilising the two largest available sites on non-Green Belt land. Notably, Aykley Heads is a strategic employment site identified for prestige offices, business incubators and start-up businesses that fall within use classes B1a (Business - Offices)



- and B1b (Business - Research & Development). This supports the North East Strategic Economic Plan (2017) which recognises the three areas of the service economy for growth are: financial, professional and business services; transport logistics; and education.<sup>19</sup> This will lead to long term positive effects in terms of the population and community SA objective, supporting existing and future employment needs.
- 5.47 Policy E3 (Retail Investment) seeks to promote Durham City as a significant retail and service centre, supporting positive business and service provision in the DCNP area where it enables the City to flourish. This will support the vitality and viability of communities, meeting identified local service and infrastructure needs.
- 5.48 Theme 3 of the DCNP (A City with a Diverse and Resilient Economy) recognises the role of tourism in Durham City. The City's heritage is a major contributor to the tourist economy and provides the setting for a number of regular events such as the biennial Lumière weekend; attracting an estimated 200,000 visitors in 2015 (Policy Research Group, St Chad's College, Durham University, 2015). Supporting the visitor economy, namely through Policies E4 – 6 will contribute positively towards protecting and enhancing the areas historic core; providing economic support for the heritage assets and the wider DCNP area. This will deliver long term positive effects in terms of the population and community SA theme.
- 5.49 A main aim of the DCNP is to maintain and enhance the City's high level of accessibility. In this context, the draft County Durham Strategy Cycling and Walking Action Plan, 2018–2028 (2018) seeks to develop and maintain a more comprehensive sustainable transport network; contributing to economic growth by encouraging cycling tourism and reducing car travel.<sup>20</sup> This is in accordance with Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design) which requires development proposals to demonstrate best practice in respect of sustainable transport accessibility and design. It is recognised that DCC will provide pre-application advice on the level of assessment required, which might be a full Transport Assessment, a Transport Statement, or a statement of accessibility within a Design and Access Statement. This is likely to lead to long term positive effects in terms of community relations and quality of life, by improving both the accessibility and function of key services and facilities.
- 5.50 Durham City functions as a community and cultural hub for the DCNP area and the surrounds. Such services and facilities comprise: community facilities, cultural facilities, religious establishments, sports fields and children's playgrounds. Policies C1 – C4 within Theme 6 (A City with an Enriched Community Life) proactively support an enriched artistic, active and cultural life for the benefits of residents and visitors alike; improving and enhancing the community offer where possible. This will likely deliver long term positive effects in terms of community cohesion, promoting active, engaged neighbourhoods with low levels of deprivation.
- 5.51 Overall, the DCNP is predicted to have residual **long term significant positive effect** on population and community. It is thought that the DCNP will support the various needs of the local community, addressing studentification in the DCNP area, as well as improving local service and facilities provision in terms of their quality and function as well as their accessibility. The DCNP will also support the growth of the local economy, recognising the extensive employment and tourism offer of Durham City, and the benefits afforded to the local community in the long term. This will positively support the overall quality of life of residents and visitors.

## Health and wellbeing

- 5.52 The health and wellbeing of residents will be supported by the DCNP policies that seek to protect and encourage a high quality public realm, local distinctiveness and townscape character. In this context, Theme 2a: A Beautiful and Historic City – Heritage seeks to ensure that Durham City's local heritage will be conserved and enhanced for the cultural benefit, and health and wellbeing of present and future generations. Policies H1 – 5 require development include high quality design which harmonises with the

<sup>19</sup> North East Local Enterprise Partnership (2017) North East Strategic Economic Plan [online] available at: <<https://www.nelep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/North-East-SEP-FINAL-March-2017.pdf>> last accessed 12/12/18

<sup>20</sup> Durham County Council (2018) County Durham Strategy Cycling and Walking Action Plan 2018–2028 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/25438/SCWDP-Action-Plan/pdf/SCWDP2018-ActionPlan.pdf?m=636735566441270000>> last accessed 12/12/18

existing heritage offer of the area, namely the WHS (Policy H1) and the Conservation Areas (Policy H2). This reinforces the importance of the green setting of these assets. It is recognised that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence (NPPF, 2018). Protecting the Green Belt through Policy G4 (Enhancing the Beneficial Use of the Green Belt) will therefore contribute towards preserving the setting of the WHS and the character of the City as a whole.

- 5.53 Policy G4 further states that proposals within the Green Belt land in the DCNP area West of the A167 from Browney Bridge to Nevilles Cross will be supported for the purpose of *“improving access (particularly for people with disabilities), green corridors, landscape, or biodiversity, or for enhancing visual amenity” [...] where proposals enhance the outer bowl of the World Heritage Site, and do not cause significant harm to the overall quality of the Green Belt environment, particularly its openness.* It is considered that maintaining and enhancing the environmental, social, and cultural value/ attractiveness of the DCNP area will positively affect residents’ quality of life, contributing to the satisfaction of residents with their neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 5.54 A key contributor to the attractiveness of the DCNP area is the network of green spaces and green corridors. However, it is recognised that the Open Space Assessment (2018) has identified an existing quantitative shortfall in the provision of all types of open space in the DCNP area (this includes allotments, amenity Green Space, Park and Recreation Grounds and Play Space).<sup>21</sup> Any future housing growth has the potential to exacerbate this situation, and therefore, the need to protect existing open space and provide new open space through development is a key priority for the DCNP. The Open Space Assessment (2018) also highlights the importance of improving the access to and quality of existing open spaces to improve capacity. In this context, Policy G1 (Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure) seeks to ensure that existing Green Infrastructure assets are protected, and where possible, on-site provision of open space within new development will be delivered. This is in accordance with the County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (2012) and is further supported by Policy D6 (Building Housing to the Highest Standards) among others.
- 5.55 The designation of Local Green Spaces (Policy G2) provides local protection to the natural environment, supporting Policies G1, G3 and G4 in maximising the value and benefits of Durham’s natural environment. This is in accordance with the Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham (2014) and will support the health and wellbeing of residents by enhancing access to open space, facilitating improvements in levels of physical activity, and enhancing social interaction between residents.<sup>22</sup> This will promote physical and psychological well-being with the potential for long term positive effects on health and wellbeing.
- 5.56 There is only one GP service within the DCNP area (Claypath surgery) which provides for local residents. Most of the students are registered with the University Health Service, which is part of the Claypath and University Medical Group and has separate premises in Green Lane. With the University planning to expand student numbers by 5,700 over the next ten years it is likely that expansion of the University Health Service will be necessary. In this context, Policy C4 (Health Care and Social Care Facilities) supports development proposals for Health Centres, Surgeries, Clinics, Nursing Homes and Residential Care Homes; where certain criteria are met. This includes being *“well related to residential areas”* and *“close to public transport routes”*; ensuring residents have suitable accessibility to essential services. It is however also noted that all surgeries in and around Durham City are accepting new patients; which may reduce pressure on capacity at Claypath surgery.
- 5.57 Overall, the DCNP is considered likely to lead to **significant long term positive effects** for this SA theme, mainly through providing new homes to meet local needs (including affordable homes) and through Green Infrastructure enhancements and protected access to green spaces.

<sup>21</sup> Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum (2018) Assessment of Open Spaces in Our Neighbourhood

<sup>22</sup> Durham County Council (2014) Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham [online] available at:

<<http://www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk/media/12760/Sustainable-Community-Strategy-2014---2030/pdf/SCS2014.pdf>> last accessed 12/12/18

## Transportation

- 5.58 Many aspects of transport are matters outside the scope and remit of a Neighbourhood Plan and as such the DCNP places reliance on higher level planning policy to deliver improved transport in the DCNP area. This includes the Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy 2016-2033 (2016) and the Durham Local Transport Plan 3: Transport Strategy (20).<sup>23,24</sup> However, at a local level, the DCNP seeks to contribute positively towards alleviating traffic issues where possible, recognising that a key issue for the DCNP area is the congestion caused by motor and pedestrian traffic on the road network.
- 5.59 In this context, the Durham City Traffic Survey 2015 (2016) found that around 33% of vehicular traffic trips passed through Durham City and 47,000 vehicles cross Milburngate Bridge every day; only 5% of vehicular trips were made wholly within the City centre. Most of the traffic is to and from locations within County Durham but there were also journeys to and from Sunderland, Newcastle and Gateshead.<sup>25</sup> Using 2011 Census travel to work data it is possible to get a picture of travel patterns into and out of the DCNP area. The majority of journeys are by car (77%), with 11% on foot, 10% by bus, 1% by bicycle and 1% by train. However, looking just at journeys to work which both start and end in the area, 60% are on foot, 32% by car, 4% by bus and 4% by bicycle.
- 5.60 The high percentage of journeys on foot likely relates to the DCNP area being a compact and therefore walkable environment. Most of the built-up area can be reached in 30 minutes from the market place; however, the steepness of routes can prove difficult for those with mobility issues. Theme 5: A City with a Modern and Sustainable Transport Infrastructure (Policies T1 – T3) seeks to address these concerns first and foremost through proposing measures to encourage sustainable travel modes.
- 5.61 Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design) seeks to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements within the DCNP area, improving access to high quality public transport facilities. This is in accordance with the draft County Durham Strategy Cycling and Walking Action Plan, 2018–2028 (2018) and the Walk, Cycle, Ride: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for County Durham 2015–2018 (2015). They seek to develop and maintain a more comprehensive sustainable transport network; contributing to economic growth by encouraging cycling tourism and reducing car travel.<sup>26,27</sup> The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2015) in particular recognises that there is little dedicated provision for cycling aside from a few routes sharing pedestrian footways. It therefore seeks to improve existing routes, creating and promoting well-designed, high-quality active travel paths. This is supported by numerous DCNP policies, namely policies S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions), S2 (The Requirement for Masterplans), T1 (Sustainable Transport Accessibility and Design), and T3 (Residential Storage for Cycles and Mobility Aids) and will positively influence travel and lifestyle choices, safely and sustainably connecting the DCNP area. Long term positive effects are anticipated in this respect.
- 5.62 Overall, it is considered likely that high car reliance will continue to be a key issue for the DCNP area, and that the proposals within the DCNP are unlikely to deliver significant improvements in this respect. **Neutral effects** are therefore anticipated in relation to this SA theme. However, it is recognised that higher-level planning policy seeks to maximise the potential to connect and improve the pedestrian and cycle network to promote these modes of travel where possible and convenient. This is anticipated to improve accessibility overall for the majority of residents and visitors.

<sup>23</sup> Durham County Council (2016) Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy 2016 – 2033 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/24435/Draft-Durham-City-Sustainable-Transport-Delivery-Plan/pdf/DraftSustainableTransportDeliveryPlan2016to2033.pdf>> last accessed 12/12/18

<sup>24</sup> Durham County Council (2011) Local Transport Plan 3 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3706/LTP-transport-library>> last accessed 12/12/18

<sup>25</sup> JACOBS (2016) Durham City Model Rebase: Review of 2015 Traffic Data & Key Trends Analysis [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/24434/Durham-City-Travel-Counts-2016/pdf/DurhamCityTrafficSurvey.pdf?m=636736452053900000>> last accessed 12/12/18

<sup>26</sup> Durham County Council (2018) Draft County Durham Strategy Cycling and Walking Action Plan, 2018–2028 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/17620/Consultation-on-draft-Strategic-Cycling-and-Walking-Delivery-Plan-2018-2028>> last accessed 12/12/18

<sup>27</sup> Durham County Council (2015) Walk, Cycle, Ride: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for County Durham 2015–2018 [online] available at: <<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3679/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan>> last accessed 12/12/18

## Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.63 DCNP policies will benefit the local community through; the delivery of new housing to meet local needs; addressing studentification and setting standards for the delivery of PBSA and conversions to HMOs; protecting Durham's internationally, nationally, and locally valued heritage; protecting and enhancing local green spaces and the wider infrastructure network; and supporting the economic function of the city in terms of the employment and tourism offer.
- 5.64 In this context, the assessment has concluded that the current version of the DCNP is likely to lead to **long term significant positive effects** in relation to the population and community and health and wellbeing SA themes. **Long term significant positive effects** are also anticipated in relation to the land, soil and water resources SA theme given the utilisation of brownfield land and protection and enhancement of green spaces.
- 5.65 It is recognised that the DCNP is relatively limited in the potential to improve local transport infrastructure through new development; however, seeks to capitalise on opportunities to connect the existing pedestrian and cycle network, which will serve a large number of the residents. However, it is considered likely that poor air quality will continue to be a key issue for Durham City, in addition to a continued reliance on the private vehicle. **Neutral effects** are therefore anticipated in relation to the air quality and transportation SA themes.
- 5.66 No significant negative effects have been identified, however; it is recognised that there is the potential for **uncertain minor long term negative effects** due to the sensitivity of the historic environment and the potential for site allocations to adversely impact upon the setting of the WHS and/or the Durham City Conservation Area. It is however noted that the any mitigation provided may result in a residual neutral effect; however, this is uncertain at this stage.

## 6. What are the next steps?

### Plan finalisation

- 6.1 The DCNP and this SA Report have been submitted to Durham County Council for their consideration. Durham County Council will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the DCNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the emerging Local Plan.
- 6.2 If the subsequent Independent Examination is favourable, the DCNP will be subject to a referendum, organised by Durham County Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the DCNP, then the Neighbourhood Plan will be 'made'. Once made, the DCNP will become part of the Development Plan for Durham City.

### Monitoring

- 6.3 In order to ensure that the policies of the DCNP are achieving the desired outcomes as expressed by local people during consultations, it is important to specify the extent and regularity of monitoring to be carried out. National advice recommends monitoring of "*the significant effects*" of neighbourhood plans which indicates that it is not necessary for all policies to be regularly monitored and indeed, there will be many policies for which data is not available or require disaggregation from a wider data field.
- 6.4 It is also recognised that most of the monitoring will be carried out by the Local Planning Authority or made available at national level. In terms of the CDP monitoring framework, the Submitted CDP (2019) states that "*In order to aid monitoring and discuss issues across an area the size of County Durham, with its many different communities, it is useful to break the county down into geographical areas which have similar characteristics in terms of their housing, economy and history.*" The CDP therefore identifies nine monitoring areas which will assist in measuring the success of the Plan's policies. The DCNP falls within 'Durham City' monitoring area.
- 6.5 **Table 6.1** below lists a selection of monitoring measures established through the Pre-Submission CDP, that are of particular importance to the DCNP given the findings of the appraisal.

**Table 6.1: Proposed monitoring measures**

SA theme	SA objective	Proposed measure (given appraisal findings)
<b>Air quality</b>	To protect and improve air quality in the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity &amp; geodiversity</b>	To protect and enhance the biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net loss of trees/woodlands/hedges as a result of new development.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	To make the Neighbourhood Plan area resilient and able to adapt to climate change and specifically minimise flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>• Energy generated from renewable sources (GWh).</li> </ul>

<b>SA theme</b>	<b>SA objective</b>	<b>Proposed measure (given appraisal findings)</b>
<b>Landscape and historic environment</b>	To protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment, with particular reference to the quality of design required by the World Heritage Site and the special character of the Neighbourhood Plan area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of heritage assets lost</li> <li>• Number of heritage assets removed from At Risk Registers as a result of the implementation of a permitted scheme.</li> <li>• Number of heritage assets removed from At Risk Registers as a result of the implementation of a permitted scheme</li> <li>• Number of enforcement cases taken against the owners of listed buildings.</li> <li>• Appeals upheld contrary to Policy 40 (Landscape).</li> </ul>
	To conserve heritage assets so that they can be understood and enjoyed for their contribution to the local economy, particularly tourism, and to the quality of life of this and future generations	
<b>Land, soil and water resources</b>	To use natural resources prudently, encourage the reuse of materials, and minimize waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of eligible schemes accompanied by a Agricultural Land Classification Assessment</li> <li>• Number of water bodies which show Water Framework Directive improvement as a direct consequence of new development.</li> </ul>
	To encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield) and thus protect the Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of proposals permitted that either minimise waste production; help prepare waste for re-use; and increase the capacity and capability of the county's network of waste management facilities to reuse, recycle and recover value from waste materials.</li> <li>• Percentage of proposals permitted that enable the disposal of waste via landfill or via the incineration of waste without energy recovery where an alternative treatment solution is available at a higher level in the waste hierarchy.</li> <li>• Capacity (tonnage) of secondary and recycled aggregate management facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Population and community</b>	To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Land approved and completed</li> <li>• Number of houses approved and completed per year</li> <li>• Status of five year land supply/delivery test.</li> <li>• Number of new bedspaces in HMOs approved.</li> <li>• Number of units approved and completed on allocated PBSA sites.</li> <li>• Percentage change of total HMOs in Durham City.</li> <li>• Number of new bedspaces in PBSA approved.</li> <li>• Vacancy rates in retail centres</li> </ul>
	To identify and then meet the business and other development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net additional bed spaces.</li> </ul>

SA theme	SA objective	Proposed measure (given appraisal findings)
	needs of the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the retail offer and tourism	
	To provide the supply of affordable housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations	
	To alleviate deprivation and poverty and improve social inclusion	
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	To support strong, safe, vibrant and healthy communities and enable all residents to live in a decent and affordable home that meets current and future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of employees in Durham City walking or cycling to work</li> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>• Percentage of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport to school.</li> </ul>
	To provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, leisure, social and cultural well-being	
<b>Transportation</b>	To identify and coordinate development requirements, including the provision of a modern transport and communications infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of employees in Durham City walking or cycling to work</li> <li>• Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham Air Quality Management Area.</li> <li>• Percentage of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport to school.</li> </ul>
	To encourage and increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling	

# Appendix A Context review and baseline



**Durham City Neighbourhood**  
**Plan Scoping Report**  
**for the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental**  
**Assessment Report**

**Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum**  
**October 2017**

**Ratified by the City of Durham Parish Council**  
**October 2018**

Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum  
The Miners' Hall  
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## ADDENDUM

The Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Screening Report was produced by the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum as a draft in December 2016 for consultations with Durham County Council and the three Statutory Consultees. The County Council, the Environment Agency and Natural England responded that an SEA would not be required.

However, Historic England responded on 26 January 2017 that the Neighbourhood Plan should be the subject of an SEA in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The reasons for their decision were:

- (i) the Neighbourhood Plan will come into effect before the County Durham Local Plan and therefore form the most up to date development plan document for the area;
- (ii) undeveloped sites and allocations must be subject to watertight policies following environmental assessment;
- (iii) housing sites D1.1, D1.5, D1.6, D1.7, D1.9 and employment site E1.1 raise concerns regarding their effects on heritage;
- (iv) there is insufficient information on how the impact of development would need mitigation measures; and
- (v) there is insufficient evidence that the potential impacts have been assessed in an area which has such a high number of designated heritage assets including sites of national and international significance.

The Forum decided that Historic England's conclusion, for the reasons given, should be accepted and accordingly that the next stage in the SA/SEA process, namely a Scoping Report, should be prepared. A Draft Scoping Report was completed by the Forum in June 2017, consulted upon with the County Council and the three Statutory Consultees, and completed in the form of this document in October 2017.

The City of Durham Parish Council elected in May 2018 is the successor body to the Forum, and at its meeting on 25 October 2018 resolved to ratify the work undertaken to date by the Forum. Accordingly, this Scoping Report is now the City of Durham Parish Council's formally adopted Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

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## • **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

1.1 This document is the Scoping Report for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP), which also covers the legal obligations of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC). As such, it aims to fulfil the requirements of the Environmental Appraisal of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004<sup>1</sup>. This Scoping Report has been prepared by the members of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum, which is the 'qualifying body' for the purposes of these regulations. The methodology adopted is based on the guidance provided by the specialist consultants Levett-Therivel (Therivel et al, 2011) for those preparing Neighbourhood Plans; on the Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005); and on the EU Directive itself (European Union, 2001).

### **What is SA/SEA and what does it mean for the DCNP?**

1.2 In brief, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan or programme and aims to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also a systematic process to predict and assess potential impacts but focuses on specific environmental issues to ensure they are considered and integrated at the earliest opportunity. Given the similarities between the SA and SEA processes, they are often combined to avoid duplication. Such an approach is also widely recognised as best practice with regards to Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans in England. When undertaking a 'joint' assessment it is often referred to as SA/SEA, but for the sake of brevity it will be referred to as SA in this report.

1.3 Unlike a Local Plan, there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to have a SA as set out in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, a 'qualifying body' such as the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Forum must demonstrate how its plan will contribute to achieving sustainable development. This is a 'basic condition' of the neighbourhood planning process (condition d). As such, undertaking a SA is a robust approach to demonstrably meet this condition.

1.4 Another basic condition the DCNP has to meet is to not 'breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU obligations' (condition f); hence, SEA Screening to determine if the plan was likely to have significant environmental effects was undertaken as a minimum requirement. A Screening Opinion was drafted by the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum following discussion with various officers of Durham County Council. After amendments to some of the proposed housing and employment development sites were agreed the Council was comfortable with the conclusion of the Screening Opinion that the sites and their indicative scales were unlikely to give rise to significant individual or cumulative adverse environmental effects. It was nonetheless acknowledged that the comments from statutory consultees must also be taken into account.

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1 In accordance with regulation 12 (2) and (3)  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/regulation/12/made>

1.5 The Screening Opinion was sent to the three statutory consultees in December 2016, with the following outcome, essentially that Historic England concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be carried out:

(a) Natural England formally responded on 19th January 2017 and confirmed that in their view the proposals/allocations contained in the Plan will not have significant effects on sensitive sites that Natural England has a statutory duty to protect.

(b) The Environment Agency considered the report and replied on 6th February 2017 that the need for an SEA would not be triggered, on two conditions:

(i) that there was a policy worded to steer any development away from Flood Zones, i.e., all development was located in Flood Zone 1; and

(ii) that site D1.6 is not allocated (for housing) as all of this is in Flood Zones 2 and 3.

(These conditions have subsequently been taken on board).

(c) Historic England in a letter dated 26th January 2017 concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan should be the subject of an SEA in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The reasons for their decision were:

(i) the Neighbourhood Plan will come into effect before the County Durham Local Plan and therefore form the most up to date development plan document for the area;

(ii) undeveloped sites and allocations must be subject to watertight policies following environmental assessment;

(iii) housing sites D1.1, D1.5, D1.6, D1.7, D1.9 and employment site E1.1 raise concerns regarding their effects on heritage;

(iv) there is insufficient information on how the impact of development would need mitigation measures; and

(v) there is insufficient evidence that the potential impacts have been assessed in an area which has such a high number of designated heritage assets including sites of national and international significance.

1.5 Although ultimately only one statutory consultee considered that there was a need for an SEA/SA, given the significance of Historic England's concerns the decision was taken to conduct a Sustainability Appraisal of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that there was a demonstrable certainty it would contribute towards sustainable development and its policies would provide the necessary environmental protection, particularly with regard to Durham City's unique historic environment. The SEA/SA of the DCNP will follow the prescribed five-stage process as set out below in Table 1 and advised by published Government guidance<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005)

**Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal Process**

Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process	Key Elements	Date
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	<p>Identify relevant strategies, policies, plans and programmes and analyse how they affect this neighbourhood plan.</p> <p>Collect baseline information about what is in our neighbourhood, what is important to local residents, and how these things might change in future without our plan.</p> <p>Identify the topics that should be covered in this plan, the issues to be faced and the possible options for dealing with them.</p> <p>Draw up a sustainability appraisal framework of draft sustainability objectives and probing questions.</p> <p>Consult with the Local Authority and the 'Statutory Consultees' (Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency) to make sure that they agree that the right information is to be included in the Sustainability Appraisal and at the right level of detail.</p> <p>Finalise the Scoping Report (this is the stage represented by this report).</p>	August 2017
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	<p>Test the emerging objectives and possible options against the sustainability appraisal framework.</p> <p>Where there are a number of distinct options, this stage helps identify the best option; and also whether a particular aspect should not be included after all.</p> <p>Take an overview of all the positive, neutral and negative impacts of all aspects of the draft plan and identify actions/amendments that would improve things - including possible actions by other bodies and/or volunteers.</p> <p>Propose measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan implementation.</p>	September 2017
Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report	Produce a Sustainability Appraisal report that presents the predicted environmental effects of the Plan, including alternatives, in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision-makers.	October 2017
Stage D: Consulting on the Draft Plan and the Environmental Report	<p>Consult the public and the Statutory Consultation Bodies on the Draft Plan and the Sustainability Appraisal, Screening and Scoping reports.</p> <p>Assess significant changes arising. Decide and explain how consultees' comments have been taken into account in deciding upon the final contents of the Plan prior to submission to the County Council.</p>	December 2017/ January 2018

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Plan on the environment	Develop aims and methods for monitoring the Plan. Respond to adverse effects.	Spring 2018  Annually by the new Durham City Parish Council
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## **Purpose of the SA Scoping Report**

1.6 The purpose of this SA Scoping Report is to compile and analyse the background information needed and at what level for the SA of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan. It is a vital stage in the overall process which seeks to ensure that the SA will cover the likely significant effects of the DCNP. Ultimately the scoping process identifies the SA objectives, which form the SA Framework and will be used as criteria to assess the policies and allocations proposed.

## **The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP)**

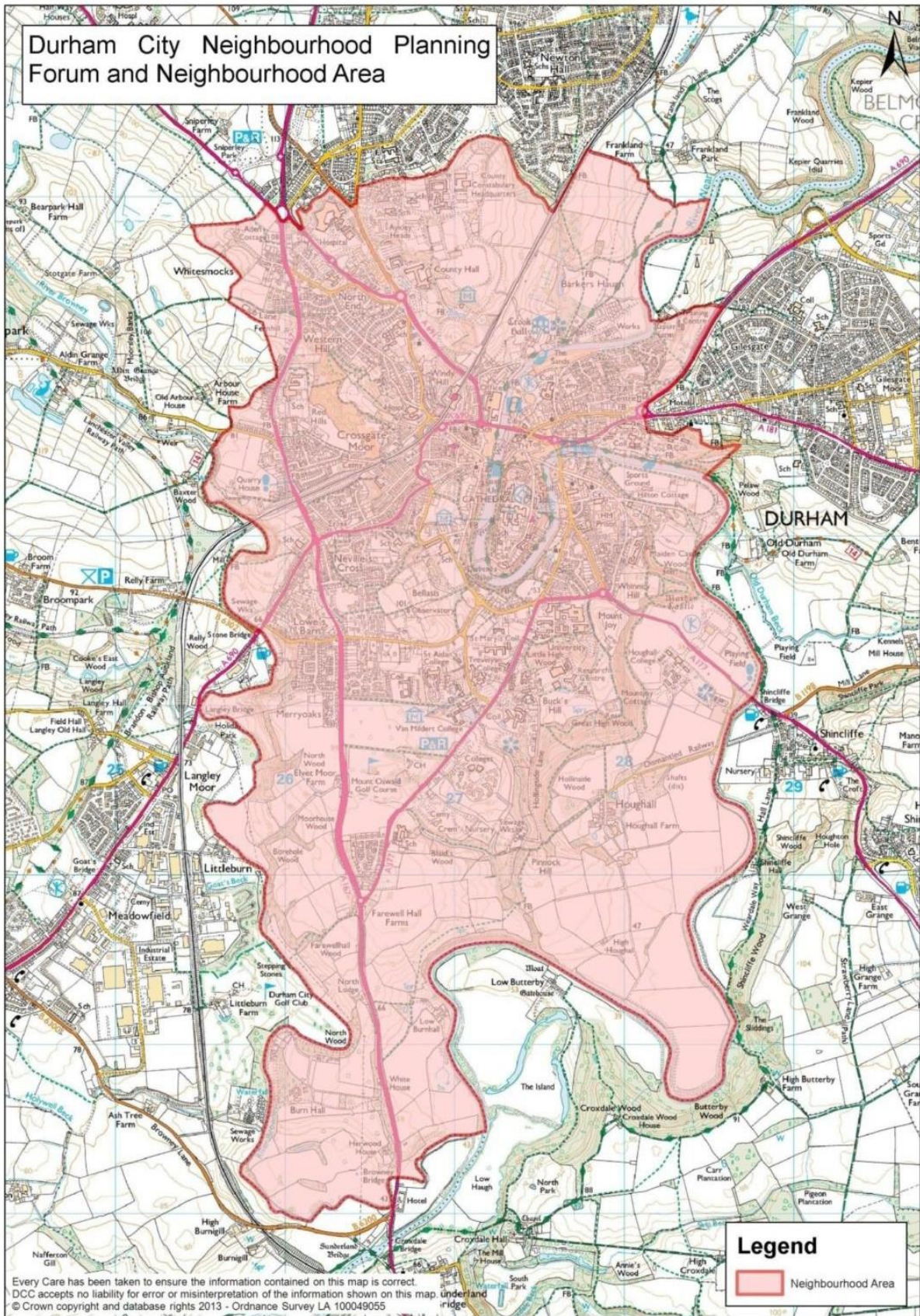
1.7 The area covered by the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan is shown in Map 1. The area is centred on the historic core of the City, designated as a World Heritage Site, and includes Durham Cathedral and Castle situated above the incised banks of the River Wear. The Plan area includes the wards of Neville's Cross, Elvet & Gillesgate and the part of Durham South on the city side of the River Wear. In this report we call this area *Our Neighbourhood*.

1.8 Durham City extends beyond Our Neighbourhood to include large residential, industrial and retail estates at Belmont, Framwelgate Moor and Newton Hall. Taken together, the built-up area of Durham City has a residential population of about 46,000 and is the biggest town in County Durham. It is the 'County town' and provides the administrative headquarters of the County Council, the main hospital, the magnificent Norman Cathedral and the world-class University of Durham.

1.9 Unlike the wider County Durham and the North East Region, Durham City and Our Neighbourhood within it were not dominated economically, physically and socially by the Industrial Revolution that transformed a sparsely-populated agricultural region in just a few decades, creating dense urbanised areas along the rivers Tyne, Wear and Tees and a multitude of colliery towns and settlements across the Durham and Northumberland lowland and coastal coalfields. The dependence on coal-mining, railway engineering, steel-making, ship-building and heavy engineering in the North East led to severe hardships in the Great Depression, and the end of these industries in the 1980s again caused widespread deprivation in County Durham and the North East. Durham City's civic, religious and higher education roles gave it some resilience to these forces. Nevertheless, Our Neighbourhood contains not only the grand civic, religious, academic, commercial and domestic buildings appropriate to an historic County town but also substantial areas of pre-war back-to-back terrace housing and inter-war housing.

1.10 The Neighbourhood Plan has come about due to concerns of individuals and organisations regarding a number of issues including the need to conserve and protect the historic environment of Our Neighbourhood, pressure to develop in the Durham Green Belt, congestion caused by motor and pedestrian traffic on the road network, the loss of family housing due to conversions to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and the anticipated high rate of growth of Durham University student numbers. The purpose and main objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan is to address these concerns but also to ensure that appropriate and needed development is facilitated and, above all, that the unique historic environment of national and world importance is protected and enhanced.

**Map 1: Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum and Neighbourhood Plan Area**



1.11 An additional factor in deciding to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan was that the City of Durham Local Plan dated from 2004. Its 'saved policies' were adopted in September 2007 which meant that these policies could continue to be used in making most planning decisions, but they did not always meet the current planning context and pressures. The new Unitary Durham County Council embarked in 2009 upon preparing a Local Plan for the whole County in order to fill the policy gap of out-of-date development plans. Unfortunately the resulting Draft County Durham Local Plan had to be withdrawn in 2015. The County Council is preparing a new County Durham Local Plan which is hoped to be adopted by 2019/20. Until then the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, once 'made' (i.e. adopted), will be the statutory development plan for Our Neighbourhood and may need to be amended to accord with the outcome of the emerging County Durham Local Plan.

1.12 In recent years there have also been moves to create a town or parish council for this area of Durham City, supported by the Member of Parliament Roberta Blackman-Woods, local politicians and members of the public. While this movement for a town or parish council for the Neighbourhood Plan area was and still is being pursued, it also resulted in the initiative to create a formal Neighbourhood Planning Forum. Accordingly, the long-standing Durham City Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum resolved in October 2012 to submit an application to the County Council to become the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum. This was achieved with the formal acceptance by Durham County Council of the application to set up this Forum on 16th January 2014. The 'story' from formal submission to the present is set out in Appendix I.

1.13 The formally constituted Neighbourhood Planning Forum comprises 34 members with duly elected officers and a Working Group of between 10 and 12 volunteers who are working on preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. The Forum has met several times a year to receive and approve reports from the Working Group and organise and participate in consultation exercises with the public. The Working Group meets at least monthly, and for much of this year weekly. All of the notes of meetings are available to view on the Forum's website (<http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/>) and public comments are welcomed and responded to. The Working Group has received guidance from officers of the County Council and has taken advantage of the advice of others preparing Neighbourhood Plans in the region.

## **SA Scoping Report structure**

1.14 The first chapter provides information on the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, the contents and main objectives of the Plan, who has been involved and the history of the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum's work. Chapter 2 sets out the policy context, and Chapter 3 the sustainability context. Chapter 4 explains how possible options were identified and lists these, and Chapter 5 sets out our chosen Sustainability Appraisal Framework and concludes with the next steps to be taken.

## • **CHAPTER 2: POLICY CONTEXT**

2.1 Neighbourhood Plans must be consistent with national planning policy and must conform to the strategic elements of the local authority's 'Core Strategy' or its equivalent and to any other Development Plan and relevant strategy and policy documents for the area in question. This is a provision of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the contents of a Strategic Environmental Assessment report, requiring in Article 5(1) as amplified in Annex 1 sections (a) and (e) that the report must provide information on the plan's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes, the environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national level which are relevant to the plan, and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation. For Our Neighbourhood the relevant other planning policies are set out below.

### **International, European and National planning policy**

2.2 National planning policy is expressed through the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. Much of the NPPF's content relating to the historic environment, and therefore of great relevance because of the significant heritage assets in Our Neighbourhood, is underpinned by the UNESCO World Heritage Site Convention, the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe, the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Main messages from this National guidance are that plans should:

- reduce the need to travel, and improve access by walking, cycling and public transport
- help to provide an adequate number of affordable homes
- help to regenerate areas that are deprived
- support employment, particularly local and small-scale employment
- protect areas designated for their nature conservation, heritage or landscape value; and generally protect and improve biodiversity and the cultural heritage
- promote good design
- reduce the risk of flooding by not building in the floodplain and incorporating good drainage in new developments
- minimise waste generation, and promote reuse, recycling and composting
- minimise energy use, promote renewable energy, and design for climate change
- minimise air, water, soil, noise and light pollution
- help to protect and provide publicly accessible open space, which in turn has health benefits

2.3 Table 2 below presents a summary of the relevant National Planning Policy Framework principles and how they relate to Our Neighbourhood. Table 3 does the same for other relevant national strategies and policies.

**Table 2: National Planning Policy Framework: key principles for Our Neighbourhood**

NPPF Principles	Key Features	How They Might Affect Our Neighbourhood Plan
1. Building a strong, competitive economy	Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, set criteria or identify sites for local and inward investment to meet anticipated needs over the plan period; and support existing business sectors, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area.	Our Neighbourhood is an important provider of jobs for the wider County and beyond, so it is important to make sure that it continues to do so. Policies will need to identify and confirm a range of employment sites and business growth areas, recognising that Our Neighbourhood serves a wide hinterland in terms of existing and future employment opportunities
2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres	Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality; allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.	Durham City centre is a significant retail and service centre for a wide catchment area and gives economic support for the heritage assets in Our Neighbourhood; its future success is vital. Accordingly, the plan must make positive provision for town centre business and services to be able to flourish.
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy	Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.	N/A: this principle does not lead to planning policies within Our Neighbourhood.
4. Promoting sustainable transport	The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel; gives priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, access to high quality public transport facilities; and considers the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.	The medieval street pattern and concentration of significant traffic generators in Our Neighbourhood cannot be reconciled to allow unrestricted vehicular access. Whilst many aspects of transport are matters outside the scope and remit of a neighbourhood plan, it will be appropriate to include measures to encourage sustainable travel modes.
5. Supporting high quality communications infrastructure	Support the expansion of electronic communications networks. Aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.	In Our Neighbourhood support for electronic communications infrastructure because of its economic benefits must be tempered by the need to ensure that structures such as phone masts do not have a detrimental visual impact on the World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation Area.

6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	To create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, plan for a mix of housing for needs of different groups in the community; and identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and, where affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need.	The Plan will particularly need to address the long-standing issues of 'studentification' and the resulting unbalanced community. The affordability of the existing and future housing stock here, and the particular needs arising from the population age structure in Our Neighbourhood, mean that policies are required to cater for a wide range of housing needs, notably those of the student population, families, and of the elderly.
7. Requiring good design	Developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; respond to local character and history; reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials; and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.	Definitely relevant to Our Neighbourhood because of The World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation Area. The plan must therefore have policies that ensure high quality design appropriate to the historic environment here.
8. Promoting healthy communities	Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day- to-day needs.  Identify for special protection green areas of particular importance.	The plan will need to examine health services and open space, leisure and cultural needs as well as issues of air quality. A key feature of Our Neighbourhood is the penetration of green spaces and green corridors through the area, and the plan should ensure that these are protected and augmented.
9. Protecting Green Belt land	The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.	Our Neighbourhood contains some of the Durham Green Belt so this national principle applies here.  Protecting the Green Belt in our Neighbourhood will contribute to protecting the setting of the World Heritage Site and to the character of the City as a whole.

<p>10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</p>	<p>Adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.</p>	<p>The 'golden thread' of sustainability must run through all aspects of our Neighbourhood Plan. The River Wear flows through Our Neighbourhood and there are Zone 3 Flood Risk areas on both banks. Some existing developments have suffered repeated</p>
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		flooding from runoff and from the river. It is essential to take this into account.
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Protect and enhance valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils, minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible; use brownfield land for development wherever possible.	The Plan should identify all aspects of the natural environment within Our Neighbourhood and devise policies to protect and enhance them.
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Develop a positive strategy and policies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.	The Plan should establish the strongest possible protection and enhancement measures for the outstanding heritage assets and townscape qualities in Our Neighbourhood which contains a World Heritage Site.
13. Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	Identify and include policies for extraction of mineral resource of local and national importance in their area.	N/A: there are no known workable mineral deposits in Our Neighbourhood.

**Table 3: Other National strategies and policies relevant to Our Neighbourhood**

National Strategy / Policy	Key Features	How they might affect our Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape and natural environment		



<p>The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (UK Government, 2011)</p> <p>Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011)</p>	<p>'The Natural Choice' (the Natural environment white paper) emphasises that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It aims include: facilitating greater local action to protect and improve nature; creating a green economy, in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature; strengthening the connections between people and nature to the benefit of both.</p> <p>The biodiversity strategy builds on the Natural Environment White Paper. Its mission is to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit</p>	<p>These documents highlight the importance of the natural environment and the role local communities can play in its protection, e.g. it led to the designation of 'Local Green Spaces' for neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The natural environment has economic, social and health benefits. Protecting the natural environment should be a key aspect of our Neighbourhood Plan, particularly as the green setting of the World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation Area is so important. This will require us to include policies that recognise and augment existing green spaces and natural habitats, propose additional green areas and protection measures for new habitats that emerge, and provide</p>
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	of wildlife and people. Relevant aspects include: Putting people at the heart of policy (e.g. Establishing a new green areas designation, empowering communities to protect local environments that are important to them.); Planning and Development (e.g. retain the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system)	improved public access.
Green Infrastructure Guidance (Natural England, 2009)	This guidance provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of green infrastructure, signposts to other relevant information, and maps out wider policy priorities and drivers for green infrastructure. It aim is to drive forward green infrastructure planning and delivery.	This guidance is a key resource for informing the Green Infrastructure section of the Neighbourhood Plan. It will be used to evidence and strengthen the policy developments mentioned above.
<b>Air, water and climate</b>		
Draft UK Air Quality Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017b).  Clean Air Zone Framework (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017a)	The aim of the draft Air Quality Plan is to reduce concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide around roads and to achieve the statutory limit values for the whole of the UK within the shortest possible time. Local authorities are required to take the lead in tackling this by establishing Air Quality Management Areas, where applicable, and drawing up an action plan detailing remedial measures.  A Clean Air Zone is "an area where targeted action is taken to improve air quality [from all sources of pollution]  ... in order to shape the urban environment in a way that delivers improved health benefits and supports economic growth". With "measures to accelerate the transition to a low emission economy ... and restrictions to encourage only the cleanest vehicles to operate in the city. "	Durham County Council has declared an Air Quality Monitoring Area for part of Our Neighbourhood and drawn up an action plan. This is a very relevant issue for Our Neighbourhood. The action plan will have land use, traffic and development management dimensions which will be reflected in appropriate planning policies in Our Neighbourhood.
<b>Heritage</b>		

<p>The Culture White Paper (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2016).</p>	<p>This white paper outlines the government's approach to public support for art and culture. Its goals include: to promote the role that culture has in building stronger and healthier communities and boosting economic growth; greater local and national partnerships to develop the role of culture in place-making; our historic built environment is a unique asset and local communities will be supported to make the most of the buildings they cherish;</p>	<p>This highlights the importance to the Neighbourhood Plan of supporting culture and protecting the historic environment.</p>
<p>The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England (HM Government, 2010)</p>	<p>The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.</p>	<p>This highlights the importance to the Neighbourhood Plan of supporting social, economic and cultural life, and protecting the historic environment.</p>
<p>Historic England. Identification and Designation of Heritage Assets. England. National Heritage List for England. Heritage at Risk Register. Historic England, Advice and Guidance</p>	<p>Historic England is the public body that looks after England's historic environment. One of its main roles is to identify and protect our heritage through the designation system. It manages the National Heritage List for England, the record of all nationally protected historic buildings or sites in England. It also identifies the most important heritage assets at risk of damage or loss.</p>	<p>Our Neighbourhood has a wealth of heritage assets. It is vital that the Neighbourhood plan's policies protects and conserves these heritage assets. Additionally, the issue of heritage assets at risk needs to be addressed with relevant planning and development management policies. Historic England's website provides a wide range of guidance documents that the Neighbourhood Planning Forum should consult and apply.</p>

<b>Human population, health, housing and services</b>		
<p>2011 Census data (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Population projections (Office for National Statistics, 2016)</p>	<p>The 2011 census (the latest census) is a source of detailed socio- demographic statistics that helps the government to develop policies, plan and run public services, and allocate funding. It is supplemented by regular sub-national population projections of the future size and age structure of the population in the regions and local authorities.</p>	<p>The 2011 Census detailed breakdown of age structures, occupations, health etc. provides firm evidence of the particular issues and needs in Our Neighbourhood, notably the exceptionally high proportion of students and the significant numbers of elderly people. Taken together with the official projections for the elderly population to increase further, our policies for housing and other aspects of balanced and sustainable communities will need to address and accommodate these pressures.</p>
<p>Fixing our broken housing market (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2017)</p>	<p>This White Paper aims to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market. It proposes to prioritise the use of brownfield land, incentivise housing for rent , encourage the smaller development firms, discourage 'land-banking' and promote good design.</p>	<p>The White Paper proposals largely provide the national framework that Our Neighbourhood requires for ensuring that the maximum use is made of possible development sites within the urban area, including well-designed affordable housing and family housing with associated green spaces. It is a powerful justification for developing policies for Our Neighbourhood that seek to maximise the provision of a range of suitable new housing to own or to rent, wherever possible on 'brownfield' land.</p>

<p>The Building Regulations 2013. Access to and use of buildings. Approved document M. Volume 1: Dwellings. (UK Government, 2016)</p>	<p>These housing regulations include optional requirements covering accessible and adaptable dwellings (M4(2) Category 2). These comprise:</p> <p>Reasonable provision must be made for people to—</p> <p>gain access to; and</p> <p>use, the dwelling and its facilities.</p> <p>The provision made must be sufficient to—</p> <p>meet the needs of occupants with differing needs, including some older or disabled people; and</p> <p>to allow adaptation of the dwelling to meet the changing needs of occupants over time.</p>	<p>Developments in Our Neighbourhood ought to apply these optional regulations but this is outside the role of neighbourhood plans. However, the Plan will strongly encourage developers to implement this housing regulation in building new houses or renovating existing houses. The Forum will also urge Durham County Council to adopt these optional requirements in policies in the forthcoming Local Plan.</p>
<p>'Building for Life 12' criteria (Birkbeck and Kruczkowski, 2015)</p>	<p>A set of quality tests agreed nationally by The Design Council and the Housebuilders' Federation to ensure that the design of new homes and their neighbourhood are as attractive, functional and sustainable as possible. There are 20 tests or criteria, and house-building schemes that achieve a score of at least 14/20 meet the 'Building for Life 12' standard.</p>	<p>The Plan will strongly encourage developers to implement these quality criteria when building new houses or renovating existing houses.</p>
<p><b>Employment, education and skills</b></p>		

<p>Building our industrial strategy (UK Government, 2017)</p>	<p>This Green Paper consults on the proposed industrial strategy of the Government. It proposes a range of areas of interventions which the evidence shows drive growth. Places with higher rates of investment in research and development, more highly skilled people, better infrastructure, more affordable energy and higher rates of capital investment are places which, the Green Paper asserts, grow faster and have higher levels of productivity. Policies on trade, procurement and sectors are tools to drive growth by increasing competition and encouraging innovation and investment. Through Central Government actions and by strengthening the local institutions that support a more productive economy it is hoped to ensure that growth is driven across the whole country.</p>	<p>The active involvement of Central Government in promoting national and local economic growth will be welcome in the North East and will need to be reflected in our Neighbourhood Plan. Specifically, provision for research and technology development in Durham City, harnessing the strengths of Durham University, is essential. It will also be important to cater for innovation through incubator facilities so that ideas can be transformed into advanced processes and products.</p>
<p><b>Transport</b></p>		
<p>Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. (Department for Transport,</p>	<p>The strategy aims to make cycling and walking the natural choices for</p>	<p>This is a strong steer from central government that policies to obtain</p>

2017)	shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. Its 2020 objectives are to: increase cycling activity, increase walking activity, reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, and increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school. It recognises that insufficient investment has been put into cycling and walking and notes that "walking and cycling should be seen as transport modes in their own right and an integral part of the transport network, rather than as niche interests or town-planning afterthoughts".	improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure should form an integral part of local or neighbourhood plans. This guidance is a key resource for informing the Transport Infrastructure section of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the Forum will shape policies to the maximum extent possible around this guidance.
Cycle traffic and the strategic road network (Highways England, 2016)	This interim advice note gives requirements and advice on regarding designing for cycle traffic for the Strategic Road Network (SRN), i.e. roads managed by the Highways England. Its purpose is to ensure that SRN infrastructure facilitates the convenient and safe movement of cycle traffic crossing or travelling along the SRN, where cycling is legally permitted.	This guidance informs the Transport Infrastructure section of the Neighbourhood Plan, and will provide the basis for appropriate policies in support of cycling provision.
Design Guidance: Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013' (Welsh Government, 2014),	The Guidance provides advice on the planning, design, construction and maintenance of active travel networks and infrastructure (i.e. for walking and cycling). The guidance includes: the needs of people using the active travel network; how active travel networks should be planned; the design of the elements making up the networks; how active travel networks should integrate with other modes of travel; related facilities such as seating and cycle parking; the construction, maintenance and management of active travel networks; a Walking Route Audit Tool; a Cycling Route Audit Tool.	This comprehensive design guide is capable of application to cities, smaller towns and rural districts, and provides the means to assess Our Neighbourhood's current transport infrastructure and to meet current and future needs.  While this guidance has no force in England, it is a useful resource for our Neighbourhood Plan.

### Strategic policies for County Durham and Durham City

2.3 The County Council is committed to the production of a County Durham Local Plan (CDLP) and by October 2014 had reached the Examination in Public Stage. The submitted CDLP policies influenced our thinking at that time. It should be noted, however, that subsequent to Stage 1 of the Examination in Public and a Judicial Review, the CDLP was

withdrawn in 2015 and a new County Durham Local Plan is now being prepared. The latest position at the time of finalising this Scoping Report (August 2017) is that the County Council



has consulted on its *Issues and Options* but the *Preferred Options* has been delayed by the publication of the Housing White Paper which was expected to include an updated and standardised methodology for calculating household projections. However, it did not, and the methodology is now expected later in 2017. *Preferred Options* and subsequent stages will give weight to the emerging County Durham Local Plan, and will be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan. As a result, the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum is developing this neighbourhood plan in the extremely unusual situation of there not being a fully up-to-date, NPPF-compliant statutory development plan within which to set more localised and fine-tuned policies and proposals. Nor is there an existing comprehensive existing local plan evidence base available to draw upon. Given the importance of protecting and enhancing the outstanding heritage environment of Our Neighbourhood, as well as tackling other important issues such as housing and employment, the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan has a highly significant duty to discharge.

### City of Durham Local Plan 2004 Saved Policies

2.4 In the absence of an approved new County Durham Local Plan, the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 'saved policies 2007' constitute the prevailing statutory Development Plan for the area (City of Durham Council, 2004) The Saved Policies were subsequently assessed for consistency with the NPPF (Durham County Council, 2015b) and a Council Policy position statement advising on how to assess development proposals in this situation was produced (Durham County Council, Planning Services Regeneration and Economic Development, 2016). Many of these saved planning policies are concerned with Durham City and provide good principles for determining appropriate development and conservation measures in Our Neighbourhood. They have provided the major starting point for our work, but of course we have needed to consider how they fit with current planning thinking and with the issues and opportunities identified by up-to-date analysis and by public consultations. The following table highlights the principal saved policies that affect Our Neighbourhood.

Table 4: Principal Saved Policies of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 that affect Our Neighbourhood

Saved policy	Key features	How it affects our Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Landscape and natural environment</b>		
E1:Durham City Green Belt	Within the Green Belt defined on the proposals map the construction of new building is inappropriate and will not be permitted unless it is for specified purposes.	Our Neighbourhood includes parts of the Green Belt and the Plan need to comply with the provisions of Policy E1 unless it is changed by the County Durham Local Plan.
E2 and E2A: Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt - Infilling	Existing developed areas may be redeveloped if no additional adverse impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.	Need to identify any such areas and decide whether some redevelopment would be acceptable.

E5: Open Spaces Within Durham City	States that particular open spaces are a vital part of the character and setting of the city, and sets protections limiting the nature and scale of acceptable	Our plan should carry this forward with assessments of the particular open spaces as they now exist and the issues faced in the future.
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	development in them.	
E26: Historic Parks and Gardens	Protects the special characters of named historic gardens and parks.	Review the identified historic gardens and parks to verify that they remain worthy of protection and whether there are additional gardens and parks to include for protection. Enhancement should also be considered.
<b>Air, water and climate</b>		
U10 Natural Flood Plains	Developments affecting watercourses only permissible if they do not result in flooding or increased flood risk elsewhere, do not result in pollution of the watercourse, do not adversely affect nature conservation interests, appearance of the landscape and environmental impact properly assessed.	Essential matter, with substantial additional experience and higher national standards since 2004/7.
<b>Heritage</b>		
E3: World Heritage Site Protection	Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site and its setting must be protected in local and long-distance views, and the conservation of buildings and the surrounding landscape.	A paramount policy that must be included and if necessary refined in our plan.
E4: World Heritage Site Extension	The then City of Durham Council would seek an extension to the World Heritage Site inscribed area.	This extension has now happened and a new Management Plan has been prepared. Our plan should cross-reference this.
E6: Durham City Centre Conservation Area	Stringent design standards appropriate to the particular heritage qualities of the locality.	This approach can be adopted but will need updating to take account of current conditions. Also, there is now a second Conservation Area and this too will require appropriate policy treatment.
E21: Historic Environment	Requires minimal adverse impacts on significant features of historic interest and encourages the retention and re-use of buildings of visual or local interest.	A starting point but probably capable of strengthening.
E22: Conservation Areas	Seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City's Conservation Areas.	More specific requirements would be valuable.
E23: Listed Buildings	Strict safeguards for protecting Listed Buildings.	Very important principle but deserves to be expanded.
U2: Telecommunications: Impact on the World Heritage Site	LPA will not permit telecomms which would have detrimental visual impact on the World Heritage Site.	Carry this forward.
<b>Human population, health, housing and services</b>		
H9: Multiple Occupation/Student Households	Permits the creation of HMOs provided that there is no adverse effect on the amenities of nearby residents, is appropriate in scale and character, and does not lead to over-concentrations of HMOs.	A key issue for Our Neighbourhood and requiring effective controls and criteria based upon up-to-date evidence including examples from other University cities.
H13: The Character of Residential Areas	Resists new development or changes of use which have a significant adverse effect on the character or appearance of residential areas, or the amenities of residents within them.	Straightforward read-across into our Neighbourhood Plan

H16: Residential Institutions and Student Halls of Residence	Acceptable with provisos including that they would not lead to a concentration of student accommodation such that it would adversely detract from the amenities of existing residents.	A key issue for Our Neighbourhood and requiring effective controls and criteria based upon up-to-date evidence including examples from other University cities now that Purpose Built Student Accommodation proposals are so prevalent.
R1 Provision of Open Space (overall minimum standards)	Open space provision for outdoor recreation to be evenly distributed and maintained, with a minimum standard of 2.4ha outdoor sports and play space provision per 1,000 head of population.	Needs to be brought into line with the latest OSNA.
Q2 General Principles: Designing for Accessibility	New development should embody sustainability. It should incorporate: measures to minimise conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles; access and manoeuvring; car and cycle parking; traffic calming; and disability parking if public buildings.	Current requirements on these principles will be adopted.
Q8 Layout and Design: Residential Development	Layout and design of new residential development must: exclude through traffic and incorporate apt traffic calming; provide adequate amenity and privacy; provide services underground; have well-designed means of enclosure; retain features of interest within site; be appropriate in form, density and materials; and make efficient use of land.	Good design principles along these lines will be valuable in the Neighbourhood Plan.
<b>Employment, education and skills</b>		
EMP 2:Durham Science Park	Confirms that the Durham Science Park at Mountjoy Lane will be occupied only for research and development, laboratories and high tech uses as set out in Class B1 of the Use Classes Order.	Review the appropriateness of this Saved Policy in the light of recent developments and the University's Masterplan.
EMP 4: Business Parks	Allocates Aykley Heads as a Business Park.	Consider the range of acceptable uses and the extent of this allocation with regard to Green Belt and World Heritage Site considerations.
EMP 12: Office Development	Accepts office development within or adjacent to the city centre.	Raises major issues about impact on the World Heritage Site as well as traffic concerns.
S2A: A2 & A3 uses within the Primary Retail Area	Within the city centre as defined, new A1 development will be permitted. Within the primary retail area, A2 and A3 will be permitted provided no more than 20% of the frontage is non-retail.	Include in principle, provided that a revised definition of the City centre is drawn up taking into account the major changes that have taken place since 2004/7.
<b>Transport</b>		
T4: Road Proposals – Routes and Designs of New Proposals	Routes and designs of new highway schemes should: avoid severance, impact on amenity or the natural or built environment or water; make safe provision for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport; achieve co-ordination in the appearance of signage and other highway furniture.	Not within the scope of a neighbourhood plan.
T13: City Centre Parking - New	New car parks within city centre permissible only where need has been	Ought to be able to incorporate suitable policies in our Neighbourhood Plan.

Sites	established within a co-ordinated strategy.	
T19: Cycling Routes	Seek to ensure development of a safe and attractive network of cycle routes.	Important for implementing the Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy.
T21: Safeguarding the Needs of Walkers	Protect existing footpaths and Public Rights of Way; ensure a safe, attractive and convenient footpath network, taking direct routes and adequately signed. Where possible, footpaths should be usable by people with disabilities. Development affecting a Public Right of Way should entail an adequate alternative route before work commences.	Good principles that will fit with the identified public issues and wishes.

## Other relevant local planning documents

2.5 Some of the documents produced as part of the Evidence Base for the now withdrawn County Durham Local Plan are still available and relevant. These have been useful in providing the right information for the Neighbourhood Plan. Our assessment of the key implications of these strategy and policy documents is summarised in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Key implications for the Neighbourhood Plan of other main County Durham strategies and policies**

DCC Strategy / Policy	Key Features	How they might affect our Neighbourhood Plan
Landscape and natural environment		
County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)  (Relevant aspects included in other sections)	<p>Policy recommendations include:</p> <p><i>Access and recreation</i> – existing public open spaces and rights of way should be protected; new development should contain sufficient open space for new and existing residents’ needs; open spaces and rights of way should be good-quality, attractive and functional</p> <p><i>Biodiversity and geodiversity</i> – designated sites and other ecologically valuable assets will be protected from the direct or indirect impacts of development; new green spaces will retain, reinforce or create links to the existing GI network; green spaces, roofs and walls will be encouraged</p> <p><i>Landscape</i> – designated landscapes and landscape conservation areas will be protected and managed; proposals to improve the countryside around towns and villages will be supported</p> <p><i>Townscape</i> – sites of historic interest, and their settings, will be protected and enhanced; the use of green</p>	<p>Durham's exceptional heritage qualities are a combination of buildings and green open spaces. The County Council's green infrastructure strategy gives us the direction and tools to maintain and strengthen these attributes. It is a major source of detail to inform the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, particularly green infrastructure policies.</p> <p>Accordingly, each policy suggestion contained in the Strategy needs to be tested for relevance in Our Neighbourhood and, wherever appropriate, will be translated into specific policies and proposals.</p>

infrastructure as a design feature will be required where appropriate; green infrastructure features which contribute to townscape will be protected

*Health and well-being* – healthy lifestyles will be supported by the protection and enhancement of open spaces and the public rights of way network

*Economic development* – inequalities in the quality of living environments will be addressed; industries which depend upon green infrastructure will be supported; GI will be used as an asset – to improve the image of areas and attract inward investment, and to provide ecosystem services

*Trees, woodland and forestry* – the creation of new woodlands will be supported; forestry and other woodland industries will be permitted where appropriate; urban trees will be protected.

*Water supply, drainage and flood control* – the quality of water resources in rivers, streams and other water bodies will be protected and enhanced; Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, which use green infrastructure to manage flooding, will be required in new development where appropriate, particularly in flood risk areas.”

<p>County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy (Durham County Council, 2008a,b).</p>	<p>This Landscape Strategy addresses issues that affect the varied landscapes of County Durham by setting out objectives for their conservation, restoration and enhancement. Its aims include: (i) To conserve and enhance the character and diversity of the Durham Landscape; (ii) To make development and land management more sustainable by helping to ensure that they respect the character of the landscape and contribute towards wider environmental objectives. It is based on the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment.</p> <p>Durham City falls within The Wear Lowlands character area of the County Durham Landscape. The strategy for the Wear Lowlands is: "To conserve the character of the valley landscapes of the Wear while</p>	<p>The Plan should ensure that the key qualities of the River Wear gorge and of the landscapes within Our Neighbourhood are recognised and protected. The detailed and expert information in this document provides the essential evidence base for the landscape aspects of our Plan.</p>
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	enhancing those areas which have been most affected by development, accommodating the needs of nearby urban populations while maintaining a strong rural identity to the countryside between towns and villages. A key component of the strategy for this settled landscape is the improvement of the countryside around towns and villages.”	
County Durham Core Evidence Base. Technical Paper No. 12. Biodiversity & Geodiversity (Durham County Council, 2009a)	This technical paper provides a summary of baseline information on biodiversity and geodiversity in County Durham and sets out the context for the policy approach to be adopted in the Council's strategies and plans.	A key source of baseline information for the Neighbourhood Plan.
County Durham Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment (Durham County Council, 2010a,b, plus some additional information provided from the unpublished updated version, though the needs assessment conclusions were not made available)  County Durham Playing Pitch Strategy 2012 - 2017 (Durham County Council, 2011a), County Durham Playing Pitch Strategy. Durham City Area Action Partnership Profile (Durham County Council, 2012c)  (Also relevant to the Human population, health, housing and services section)	This document assesses open space, sport and recreation facilities in County Durham by: identifying local needs; auditing local provision and assessing this against quality, quantity and access standards. It enables an assessment of the localities and scale of deficiencies in provision. The 2010 assessment identified deficiencies within the Durham City Area Action Partnership area (which covers a wider area than Our Neighbourhood) of parks and gardens, semi-natural greenspace and allotments.  The Playing Pitch Strategy contains an audit of provision and aims to ensure that the quantity and quality of playing pitches and accessibility of playing pitches meets the needs of the local population now and in the future.	This underpins our work in setting policies for open space, sport and recreation. The Neighbourhood Plan should develop policies and proposals that protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities, and seek to address deficiencies in provision.
The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)	Aspects relevant to this section include: Altogether greener - Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment.	One of many Durham County Council documents that emphasises the importance of green infrastructure and therefore needs to be embedded within the Neighbourhood Plan.

<p>Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)</p> <p>Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)</p>	<p>The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are:          Keeping Durham Green - renovation of Wharton Park, care of River Wear banks, adding to existing green spaces.</p> <p>The Masterplan update notes what</p>	<p>These are priority aspects for Our Neighbourhood; each of the Durham City Masterplan's projects and actions need to be incorporated into Our Neighbourhood's corresponding policies and proposals.</p>
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	has been delivered and outlines key future activities. Completed projects include the renovation of Wharton Park.	
Air, water and climate		
County Durham Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan(County Durham Environment Partnership, 2015a,b)  (Also relevant to other sections)	<p>The strategy has seven key themes; relevant ones are:</p> <p><i>A low carbon economy</i> including: encourage green jobs, technology innovation (e.g. micro/community energy generation) and green tourism <i>Built environment</i> including: the challenge to ensure current buildings and businesses are energy efficient and encourage uptake of Sustainable Urban Drainage</p> <p><i>Natural environment:</i> including: protect and enhance the network of green spaces and corridors, enhance biodiversity and ensure more resilience to climate change and encourage water management</p> <p><i>Transport and infrastructure:</i> including: through promotion of travel choices and alternative to private motor travel, (e.g. electric vehicle charging points)</p> <p><i>Community engagement:</i> integral to successful delivery of a low carbon future and take up of challenges.</p> <p>The Delivery Plan states that the Council wants to engage with residents, groups and businesses so as to successfully deliver the Strategy.</p>	<p>The issues of climate change can be addressed in the Plan through promoting a low carbon economy,</p> <p>e.g. green tourism; protecting the green infrastructure and flood plains; encouraging cycling, walking and public transport; and including policies on sustainable built development. This is the 'golden thread' against which all policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan must be assessed and fine-tuned wherever necessary.</p>
The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)	Aspects relevant to this section include: Altogether greener - Deliver a cleaner and more attractive sustainable environment; Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change.	Sustainable development and consideration of mitigating the effects of climate change need to be covered in the Neighbourhood Plan. . As above, this is the 'golden thread' against which all policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan must be assessed and fine-tuned wherever necessary.

<p>Durham County Council. Air Quality Management Area (Durham City) (No.2) Order 2014. Durham County Council air quality action plan for Durham City (AECOM, 2016)</p>	<p>The County Council declared an Air Quality Monitoring Area in May 2011, extended in July 2014, for those parts of the City where air quality is a risk to human health (i.e. the A690 from Gilesgate roundabout to Stonebridge; Gilesgate Bank (leading to Sunderland Road and Marshall Terrace); New Elvet; Claypath; Framwellgate Peth). In order to</p>	<p>This reveals that air quality standards are breached in several stretches of Our Neighbourhood. The Plan has limited means for addressing this issue as the cause is principally vehicular traffic exhaust emissions, but provision of facilities for other forms of travel will assist.</p> <p>The action plan has land use,</p>
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	<p>address the issues an Air Quality Action Plan was approved in June 2016.</p>	<p>traffic and development management dimensions which we will reflect in appropriate planning policies in Our Neighbourhood.</p>
<p>Durham County (Level 1). Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) – Level 1 (Golder Associates, 2010)</p>	<p>In relation to spatial planning, Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) sets out Government policy on development and flood risk.</p> <p>PPS25 places a statutory requirement upon Durham County Council to consider the risk of flooding when determining where, and what type of development should be allowed within the County. The NPPF advocates a sequential approach to the allocation of sites for future development and/or regeneration, in which areas of very low, or no flood risk are sought as a priority. The primary purpose of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is to provide the County with an overview of areas that will be susceptible to flooding in a range of design flood events.</p> <p>Flood Zones:</p> <p>Zone 3b - functional floodplains; Zone 3a - high probability</p> <p>Zone 2 - medium probability Zone 1 - low probability</p> <p>The sequential test:</p> <p>the overall aim of decision-makers should be to steer new development to Flood Zone 1.</p> <p>Where there are no reasonable available sites in Flood Zone 1, decision-makers should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonable available sites in Flood Zone 2.</p> <p>Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 and 2 should decision-makers consider the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3, taking into</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan must consider these issues and include appropriate measures, including design advice on mitigating the risk of flooding, and not allocating vulnerable land uses in Flood Zones 1 and 2.</p>

	<p>account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses.</p> <p>Typically, residential development is considered 'more vulnerable' for planning purposes, whereas commercial development will fall into 'less vulnerable'.</p>	
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	<p><i>Mitigating the risk of flooding through design.</i> Where a risk of flooding has been identified within a site, it will be necessary to incorporate design measures to ensure that this is mitigated safely, and does not result in increase in flood risk elsewhere.</p>	
<p>Durham County Council. Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Final Report. (AECOM, 2018)</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)</p>	<p>Policy recommendations relevant to this section include: <i>Water supply, drainage and flood control</i> – the quality of water resources in rivers, streams and other water bodies will be protected and enhanced; Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, which use green infrastructure to manage flooding, will be required in new development where appropriate, particularly in flood risk areas.</p>	<p>Green infrastructure is important to manage flooding and to help to mitigate the effects of climate change. In Our Neighbourhood there have been very serious floods from the River Wear every few years which have led to more stringent development management principles. The Plan must rigorously apply and develop these principles, both in terms of development sites and the application of the SUDS requirement for new developments.</p>
<p>County Durham Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Durham County Council, 2016a; p.18, 3.26).</p>	<p>This document identifies the issues and options relevant to the future planning of County Durham which will develop what will become the preferred option for moving the County forward.</p> <p>3.26 The availability of suitable land will influence the spatial options for the distribution of development. Environmental designations and physical constraints such as flood risk and topography will therefore limit the areas of land that will be assessed as we seek to identify allocations in future iterations of the Plan.</p>	<p>This indicates the direction of travel for the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with the Local Plan at whichever stage it has reached. In due course both Plans will have adopted status and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will be the local and more detailed part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area, including appropriate boundary revisions and mitigation measures for proposed development sites so as to deal with flood risk.</p>

<p>Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)</p> <p>Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)</p>	<p>The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are: Modern infrastructure - flood mitigation measures with the Environment Agency.</p> <p>The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key future activities. No relevant completed projects for this section.</p>	<p>Progress on this should be kept under review by the Neighbourhood Planning Forum as flooding in Our Neighbourhood is a known issue.</p>
<p>Heritage</p>		
<p>Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Management Plan 2017</p> <p>- 2023. (Durham World Heritage Site, 2017; pending approval by</p>	<p>The aims of the management plan are: Protect the Site's Outstanding Universal Value and setting; Conserve and enhance the Site and</p>	<p>The World Heritage Site is a crucial part of Our Neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Plan should</p>



UNESCO's World Heritage Office)	<p>its setting; Support understanding and awareness of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value [OUV] and of World Heritage; Support visitor and communities' access, their enjoyment of the Site and its benefits; Provide World Heritage Site (WHS) management to deliver all aims.</p> <p>Relevant points in the Action Plan are:</p> <p><i>1.1 Ensure the protection of the OUV through planning policy and processes (1.1.1 Liaise with County Durham/ Neighbourhood Plan teams to ensure they accurately reflect the SOUV and attributes of the Site in Local Plans)</i></p> <p><i>Conserve the setting of the WHS and encourage appropriate and sensitive development and support the ongoing regeneration of Durham and its environs. (2.2.1 Build and confirm support for an inner setting area around an expanded WHS core area in lieu of a Buffer Zone; 2.2.2 Increase understanding of the inner setting through views and general analysis; 2.2.3 Promote the use of ICOMOS Heritage Impact Assessments for new developments in and around the WHS; 2.2.4 Make available to prospective developers, descriptions of significance and key factors forming the character of the townscape that support the OUV of the Site; 2.2.6 Develop and deliver a programme of more proactive tree management along the riverbanks and upon the Peninsula and continue the conservation of the WHS riverbanks, woodlands and associated structures; 2.2.7 Ensure that all maintenance and development plans on the WHS pay due attention to the preservation and support of fauna and flora)</i></p> <p><i>Pursue expansion of the WHS boundary (2.3.1 Review inner and</i></p>	<p>support the World Heritage Site Management Plan and assist, wherever feasible, to implement its action plan. The Neighbourhood Planning Forum should liaise with the World Heritage Site management team. This must result in the inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan of all the policies and management measures necessary fully to reflect the WHS Management Plan.</p>
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outer riverbanks for potential to become new boundary of the WHS2;

3.2 Build documentary evidence in support of the conservation and restoration of these historic Green Landscapes)

*4.1 Maximise the benefits brought to the region by sustainable and appropriate use of the WHS as a*

	<p><i>visitor attraction and maximise the benefit to the WHS of the local and regional development of Durham's tourist offer (4.1.2 Integrate the WHS within local and regional tourism strategies)</i></p> <p><i>Increase visitor/user engagement with the WHS (5.3.4 Develop guided walks, controlled public access and new signage and interpretation boards along the riverbanks</i></p> <p><i>Improve physical access to and across the WHS (5.4.1 Improve physical access to and around the WHS for users with disabilities and their carers. Ensure all development projects include consideration of improvements to access; 5.4.2 Work in partnership to support the continuation/expansion of the Cathedral Bus service; 5.4.3 Work in partnership to address traffic congestion on the peninsula</i></p>	
<p>Durham City Conservation Area Appraisal (Durham County Council, 2016c)</p>	<p>Durham City was designated as a conservation area in August 1968 focusing on the peninsula, and the area covered was significantly enlarged in 1980 to incorporate a much larger section of the city centre.</p> <p>The Durham City Conservation Area was reviewed in 2015, with some boundary changes, and a character appraisal document produced and formally approved on 29th July 2016. This appraisal defined the unique characteristics which make the historic city centre so special (by looking at five Character sub-areas in great detail) and identified negative aspects, threats and opportunities to its preservation and enhancement.</p> <p>The aim of the appraisal is to provide the foundation for developing practical policies and proposals for the management of the conservation area. A management <i>proposals</i> section is</p>	<p>Highly detailed and sensitive analysis, containing a wealth of information about the City centre. Our Neighbourhood Plan policies must ensure that developments are in compliance with these management proposals.</p>

	<p>included in the individual Character Area documents. However, the management plan for the Durham City Conservation Area has not yet been published.</p>	
<p>The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)</p>	<p>Aspects relevant to this section: Altogether greener - Promote sustainable design and protect Durham's heritage.</p>	<p>One of many Durham County Council documents that emphasises the importance of protecting Durham City's heritage,</p>

		<p>a key aspect for the Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, it will have policies that comply with and implement the relevant aspects of the Sustainable Communities Strategy.</p>
<p>County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)</p>	<p>Policy recommendations relevant to this section include: <i>Townscape</i> – sites of historic interest, and their settings, will be protected and enhanced; the use of green infrastructure as a design feature will be required where appropriate; green infrastructure features which contribute to townscape will be protected.</p>	<p>Durham's exceptional heritage qualities are a combination of buildings and green open spaces. The County Council's green infrastructure strategy gives us the direction and tools to maintain and strengthen these attributes. The Neighbourhood Plan must develop policies that carry the Strategy's principles forward into effective protection and enhancement of the area's townscape and green infrastructure.</p>
<p>County Durham Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Durham County Council, 2016a; p.18, para. 3.23).</p>	<p>This document identifies the issues and options relevant to the future planning of County Durham which will develop what will become the preferred option for moving the county forward.</p> <p>3.23 New development should also respond to an area's natural, built and historic environment and avoid unacceptable impacts on local, national and international designations. These principles should be incorporated into any option for the spatial strategy.</p>	<p>This indicates the direction of travel for the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with the Local Plan at whichever stage it has reached. In due course both Plans will have adopted status and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will be the local and more detailed part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area. Specifically, the principles relating to the natural, built and historic environment in Our Neighbourhood must be translated into practical planning policies.</p>

<p>Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)</p> <p>Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)</p>	<p>The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are: Making the most of the historic core - in partnership with Durham University, Business Improvement District, event planners, hotels, to increase visitor numbers and ensure care of historic buildings. The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key future activities. Completed projects include the renovation of Wharton Park.</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Planning Forum will add the Masterplan's projects within to the protection, enhancement and promotion of Durham City's unique heritage.</p>
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Human population, health, housing and services		
<p>The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)</p> <p>(Relevant aspects included in other sections)</p>	<p>There are two aims for County Durham: (i) An altogether better place, (ii) Altogether better for people. There are five priority themes and high level objectives:</p> <p><i>Altogether wealthier</i> - Thriving Durham City; Vibrant and successful towns; Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities; Competitive and successful people; A top location for business</p> <p><i>Altogether better for children and young people</i> - Children and young people realise and maximise their potential; Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life; A Think Family approach is embedded in our support for families</p> <p><i>Altogether healthier</i> - Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life; Reduce health inequalities and early deaths; Improve quality of life, independence and care and support for people with long term conditions; Improve mental and physical well-being of the population; Protect vulnerable people from harm; Support people to die in the place of their choice with care and support they need</p> <p><i>Altogether safer</i> - Reduce anti-social behaviour; Protect vulnerable people from harm; Reduce re-offending; Alcohol and substance misuse harm reduction; Embed the Think Family approach; Counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism; Reduce road casualties</p> <p><i>Altogether greener</i> - Deliver a cleaner and more attractive sustainable environment; Maximise the value and benefits of Durham's natural environment; Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impact of climate change; Promote</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan should address these issues, although the Plan is mainly limited to land use policies relating to Our Neighbourhood. The issues in the Neighbourhood Plan should relate to facilitating the economic success of Our Neighbourhood; promoting the well-being of all those living in and visiting the area; promoting sustainable design and protecting the heritage of Our Neighbourhood; and encouraging a vibrant town centre and sustainable communities.</p> <p>Our emerging policies will be tested against all these objectives.</p>

	sustainable design and protect Durham's heritage	
County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)	<p>Policy recommendations relevant to this section include:</p> <p><i>Access and recreation</i> – existing public open spaces and rights of way should be protected; new development should contain sufficient</p>	The benefits of green infrastructure for leisure and people's health and well-being need to be considered within the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must



	<p>open space for new and existing residents' needs; open spaces and rights of way should be good-quality, attractive and functional</p> <p><i>Health and well-being</i> – healthy lifestyles will be supported by the protection and enhancement of open spaces and the public rights of way network</p>	<p>develop policies that carry the Strategy's principles forward into effective protection and enhancement of the area's public open spaces and rights of way.</p>
<p>Durham County Council's Service Plan, Neighbourhood Services, 2016- 2019 (Durham County Council, 2016g, p.18),</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Services provides a wide range of essential services to communities and also internally to the Council, including waste collection, street cleaning, highways and street lighting, indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, licensing and customer services.</p>	<p>Many of these aspects are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan: however they are very important to the life of the residents of Our Neighbourhood. One possible approach could be through the existing Durham City Area Action Partnership and the hoped-for Durham City Parish Council.</p>
<p>Older Persons Accommodation and Support Services Strategy (Durham County Council, 2010c); County Durham Issues and Options Stage. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Durham County Council, 2016b)</p>	<p>The aim of the strategy is to enable older people to live as independently as possible in homes that support good health and well-being. This requires houses that are accessible and well designed to meet older people's needs and which are located in areas which are accessible and provide a full range of local facilities. Durham County Council's strategic housing market assessment surveyed housing needs for older people. It identified the following needs: modern properties aimed at the elderly, dementia schemes, extra care schemes, ground floor apartments and 2 bed bungalows were highlighted as key areas. In terms of stock shortages amongst older people stakeholders recognised; energy efficient homes for life, extra care facilities, sheltered accommodation and affordable rent schemes as priorities.</p>	<p>Highly relevant to Our Neighbourhood because of the need for well-evidenced support for the increasingly aged and infirm resident population and the unbalanced housing market here. All aspects of the Support Services Strategy and the SHMA will be analysed and translated wherever possible and appropriate into Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals.</p>

<p>Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)</p> <p>Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)</p>	<p>The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are:  Ensuring services are in place including schools, health, and security. Also housing allocations in the Green Belt and on brownfield sites.</p> <p>The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan should take account of changes in Our Neighbourhood's population and the need for health, education and other services. The suggested Green Belt sites can only be considered in the forthcoming County Durham Local Plan.</p>
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	<p>future activities. Completed projects include the introduction of an Article 4 direction and an Interim Student Accommodation Policy.</p>	
<p>Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2013 updated 2014 (Durham County Council, 2014b)</p>	<p>All planning authorities have to demonstrate whether there is a 5-year supply of genuinely available and deliverable sites for housing development. All possible sites submitted for consideration by a multi-agency panel are graded into one of three categories, essentially yes, doubtful and no.</p>	<p>A vital source for potential residential development sites already tested against availability, viability, environmental and other constraints. (A subsequent update made available in May 2017 augments this information). All of the assessed sites need to be carried forward into the Neighbourhood Plan, either as confirmed proposals or as allocations or as sites considered but rejected in the appraisal process.</p>
<p>Interim student accommodation policy (Durham County Council, 2016f) County Durham Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Durham County Council, 2016a, p.42 para 4.59)</p>	<p>The interim student accommodation policy was developed during and after the Examination in Public of the withdrawn County Durham Local Plan in liaison between the Council, developers and local community groups.</p> <p>This 'Issues and options' document identifies the issues and options relevant to the future planning of County Durham which will develop what will become the preferred option for moving the County forward.</p> <p><i>Note: "4.59 Given the extensive public consultation and responses received, we propose to incorporate the interim policy on student accommodation into the Plan. It will therefore be included in the Preferred Options document later in the year."</i></p>	<p>Student accommodation and the highly unbalanced communities in Our Neighbourhood is a key issue for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan should incorporate this policy. However, there are aspects that need amending and enhancing in the light of community views and experience in the implementation of the interim policy.</p>

<p>Durham University Strategy 2017-2027 (Durham University, 2017a) Estate Masterplan 2017-2027.</p> <p>Executive summary (Durham University, 2016. The full Masterplan has not yet been made publicly available)</p>	<p>The key points in the Strategy are: (i) to base the 2,500 students from the Stockton Queen's Campus in Durham City from 2018/19: joining the 15,000 students already in the City (ii) to increase the student population to 21,500 by 2027; (iii) a commitment to house over 50% of students in College accommodation by 2027. To meet this objective the University will establish four to six new Colleges in partnership with private sector developers - delivery 2019-2027; (iv) a planned net growth of 330 full-time academic staff members to 2027; (v) building a new Centre for Teaching</p>	<p>More detailed consideration of the components and pace of the planned increase in student numbers above the existing student population will need to be undertaken. The University is a key part of the Our Neighbourhood and very important to the economy and cultural life of Durham City and Durham County. It is also a steward of a large part of Our Neighbourhood's heritage assets and is a major landowner. The University estate includes part of the World Heritage Site, and it</p>
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	<p>and Learning - delivery 2019; (vi) I build a large-scale, integrated sports park at Maiden Castle, Durham, that will be widely available beyond the University - delivery by end 2018; (vii) two new Colleges at Mount Oswald and some remodelling of buildings on the Peninsula - delivery by 2019 ;(viii) build a new facility for Durham Students' Union - delivery by 2027;</p> <p>(ix) fundraise for a new concert and performance hall that will benefit Durham City and the wider region - delivery by 2027; (x) a second phase of estate development from c.2020- 2023. This will begin with a new Business School at Elvet Waterside. There will also be new developments at Elvet Riverside of new facilities for Arts and Humanities Departments;</p> <p>(xi) a third phase of estate development at the Science Site - delivery c.2023-2027.</p> <p>The public consultation on the Estates Masterplan highlighted the following key issues: (i) Why does the University need to grow? (ii) Will there be more Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)? (iii) How will accessibility, traffic and parking be improved? (iv) How can everyday life for local residents be improved?</p>	<p>owns five Grade 1 or Grade 2* Listed buildings, 68 Grade 2 Listed buildings and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Neighbourhood Plan should support where possible the University's expansion. However, Our Neighbourhood is more than the University and this expansion needs to be balanced and proportionate so that the needs of the wider community are considered and the special character of Our Neighbourhood is maintained. This expansion must address the issues of the unbalanced communities in Our Neighbourhood - a major concern of residents. Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan has to reflect this wider community view.</p> <p>The University has said that it has revised the Masterplan to take account of these concerns. The full Masterplan is needed by the Neighbourhood Planning Forum in order to assess how this will be achieved and reflected as appropriate in the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
Employment, education and skills		

<p>More and better jobs. The North East Strategic Economic Plan (North East Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014)</p>	<p>The North East is strategically located between Scotland and the wider north of England economy. It is well connected to the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world by rail, sea, road and air. The strategic plan is to deliver 100,000 more and better jobs by 2024. The growth opportunities are: Tech North East - driving a digital surge; making the North East's future in automotive and medicines advanced manufacturing; Health Quest North East meaning innovation in health and life sciences; and Energy North East- excellence in subsea, offshore and energy technology. The Strategy recognises the three areas of the service economy for growth are: financial, professional and business services; transport logistics; and education.</p>	<p>This is a high level strategy which applies to the whole North East region. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to address the issues in relation to Our Neighbourhood.</p> <p>Accordingly, there will need to be policies that make provision for these distinctive streams of new employment opportunities, ranging from confirmation of the prestige strategic employment site at Aykley Heads through various kinds of bespoke units to innovation spin-out incubators, and of the particular requirements of the health and academic sectors.</p>
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Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (Durham County Council, 2009b)	A retail, leisure and town centre study of the main centres in County Durham including Durham City	This provides evidence to inform the Neighbourhood Plan's economic and town centre policies, although it is inevitably not up to date with the considerable retail developments in the town centre and out-of-town since 2009..
The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)	Aspects relevant to this section include: Altogether wealthier - Thriving Durham City; Vibrant and successful towns; Sustainable neighbourhoods and rural communities; Competitive and successful people; A top location for business.	The Neighbourhood Plan should address these issues, although the Plan is mainly limited to land use policies relating to Our Neighbourhood. The issues in the Neighbourhood Plan should relate to facilitating the economic success of Our Neighbourhood; protecting the heritage of Our Neighbourhood; and encouraging a vibrant town centre and sustainable communities. Our emerging policies will be tested against all these objectives.
County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)	Policy recommendations relevant to this section include: <i>Economic development</i> – inequalities in the quality of living environments will be addressed; industries which depend upon green infrastructure will be supported; GI will be used as an asset – to improve the image of areas and attract inward investment, and to provide ecosystem services	The benefits of green infrastructure for the economy, particularly as a tourist attraction, need to be considered within the Neighbourhood Plan.
Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)  Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)	The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are: Business growth - potential for more and better jobs through regeneration at Aykley Heads, Freemans Reach, North Road, The Gates and Lower Claypath.  The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key future activities. Completed projects include new developments in the City Centre and the running of successful major events.	The Neighbourhood Plan must develop policies that carry the Strategy's principles forward into sustainable economic growth in the context of the historic environment of Durham City.

<p>County Durham Plan Issues and Options consultation document (Durham County Council, 2016a; p.35, paras 4.23 to 4.25).</p>	<p>This document identifies the issues and options relevant to the future planning of County Durham which will develop what will become the preferred option for moving the County forward.</p>	<p>This indicates the direction of travel for the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be consistent with the Local Plan at whichever stage it has reached. In due course both Plans will have</p>
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	<p>Note:</p> <p><i>“4.23 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) maintains the ‘town centres first’ approach to the location of main town centre uses, requiring planning policies to be drawn up to positively promote competitive town centres and manage their growth.</i></p> <p><i>Nationally, town centres face increasing economic challenges including a change in consumer behaviour and the rise in e-commerce, mobile technology and Internet shopping. The significant growth in this sector has inevitably impacted on the number and range of shops, with many national retailers withdrawing from town centres including those in County Durham. We have seen similar changes in respect of food retail with the development of large format stores now either shelved or closing. We have however at the same time seen growth of smaller and more local convenience and discount stores coming forward as a direct response to the economic climate that currently exists. The ease of travel and the increasing attraction out of town shopping across the region has further impacted on how our town centres are used.</i></p> <p><i>Although town centres are now not always the main focus for people's shopping, they are still key drivers to the economy. Therefore it is important that we ensure our centres remain viable going forward by understanding national trends and ensuring that they reflect the needs and opportunities of the communities that they serve. It is essential that we set out this strategy in the context of national policy.”</i></p>	<p>adopted status and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan will be the local and more detailed part of the Statutory Development Plan for the area. Specifically, the principles relating to the town centre of Our Neighbourhood must be translated into practical planning policies.</p>
Transport		

<p>Durham Sustainable Transport Plan. Issues and opportunities report (Durham County Council, 2015c) Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy 2016-2033 (Durham County Council, 2016d)</p> <p>Local Transport Plan 3: Transport Strategy (Durham County Council,</p>	<p>The Issues and Opportunities report gives a SWOT analysis, and the relevant aspects are: (i) rebalance the City's infrastructure towards sustainable modes of transport, before congestion becomes so severe that it is impossible to reallocate space on our streets; (ii)</p>	<p>To a great extent these documents do the job for us; the Plan will identify practical, staged implementation measures within the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan that help increase travel opportunities compatible with improving the City' s environment</p>
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2011b)

enhancing the special character of Durham City has to be one of the outcomes of transport policy and proposals; (iii) enhancement of the pedestrian environment to support those already walking, and to encourage more people to do; (iv) building on innovations such as Park & Ride and the congestion charging scheme on the Peninsula; considerable improvements are needed to the bus station and to the connection to the rail station, and many bus stops require upgrading;

(v) the compact nature of Our Neighbourhood is a significant opportunity to implement a step change in provision to support cycling, the challenge being to provide continuous, safe routes; (vi) The principal challenge in providing enhanced support for walking, high quality public transport, and in encouraging a step change in cycling, is space. One of the great assets of Our Neighbourhood, its built heritage and historic environment, is also a constraint as in many areas there is no room to create extra road capacity; (vii) the problems created by the route of the A690 through the heart of the city. One solution is the building of relief roads; (viii) The City centre has sufficient supplies of publicly available car parking to meet most current visitor and retail needs. The strategy sets out the objectives to address the issues and opportunities identified above. Its vision is to: Enhance the transport networks and services within Durham City to help make the city a world class place where people can move around for work, for education, to access healthcare and other services that will help improve quality of life, and to access the social and cultural opportunities that Durham City offers, while protecting and enhancing its unique historic and natural environment. It is underpinned by a hierarchy of users framework to develop the focus of interventions within the

and conserving its heritage.

strategy. This hierarchy (from users to consider first to those to consider last) is: pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users,

	<p>specialist service vehicles (e.g. emergency services, waste etc.), other motor traffic.</p> <p>Local Transport Plan 3 is for the period 2011 onwards and covers the whole of Durham County, with Durham City as a section within this. It is organised under 6 themes: A stronger economy through regeneration; Reduce our carbon footprint; Safer and healthier travel; Better accessibility to services; Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment; Maintain the transport asset.</p>	
The Sustainable Communities Strategy for County Durham 2014-2030 (County Durham Partnership, 2014, p.20)	Aspects relevant to this section include: Altogether safer - Reduce road casualties.	An important consideration for the transport infrastructure section of the Neighbourhood Plan.
County Durham Green Infrastructure Strategy (Durham County Council, 2012b)	The policy recommendations relevant to this section emphasise the importance and benefits of the public rights of way network.	The pedestrian network and the maintenance and enhancement of public rights of way are a key issue for the Neighbourhood Plan, and will be reflected in specific policies.
<p>Durham City Regeneration Masterplan (Durham County Council, 2014d)</p> <p>Durham City Masterplan update (Durham County Council, 2016e)</p>	<p>The Masterplan has a number of implementation projects and actions for Our Neighbourhood (a subset of the Durham City area covered by the Masterplan). Ones relevant to this section are: Modern infrastructure - new relief roads (outside Our Neighbourhood) are proposed. In addition projects to improve the bus station, cycle and pedestrian routes, and junctions on A690.</p> <p>The Masterplan update notes what has been delivered and outlines key future activities. Completed projects include the refurbishment of the road and pavements in North Road, cycle path provision to the railway station, installation of a SCOOT system at the traffic lights on the Gilesgate and Leazes Bowl roundabouts.</p>	The Neighbourhood Plan can only address issues within Our Neighbourhood and consider ways to encourage cycling and walking and the use of public transport. Each of the projects will be incorporated into policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.
Highways Design Guide For Residential Development (Durham County Council, 2014e)	This guide lays down the standards which should be complied with for roads to be adopted for maintenance at the public expense.	A County-wide policy that will be applied (and if necessary enhanced) within Our Neighbourhood.

<p>Walk, Cycle, Ride: Rights of Way Improvement Plan for County Durham 2015–2018 (Durham County Council, 2015a)</p>	<p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 placed an obligation on local authorities to produce and maintain a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This is</p>	<p>This highlights the importance of covering rights of way within the Neighbourhood Plan and helps to identify measures that are within our remit. Pedestrians are the first</p>
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	<p>the third ROWIP for County Durham. The “opportunities” (essentially the policies) identified in the plan include protecting and maintaining the network, modernising by improving existing routes, and influencing travel and lifestyle choices by creating and promoting well-designed, high-quality active travel routes. In relation to development there is an aim that paths are provided and improved as part of development, and to improve gateway sites to public green spaces. Enhancements to the natural environment and biodiversity should be progressed wherever possible as part of improvement schemes.</p>	<p>user group on the Sustainable Transport Plan user hierarchy. Our Neighbourhood Plan will carry forward into policy the relevant parts of the Strategy.</p>
<p>County Durham Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, 2012–2015 (Durham County Council, 2012a)</p>	<p>This is the current cycling strategy: a revised policy is being prepared and is expected to be published for consultation in the summer of 2017. The aims of the strategy include: integrating cycling policies within other strategies; creating consistently high standards for on and off road cycle infrastructure; developing and maintaining a more comprehensive network; contributing to economic growth by encouraging cycling tourism and reducing car travel through Travel Plans; protecting the cycling network from negative impacts of development.</p>	<p>This provides help in identifying identify measures on cycling for our Neighbourhood Plan. Cycling is the second user group on the Sustainable Transport Plan (STP) user hierarchy. Our Neighbourhood Plan will carry forward into policy the relevant parts of the Strategy.</p>
<p>'County Durham Parking and Accessibility Standards' (Durham County Council, 2014c)</p>	<p>Demand for travel by car can be influenced by the availability of parking space for all types of vehicles at the place of destination.</p> <p>Requirements for parking space following this guidance should provide the correct balance between demand to travel by private car and the need to encourage active and sustainable travel.</p>	<p>A County-wide policy that will be applied (and if necessary enhanced) within Our Neighbourhood.</p>

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- **CHAPTER 3: SUSTAINABILITY CONTEXT**

3.1 SEA/SA legislation requires this report to set out the baseline information relating to the social, environmental and economic features of the area. This is a provision of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the contents of a Strategic Environmental Assessment report, requiring in Article 5(1) as amplified in Annex 1 sections (a) and (e) that the report must provide information on the plan's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes, the environmental protection objectives established at international, European Community or national level which are relevant to the plan, and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

3.2 As the Neighbourhood Plan area is small, covering just two wards and part of another, statistical information is not as readily available as for standard administrative and statistical areas. It has been possible to draw upon the 2011 census 'super output areas' data and upon some of the Evidence Base for the County Durham Local Plan, supplemented by local sources such as the work of the Business Improvement District. It is also worth noting that the characteristics of the Neighbourhood Plan area cannot be considered in isolation: it is part of a wider local, regional, national and international network.

3.3 The EU SEA Directive, Annex 1 (European Union, 2001) lists a number of possible issues or aspects of the environment that might be affected by the plan. Levett-Therivel (Therivel et al, 2011, p.22) offers an amended version of the list. The Forum has chosen its own list of issues, derived from the EU Directive and Levett-Therivel, which are judged to be relevant to Our Neighbourhood. These are used as sub-headings in this chapter (and in Tables 3 and 4 in Chapter 2) in which the sustainability context is described.

3.4 Sources used to obtain this baseline information include the following items: the Forum's public's priorities consultation surveys (June/July, 2015), the Forum's children and young people's surveys (October 2015 to March 2016), Durham County Council (2009a, 2010a,b, 2012b,c, 2016c, Definitive Public Rights of Way map, Tree Preservation Orders map), Environment Agency (Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea)), Historic England (National Heritage List for England), Natural England (MAGic). Further sources are cited in the text below where applicable.

### **Landscape and natural environment**

3.5 The deeply incised valley of the River Wear landscape feature is notable and creates the dramatic setting of the World Heritage Site, with the inner and outer bowls which provide views into and out of the City centre. There are other areas that contribute to the character of Our Neighbourhood including woodlands, parks, allotments and gardens. As well as their landscape value, these open areas provide spaces for informal recreation and leisure and are valued for their wildlife. The Durham Green Belt serves a number of strategic purposes and is partly included in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Policies to protect the Green Belt and other important green spaces from inappropriate development are one of the most significant values of the Neighbourhood Plan. Table 6 lists the relevant sites in Our Neighbourhood.

**Table 6: Landscape and natural environment sites in Our Neighbourhood**

Green Belt area within Our Neighbourhood and Area of Great Landscape Value	Aykley Heads, Sidegate, Franklands Lane  Maiden Castle  Land south of the A177 Land west of the A167
Agricultural land	Arbour House Farm Baxter Wood Farm Elvet Moor Farm Farewellhall Farms  Frankland Farm (part in Our Neighbourhood)  Houghall Farm at East Durham College's Houghall Campus Fields: Mountjoy, Potters Bank, Whinney Hill
Allotments and community gardens	Crossgate Community Garden, Laburnum Avenue Green Lane allotments  May Street allotments North End allotments  Peskeys Park  St Margaret's allotments, Margery Lane Wharton Park Community Garden
Cemeteries	Bow Cemetery, Potters Bank  Durham Cemetery and Crematorium, South Road Redhills Roman Catholic Cemetery, Redhills Lane  St Cuthbert's Anglican Church Cemetery, Framwellgate Peth St Margaret's Cemetery, Margery Lane  St Nicholas' Cemetery, Providence Row St Oswald's Cemetery, Church Street  Stockton Road Cemetery
Green assets	<p><i>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</i> None</p> <p><i>Local Nature Reserves (LNR)</i> Aykley Wood  Flass Vale</p> <p><i>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</i> Baxter Wood  Blaid's Wood  Flass Vale  Hopper's Wood</p>

Houghall, Maiden Castle and Little High Woods

Moorhouse Wood

North Wood

Pelaw Wood Saltwell Gill Wood

*Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)*

Blaid's Wood

Borehole Wood Farewell Hall Wood Great High Wood Hollinside Wood Hoppers Wood Maiden Castle Wood Moorhouse Wood North Wood

Pelaw Wood Saltwell Gill Wood

*Protected habitats/species*

*Habitats:*

Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows Ancient semi-natural woodland Veteran trees

Ponds

Rivers and streams

Road verges of conservation importance

*Species:* Amphibians (frogs, toads and newts), particularly the Great crested newt

Badgers Barn owls

Bats (all species) Hedgehogs House sparrows Otters

Salmon Sea trout

Wild birds, their nests and eggs

*County Geological Site* River Wear Gorge at Durham City

*Footpaths*

Many Public Rights of Way

*Trees*

Trees with preservation orders

*Parks, gardens and woods* Botanic Gardens, Durham University, South Road

The Houghall Arboretum and Pinetum, East Durham College, Houghall Campus

Crook Hall Gardens

Linear Park, Mount Oswald (proposed)

Low Burnhall, Woodland Trust wood Peninsular Woodlands

Wharton Park

*Open green spaces* Aykley Heads

Bowling Green (now unused), Elvet Waterside Gilesgate Green

Hollow Drift (field adjacent to Durham City Rugby Club ground) Observatory Hill

The College

The riverbanks (the parts of the riverbanks that are not just pavements)

Roundabouts, e.g. Gilesgate Roundabout The Sands

*Non-green open spaces* Fowler's Yard High Street Market Place Millennium Place

Palace Green (with some characteristics of an open green space) The riverbanks in the City Centre (the parts of the riverbanks that are just pavements)

(Sources: Natural England MAgic, Durham County Council maps (e.g. Allotments, Cemeteries, Definitive Public Rights of Way, Tree Preservation Orders), Durham Landscape Maps, Durham County Council (2009a), public consultation and feedback)

## **Air, water and climate**

3.6 Air, water and soil are fundamental elements of the environment. As most of the Neighbourhood Plan area is either developed or protected land, soil conditions have not been investigated and are not considered to be an issue.

3.7 The quality and provision of household water has not been raised as an issue by the public, nor has the sewerage system. Nevertheless, it is important to establish whether current water quality is poor or good and whether there is potential for proposed developments to have an impact, adverse or otherwise. Quality standards are set by the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000 by the Government and European Union based on standards recommended by the World Health Organisation and in Our Neighbourhood fall to the Northumbrian Water Authority (NWA) for compliance. Across Our Neighbourhood NWA reports the water quality as 'good'. In 2007 NWA constructed a major new drinking water reservoir on the outskirts of Durham City which the Authority claims will secure the supply and quality of drinking water for future generations. Pollution in feeder watercourses is one source of potential contamination, and the watercourses in Our Neighbourhood that are monitored include Orchard Drive, South Street, Baths Bridge and Pelaw Wood Beck.

3.8 Storm water drainage is a problem in some parts of Durham and flash flooding occurs after heavy rainfall or snowfall. However, there is concern that the River Wear has flooded its

banks on a number of occasions and the Environment Agency has published a Flood Risk map which shows the areas affected (Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning). Key areas of Our Neighbourhood that lie within Zone 3 of the River Wear are: The Sands; River footpaths, and roads alongside these footpaths where present, from Sidegate/The Sands to the Racecourse; Elvet Waterside; The Racecourse; Maiden Castle; and Houghall. Flooding also causes riverbank problems. Recent events include: (i) undercutting of the riverbank footpath between High Drift and Maiden Castle - footpath reinstated or moved further inland as applicable; (ii) landslip at Pelaw Wood - currently being stabilised (just outside Our Neighbourhood); (iii) landslip at St Oswald's Church.

3.9 Air quality is also a concern and the County Council declared an Air Quality Monitoring Area in May 2011, extended in July 2014, for those parts of the City where air quality is a risk to human health (Durham County Council. Air Quality Management Area (Durham City)). In order to address the issues an Air Quality Action Plan was approved in June 2016 (AECOM, 2016). The government has published a framework setting out the principles local authorities should follow when setting up Clean Air Zones (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017). Air quality is one of the reasons for the Neighbourhood Plan to promote alternatives to motorised transport although it is acknowledged that vehicular traffic passes through the City with origins and destinations to the north, south, east and west of Our Neighbourhood.

## Heritage

3.10 The heritage of the Neighbourhood Plan area is recognised through a series of categories: the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site, two Conservation Areas (Durham City, designated in 1968, and Burnhall, designated in 1981) covering the built development of the City from the medieval period up to the 20th century, statutorily listed buildings including Grades I, II\* and II, and many locally cherished buildings and sites, including an historic garden and a battlefield. These are listed in Table 7 and illustrated in Map 2.

**Table 7: Heritage assets in Our Neighbourhood**

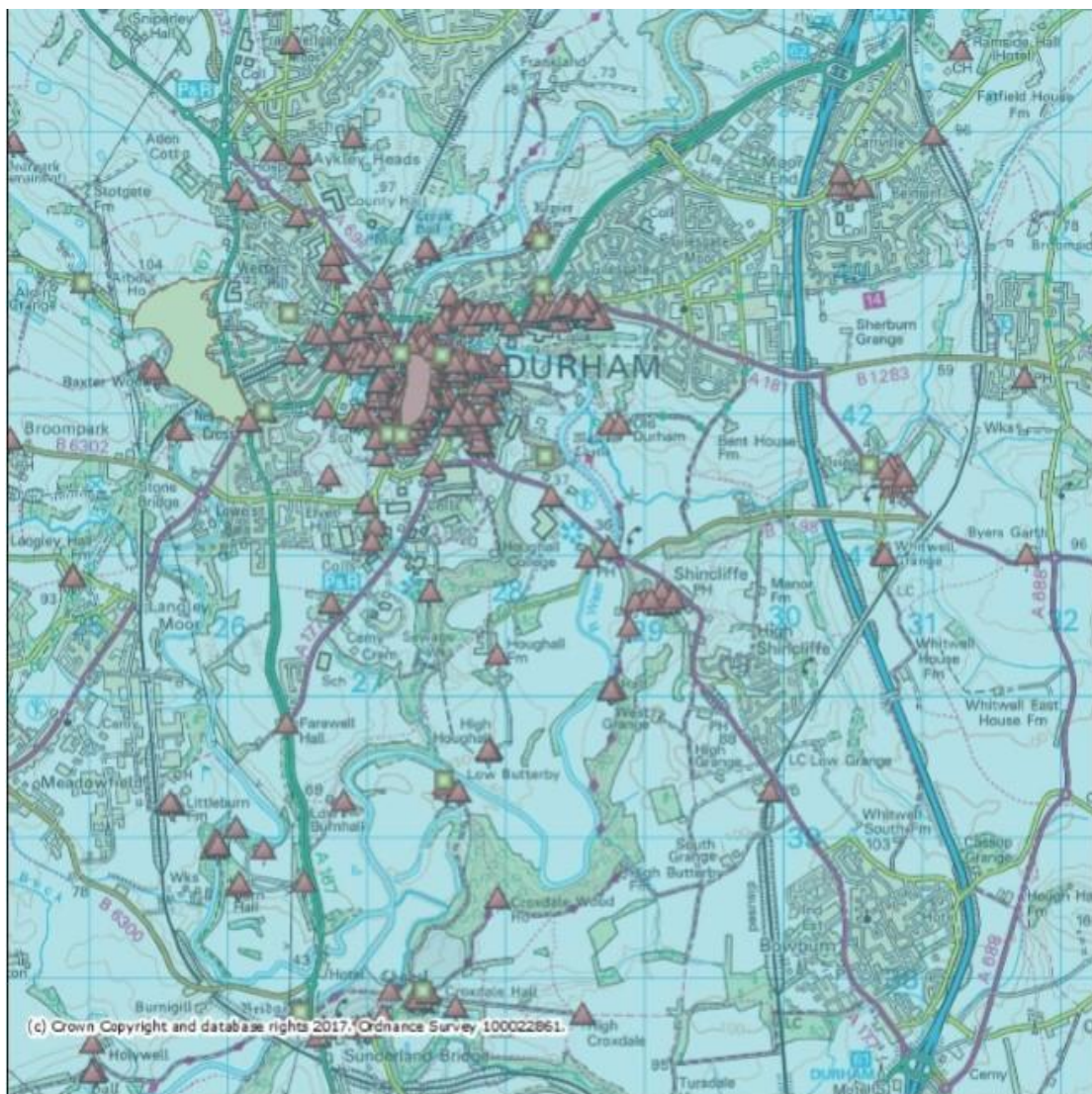
World Heritage Site	Durham Cathedral and Castle
Registered battlefield	Battle of Neville's Cross 1346
Registered park and garden	Burn Hall
Scheduled ancient monument	Prebends Bridge Chapel of St Mary Magdalene, A690 The Watergate, South Bailey Framwellgate Bridge Elvet Bridge Maiden's Bower round cairn, Flass Vale Maiden Castle promontory fort Neville's Cross

Listed buildings/structures	467 (Grade I = 42; Grade II* = 27; Grade II = 388)
-----------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

Conservation Areas	Durham City Burnhall  (Also adjacent: Sunderland Bridge and Shincliffe)
Non-designated heritage assets*	331

(\*Source: Non-designated as listed in the Durham City Conservation Area Appraisal report (Durham County Council, 2016c)

**Map 2: Historic buildings and sites in Durham City**



<b>Legend</b>	
Scheduled Monuments (England) - points	
<b>World Heritage Sites (England)</b>	
Buffer Zone	
World Heritage Site	
Listed Buildings (England)	
Registered Battlefields (England)	
	Projection = OSGB36 xmin = 422300 ymin = 536800 xmax = 434400 ymax = 545400 Map produced by MAGIC on 25 July, 2017. Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGIC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.





Area 4 Elvet

<i>New Elvet and Old Elvet Riverside</i>	Dunelm House, New Elvet  Former Public Swimming Baths, Elvet Riverside The brick railway bridge abutments associated with Elvet Railway
<i>Green Lane/Whinney Hill Church Street/Hallgarth Street</i>	Mount Joy farmhouse and associated farm buildings Former Durham Johnston School, Whinney Hill Church Street No 31, 32, 33*  The Tithe Barn Durham Prison Officers' Club, Hallgarth Street*‡

Area 5 Gilesgate		
<i>Upper Gilesgate</i>	Vane Tempest Hall and Stable Blocks* York House, St. Hild's Lane	
<i>Lower Gilesgate Kepier / Riverside / St Mary Magdalene's</i>	Kepier House Chapel of St Mary Magdalene*	
	19 <sup>th</sup> century brick kiln to north of Kepier Hospital	
Outside Conservation Area		
<i>Dryburn Road</i>	Dryburn House*, University Hospital of North Durham grounds (planning permission given for demolition)	

3.12 Tables 7 and 8 and map 2 demonstrate the richness and sheer intensity of heritage assets in Our Neighbourhood. This is evidence for the importance of ensuring that the Neighbourhood Plan recognises the sensitivity and vulnerability of the historic environment here, particularly the issues that arise from the capacity of this environment to accommodate change. In terms of condition, much of the historic stock is in the hands of responsible owners such as Durham University and is well maintained. There are, however, heritage assets at risk, as detailed above, and the Neighbourhood Plan needs to address this in association with national, County and local agencies. Durham City cannot be 'frozen in aspic' and new developments need to be accommodated but damage has occurred such as the severance of Claypath from the Market Place and, more recently, the approved demolition of Dryburn House and of the former Gas Board offices in Claypath. The national and local importance of the historic assets and environment in Our Neighbourhood, including non-designated heritage assets, requires that planning polices establish the standards and indeed limits placed upon development proposals and are framed on the basis that Our Neighbourhood has a constrained capability for accommodating sizeable buildings however well designed.

### **Human population, health, housing and services**

3.13 Appropriate housing development to meet the different needs of the population in Our Neighbourhood is greatly affected by pressures for Durham University student accommodation; a long term problem. Durham University in its Strategy and Estates Masterplan (University of Durham, 2016, 2017) sets out aspirations for significant growth of the University over the next 10 years. If adopted, it will further squeeze the very limited availability of sites for various forms of residential development. In fact, most potential housing sites have already been approved for the construction of Purpose Built Student Accommodation, whereas the need, as evidenced below, is for accommodation for long-term residents as families, elderly people and young people starting out on the housing ladder. Indeed, one of the strongest concerns expressed in the Forum's public survey consultations

has been the 'studentification' of former family housing areas of Durham. For the reasons expounded by the County Council in adopting its Interim Policy on Student Accommodation (DCC Cabinet Report 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2016), the severe imbalance in parts of Our

Neighbourhood is damaging to community relations, to quality of life, and to the future sustainability of schools, shops and other services and facilities.

3.14 The evidence for the social profile of Our Neighbourhood comes principally from the Super Output Areas of the April 2011 national census (Office for National Statistics, 2011), recording a total of 20,616 people living in Our Neighbourhood at that time. 10,605 of these were boys or men and 10,011 girls or women. Most of this apparent gender imbalance is accounted for by 514 male prisoners in Durham Prison.

3.15 Over half (53%) of the residents were students, who numbered 10,916. Some of these are school sixth-formers who had attained the age of 18 or are attendees at New College Durham or Houghall College, but the vast majority are at Durham University's main campus in Durham City. It should be noted that the University of Durham's own figures show 12,733 in the city for the Census year, but this difference can mainly be explained by the fact that not all students live within Our Neighbourhood. The area with the highest concentration of students (87%) is the South Road group of colleges. Here there are 4,494 persons comprising 3,924 students and 570 long-term residents.

3.16 The long-term (i.e. non-student) population of 9,700 has roughly the same age balance as for the rest of County Durham, except that 11% are aged 75 or over as opposed to 8% in the County as a whole. 33% of the long-term residents are retired (25% in the County), and only 3% are sick or with disabilities (7% in the County). These comparisons indicate that Our Neighbourhood will have a greater demand for elderly accommodation of varying degrees of shelter and care, for day centres and for domiciliary care services but less proportionate need than in the County as a whole for provision for school places, playgrounds and so on. The nature of retailing and other leisure activities will also be affected by the greater proportion of elderly people. As to whether the lower proportion with sickness and disability will offset the health care needs for a more elderly population is not clear.

3.17 Only 15.7% of the population is non-White British, but this is not typical of County Durham which has just 3.4% non White British. The main minority ethnic groups in Our Neighbourhood are Chinese (2.7%); Indian (1.3%); and Other Asian (1.2%), reflecting the international nature of the University.

3.18 At the time of the 2011 Census there were 5,410 households in Our Neighbourhood, representing a crude overall household size in 2011 of 3.811 as compared to the County average household size of 2.29. This displays the severely distorting effects of student households. The number of non-student households may be estimated on the basis of the County average household size to have been about 4,200.

3.19 The University's figures show that there were 12,733 students in the academic year 2011/12 and there are now 15,475 in 2016/17. The figures show that 9,123 of this number live outside of Colleges, nearly all in rented accommodation known as Houses in Multiple Occupation.

3.20 Owner-occupation is 53% (as compared with 66% for County Durham as a whole); 8% is social housing (20% in County Durham); and private rental is 36% whereas for County

Durham it is just 12%. These comparisons indicate that housing tenure in Our Neighbourhood is distinctly shaped by student rentals.

3.21 In terms of the level of economic activity of the residents of Our Neighbourhood, 32.5% of residents (including students) are recorded in the 2011 Census as being economically active as against 57.3% in County Durham as a whole. This contrast can be explained on the basis of the presence of students, and to a lesser extent by the higher proportion of retired people.

Ward	Total persons 16-74 years old	Econ active full-time employees	Econ active part-time employees	Econ active self employed	Total econ active	% econ active
Elvet & Gilesgate	9,586	681	200	134	1,015	10.6%
Neville's Cross	7,995	2,118	634	490	3,242	40.6%
Durham South	4,908	633	2,108	312	3,053	62.2%
Our Neighbourhood*	22,489	3,432	2,942	936	7,310	32.5%
County Durham	383,796	50,595	143,922	25,309	219,826	57.3%

\* Durham South Ward extends to Shincliffe Village outside the area of Our Neighbourhood.

3.22 The dominant occupations of the residents in Our Neighbourhood who are in employment are education (25.6%); health and social services (11.12%); and retail and wholesale (10.7%). These figures demonstrate the role of Durham City as a major centre for the whole County through being the location of County Hall, the University Hospital of North Durham and the University of Durham, though of course most of the people who work at these locations live outside Our Neighbourhood and indeed outside Durham City.

Ward	Total residents in employment	Retail and wholesale	Accom'n and food services	Professional and scientific services	Education services	Human health and social services
Elvet & Gilesgate	2,175	228	447	134	656	151
Neville's Cross	3,873	338	303	335	1,179	474
Durham South	3,158	423	188	200	524	402
Our Neighbourhood*	9,206	989	938	669	2,359	10,27
Percentages	100.0%	10.7%	10.2%	7.3%	25.6%	11.2%
County Durham	227,894	33,261	12,257	8,789	23,836	31,923
Percentages	100.0%	14.6%	5.3%	3.9%	10.4%	14.0%

\* Durham South Ward extends to Shincliffe Village outside the area of Our Neighbourhood.

3.23 The residents of Our Neighbourhood also notably hold more qualifications than is the case across the County: some 37% hold Level 3 ('A' level equivalent) qualifications

compared with 14% in County Durham.

Ward	Total persons over 16 years old	Number with Level 3	% with Level 3
Elvet & Gilesgate	9,958	5,645	59%
Neville's Cross	8,629	2,751	32%
Durham South	5,543	598	11%
Our Neighbourhood*	24,130	8,994	37%
County Durham	425,258	57,957	14%

\* Durham South Ward extends to Shincliffe Village outside the area of Our Neighbourhood.

3.24 The health of the residents of Our Neighbourhood is above average: about 89% are in good or very good health, somewhat better than the figure of 76% for County Durham which reflects the long-standing damage to health and well-being caused in the traditional industries of County Durham beyond Durham City: coal-mining, railway engineering, ship-building and heavy engineering.

Ward	% with good or very good health
Elvet & Gilesgate	91%
Neville's Cross	90%
Durham South	79%
Our Neighbourhood*	89%
County Durham	76%

\* Durham South Ward extends to Shincliffe Village outside the area of Our Neighbourhood.

3.25 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (Department for Communities and Local Government. OpenDataCommunities) reveals the legacy from those former industries: many communities of the County are amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. In contrast, Our Neighbourhood is in the 30% least deprived; indeed Neville's Cross is in the 10% least deprived. Put another way, out of a score of 100 for the least deprived places in England, Neville's Cross stands at 96.

Area	Deprivation rank (out of 32844, where 1 is the most deprived in England)	In decile cluster of least deprived neighbourhoods in England	Ranking out of 100
Claypath/The Sands	23,986	30%	73
Elvet East	11,502	40%	35
Elvet West	24,697	30%	75
Crossgate North	21,968	40%	66
Crossgate South	32,457	10%	99
North End	29,553	20%	90
Neville's Cross North	31,767	10%	97
Neville's Cross South	31,421	10%	96
Our Neighbourhood (approximately)	26,000	30%	79

\* Durham South Ward extends to Shincliffe Village outside the area of Our Neighbourhood.

3.26 Durham City performs a number of functions for communities within Our Neighbourhood and further afield. The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust has a number of services within Our Neighbourhood, including The University Hospital



of North Durham (providing a wide range of clinical departments including accident and emergency) and community-based services (some covering mental health). Mental health services are also provided by the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust whose main County Durham site is Lanchester Road Hospital just outside Our Neighbourhood. The only GP service within the Neighbourhood Plan area provides for local residents as well as for the student population. There are concerns that due to the increasing older population, and the planned expansion of the student population, there is a need for more GP surgeries. Dental services, community care services and a wide range of public services are also available. See Table 9 for details.

3.27 Durham City also functions as a community and cultural hub for Our Neighbourhood and surrounding areas. Such services and facilities comprise: community facilities, cultural facilities, religious establishments, sports fields and children's playgrounds. See Table 9 for details.

**Table 9: Public and community services and facilities in Our Neighbourhood**

Health and social care establishments	<p>Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), North End House, North End</p> <p>Claypath and University Medical Group, Gilesgate and Green Lane Claypath Dental Practice, Claypath</p> <p>Durham City Smiles, Crossgate (dental practice) Durham City Centre Youth Project, North Road Elvet Dental Practice, Old Elvet</p> <p>Food Bank, Framwellgate Peth Hallgarth Care Home, Hallgarth Street Kingsgate Dental, Church Street mydentist, Framwellgate Bridge</p> <p>Neville Court (care home), Darlington Road, Nevilles Cross St Cuthbert's Hospice</p> <p>St Margaret's Care Home, Crossgate</p> <p>St. Margaret's Health Centre, Crossgate (specialist NHS clinics) St. Margaret's Centre, Margery Lane (mental health)</p> <p>University Hospital of North Durham</p> <p>Waddington Street Day Centre, Waddington Street (mental health)</p>
Public services	<p>Council offices, Millennium Place Central Library, Millennium Place Durham City Police Station, New Elvet</p> <p>Durham Constabulary Headquarters, Aykley Heads Durham County Council, County Hall, Aykley Heads</p> <p>Durham County Court and Family Court Hearing Centre, Green Lane Durham Crown Court, Old Elvet</p> <p>HM Prison Durham</p> <p>National Savings and Investments, Durham Office Passport Office Durham</p> <p>Post Office, WH Smith, Market Place</p> <p>Public toilets: Cathedral, Clayport library, Durham Bus Station, Durham Indoor Market, Gala Theatre, Palace Green, Prince Bishops multi-story car park, Railway Station, Wharton Park</p>
Community facilities	<p>Allington House Community Association, North Bailey Antioch House, Crossgate</p> <p>Community Centre, Merryoaks (proposed), Park House Road</p>

Durham City Workmen's Club and Institute, Crossgate Durham Miners Hall, Redhills  
 Elvet Methodist Church Hall, Old Elvet Masonic Hall, Old Elvet  
 North Road Methodist Church, North Road  
 Nelson Hall Scout Hut, behind St. John's Church, Nevilles Cross  
 Redwood Lodge Community Centre, behind St. Oswald's School between Church Street and Stockton Road  
 Shakespeare Hall, North Road  
 St. John's Church Centre, Nevilles Cross St. Oswald's Institute, Church Street  
 Wharton Park meeting room, Wharton Park

**Cultural facilities**      Crook Hall

Crushed Chilli Gallery  
 Durham Cathedral (Cathedral, Library, Open Treasure) Durham City Theatre, Fowler's Yard  
 Durham Museum and Heritage Centre, North Bailey Durham Student Theatre, North Bailey  
 Durham University (Castle Museum, Library (public access for reference purposes), Museum of Archaeology, Musicon, Oriental Museum, Palace Green Library)  
 Empty Shop  
 Events and festivals (Book Festival, Brass Festival, Christmas Market, Durham City Run, Fire and Ice, Lumiere, Miners' Gala, New Year's Eve Lantern Parade, Regatta, Seasonal Markets, Street Festival)  
 Fowler's Yard Creative Workspaces  
 Gala Theatre and Cinema (plus two more cinemas approved) World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, Owengate

**Religious establishments**      Christchurch Durham, Claypath

Durham Cathedral  
 Durham City Spiritualist Church, John Street Durham Islamic Society Mosque, Old Elvet Durham Presbyterian Church, Laburnum Avenue Durham Vineyard, Framwellgate Peth  
 Elvet Methodist Church, Old Elvet  
 King's Church Durham, DSU, Kingsgate House, New Elvet North Road Methodist Church, North Road  
 Sanctuary 21, Salvation Army, North Bailey  
 St Cuthbert's Anglican Church, Framwellgate Peth St Cuthbert's Catholic Church, Old Elvet

St Godric's Church, Castle Chare St John's Church, Neville's Cross St Margaret's Church, Crossgate  
St Oswald's Church, Church Street St Nicholas Church, Marketplace Society of Friends, North Bailey

Waddington Street United Reformed Church, Waddington Street

**Sports fields and facilities** Banks Sports Field, Sheraton Park

Bow School

The Chorister School

Durham Archery Lawn Tennis Club Durham City Cricket Club, Green Lane

Durham City Rugby Football Club, Hollow Drift Durham High School for Girls

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School Durham School

Durham University, Graham Sports Centre, Maiden Castle

Durham University, individual College provision (e.g. Grey College. Collingwood College, St Mary's Field)

Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre, Walkergate Lowes Barn Park, Nevilles Cross

Nevilles Cross School The Racecourse

St Cuthbert's / Merryoaks bowling club and sports field, Parkhouse Road St Leonard's Catholic School

St. Margaret's Primary School

**Children's playgrounds** Allergate

Bakehouse Lane Church Street

Merryoaks, Park House Road Mount Oswald (proposed)

Wharton Park

## Employment, education and skills

3.28 The main employers are Durham University with over 8,000 jobs; Durham County Council with 2,000 jobs, University Hospital of North Durham sharing the major part of 7,000 jobs in the Foundation Trust's area, and Government offices with over 700 jobs. A reliance on four major public sector employers creates an economic imbalance, which is unhealthy and needs to be addressed. The role of Durham City as the 'county town' within County Durham is reflected in the 80 offices of estate agents, solicitors, accountants and related

professional services. Office space is limited in the centre of town, and most of it is in Georgian and Victorian buildings. The retail sector amounts to some 1,000 full-time equivalent jobs and provides vibrancy and a relatively good retail offering, but with few independent retailers. There is a limited lunchtime economy (concentrated in the immediate City centre, with more minimal provision in the outer areas of the City centre) supported by the presence of major offices and of students, and a very significant night-time economy drawing people into Durham City from other parts of County Durham and beyond.

3.29 There are three state primary schools, two state secondary schools, a special school and a Sixth Form Centre in Our Neighbourhood, all with good or outstanding ratings by Ofsted. Capacity issues affect several of the primary schools, and at least one of the secondary schools is customarily over-subscribed. There are also three private schools, offering education from nursery to secondary level. See Table 10 for further details.

3.30 The University is a member of the Russell Group and provides world-class scholarship and research. It is the third oldest University in England and has grown in recent decades from about 6,000 students in the 1980s to about 15,500 now, together with about 2,500 in the Stockton campus. Further growth is planned over the next ten years to about 21,500 in Durham City by 2026/27. Vocational skills are provided by the high quality establishments of New College Durham (just outside Our Neighbourhood) and East Durham College, Houghall Campus (offering agriculture, arboriculture and forestry, horticulture and animal care courses).

**Table 10: Employers and educational establishments in Our Neighbourhood**

C2 Residential institutions (including residential care homes, nursing homes) (See Table 9 for further details)
D1 Non-residential institutions (including places of worship, law courts) (See Table 9 for further details)
D2 Assembly and leisure
Sui Generis (including betting offices/shops, nightclubs)
<b>Educational establishments</b> Bow School, Quarryheads Lane (private, primary; Prep provision of Durham School)
The Chorister School, The College (private, primary and secondary) Durham High School for Girls, South Road (private, primary and secondary) Durham Johnston Comprehensive School, Newcastle Road (secondary) Durham School, Quarryheads Lane (Private, secondary)
Durham Trinity School and Sports College (part inside Our Neighbourhood) (special school, primary, secondary)
Durham University
East Durham College, Houghall Campus Kids First, Old Dryburn Way (Nursery) Nevilles Cross Primary School, Relly Path
St Leonard's Catholic School, North End (secondary)
St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, The Peth
St. Oswald's Church of England Primary and Nursery School, Church Street Sixth Form Centre, Providence Row
Stepping Stones Nursery, St. Margaret's Garth, Crossgate
Yellow Wellies, North Road (pre-school)

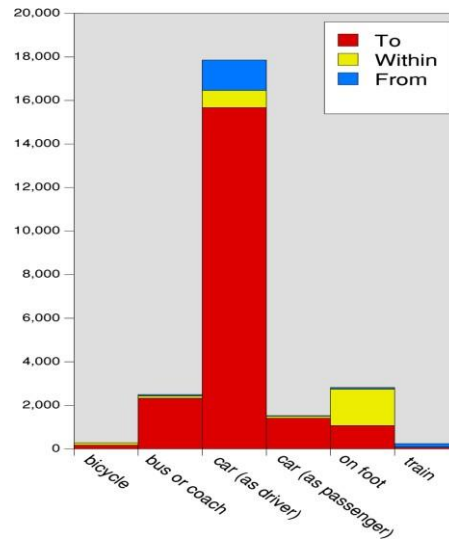
## Transport

3.31 Many of the transport characteristics of Our Neighbourhood stem from the constraints posed by the River Wear as it cuts through the landscape, and by the hilly terrain which has necessitated various engineering solutions to ease transport by road and rail. While modern footbridges such as Pennyferry Bridge, Kingsgate Bridge, Baths Bridge and Maiden Castle Bridge help to connect the neighbourhood, the transport network is largely limited and defined by the flood-plains and bridges of the River Wear, and the historic approaches to the city. The A167 bypasses Durham City centre on the west (though this road now passes through built up areas) and the A1(M) passes Durham beyond the eastern boundary of Our Neighbourhood. The east-west route through the City is the A690. Some routes, such as those to the west and south-east via Crossgate Peth and Shincliffe Peth are still constrained to an extent by the cuttings created to ease the passage of vehicles over the hills of the outer bowl in which the city is set.

3.32 The Durham City Traffic Survey 2015 (JACOBS, 2016) found that around 33% of vehicular traffic trips passed through Durham City and 47,000 vehicles cross Milburngate bridge every day; only 5% of vehicular trips were made wholly within the City centre. Most of the traffic is to and from locations within County Durham but there were also journeys to and

from Sunderland, Newcastle and Gateshead. Using 2011 Census travel to work data (Office for National Statistics, 2011) it is possible to total the commuting journeys originating in the area and those starting outside with the work destination being in the area to get a picture of travel patterns. The majority of journeys are by car (77%), with 11% on foot, 10% by bus, 1% by bicycle and 1% by train. Looking just at journeys to work which both start and end in the area, 60% are on foot, 32% by car, 4% by bus and 4% by bicycle.

3.33 The chart is coloured to show work journeys to the area, within, and starting from the area, and demonstrates the importance of the area for employment, as far more people travel into Our Neighbourhood to work than live here and travel elsewhere. The chart also shows the modal share, as summarised above in paragraph 3.32.



3.34 Data from the University annual travel surveys (Durham University, 2013b, 2014) provide a useful picture of trends, as well as information on the potential for changing travel mode and the barriers to doing so. From the latest figures given for the Durham campus, staff travel to the University in 2014 was 76% by car, 9% on foot, 9% by bus, 4% by bicycle and 2% by train. Student travel in 2013 was 82% on foot, 5% by car, 6% by bus, 5% by bicycle, 2% by train. The Review of Durham University's Sustainable Travel Plan Targets 2008-2016 (Durham University, 2017) shows small fluctuations in modal share over the period but no discernible long-term shift.

3.35 Our Neighbourhood is quite compact, which makes it a walkable environment. Most of the built-up area can be reached in 30 minutes from the market place, and there is an extensive network of footpaths sometimes providing short-cuts by comparison with footways alongside roads. On the other hand, the steeper routes and steps can be difficult to negotiate for those with mobility issues, and there are many deficiencies such as narrow, badly-lit or poorly maintained routes, making walking less attractive. Some pavements are heavily congested during the University terms. Severance of pedestrian routes by the A690 and other major roads is also an issue, but walking is very much encouraged in the historic core of the city, with pedestrian areas on Silver Street and Elvet Bridge, and the congestion charge limiting vehicular access to Saddler Street and the rest of the peninsula.

3.36 Most of the built-up area of Our Neighbourhood can be reached from the Market Place by bicycle in 15 to 20 minutes. There is little dedicated provision for cycling aside from a few routes sharing pedestrian footways. The Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy (Durham County Council, 2016d, p.11) notes that cycling levels in Durham City are low for a compact university town. Durham University (2013a) 2013 staff travel survey asked

respondents what would encourage them to cycle to work: 54% said nothing would encourage them to cycle, but 22% could be encouraged with cycleway improvements or traffic-free routes.

3.37 Bus routes from Durham reach all the main towns in the county and adjoining centres although many are infrequent and limited to daytime only. Although there are some express services, most call at a number of villages on the way and so commuting to or from places such as Sunderland and Middlesbrough is generally much faster by car. Buses from central Durham serve most of the employment and education sites around the City, but the lack of through services means that commuting by bus is less attractive, and the timekeeping can be affected by peak time traffic congestion as there are few bus priority measures. There are two main bus companies but no interoperability of tickets.

3.38 Durham railway station had over 2.5 million entries and exits in 2015/16 (Office of Rail and Road, 2016) and a 2012 study found that 45% of journeys were between Durham and Newcastle (Durham County Council, 2015c, p.52). Journeys by train can be made throughout the UK, but locally only Newcastle and Darlington are well-served owing to the closure of most railway lines in the county. Other major destinations such as Sunderland, Stockton and Middlesbrough are much easier to reach by road than by rail, as are the airports at Newcastle and Durham/Tees Valley. Reopening the Leamside line is an aspiration which would increase the local journey opportunities.

3.39 The Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy (Durham County Council, 2016d) found that the cost of car parking in Our Neighbourhood is comparatively cheaper than other small historic cities in the UK. There were 1,700 off-street spaces, 70% of which are privately owned: Prince Bishops with 400 spaces, the Gates with 204 spaces, Walkergate 500 spaces and the railway station 358 spaces. The council controlled off-street provision amounts to 262 spaces (Durham County Council. Durham City car parks), and in addition there is controlled parking on many residential streets. Car parking is also found at the large employers in the City: County Hall has 900 free spaces; University Hospital has 245 spaces which are charged; New College has 850 free spaces (outside Our Neighbourhood); the Arnison retail centre (outside Our Neighbourhood) has 1,400 free spaces; Durham University has 2,600 spaces which are free but require a permit; Aykley Heads has 280 spaces and charges £2.00 per day and the Riverside centre has 170 free spaces. The recently developed Passport Office and National Savings Office deliberately have no spaces for employees.

3.40 Park and Ride facilities have been developed on the northern, western and southern approaches to the City centre and operate Monday to Saturday from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm, but currently require subsidy from the County Council. In 2015 they catered for 1.1 million passengers with 1157 spaces (Durham County Council, 2015c, p.50). There is space for 11 coaches at the Sands and there are 5 taxi ranks (in North Road, the Railway station, Claypath slip road to Leazes Road, and slip road by Prince Bishops car park) and 2 car clubs.



## SWOT Analysis

3.41 Levett-Therival's guidance is that it is a legal requirement that a Sustainability Appraisal report must identify existing problems in the area. They suggest that this can be shown in a 'SWOT' analysis:

- **S**trengths are things that are good at the moment
- **W**eaknesses are things that are bad at the moment (existing problems)
- **O**pportunities are chances for future improvement
- **T**hreats are things that could make the situation worse in the future

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each aspect of the environment of Our Neighbourhood are brought together in the following table (Table 11).

**Table 11: SWOT analysis of Our Neighbourhood**

### Landscape and natural environment

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Banks of River Wear Green Belt</p> <p>Open green spaces</p> <p>Green assets, including wildlife sites and woodlands</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Lack of management plans, both for individual sites and collectively across Our Neighbourhood</p> <p>Lack of green landscaping to soften the impact of modern urban buildings</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Variety of uses to promote health and well-being Leisure and tourism</p> <p>Use of green assets to mitigate the effects of climate change</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>New developments destroying green assets on site and not replacing them</p> <p>Inappropriate development in the Green Belt Development threats to protected species Effects of climate change on habitats Erosion and landslips of the river banks</p>

### Air, water and climate

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Good household water supply Good sewerage system</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Poorly designed / poorly maintained drains, causing localised flooding in heavy rainfall</p> <p>Flash floods after storms River flooding</p> <p>Landslips</p> <p>Poor air quality</p>
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Opportunities	Threats
New UK strategy for air quality County Plan to address climate issues	Increasing traffic congestion and pollution University growth putting pressure on water supply and sewerage systems Use of hard surfacing in properties Effects of climate change increasing flooding risk

## Heritage

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site Two Conservation Areas</p> <p>Listed buildings, gardens and battlefield Non-designated heritage assets</p> <p>Tourist-related attractions</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Discordant buildings, treatments and details</p> <p>Focus on the outstanding qualities of the World Heritage Site can lead to neglect of other assets which would be rightly prized in many small towns</p> <p>Some of the best streetscapes in Our Neighbourhood are marred by the pressure for car parking</p> <p>Planning decisions that permit demolition of listed buildings and pass new developments with inappropriate scale, massing and design for their heritage setting</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Visitors and tourism</p> <p>Publication of the Durham City Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>The quantity and quality of these heritage assets are taken for granted, which may lead to underestimation of the impact of individual assets being lost because of planning decisions,</p> <p>e.g. permission to demolish listed buildings</p> <p>Lack of resources for maintenance of historic fabric in public and private ownership</p> <p>Impact of developments on views to and from the World Heritage Site</p>

## Human population, health, housing and services

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Community and residents' groups Vibrant cultural activities</p> <p>Having University Hospital of North Durham in Our Neighbourhood</p> <p>Durham City being the location of a number of public services</p> <p>Availability of fibre broadband throughout the area Street cleaning and litter picking</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Age structure Unbalanced community</p> <p>Proliferation of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) taking up terraced housing that would otherwise accommodate local residents</p> <p>Half of the population (i.e. students) absent half of the year Only one GP's surgery to serve residents and students Small scale community and cultural activities often poorly publicised</p> <p>Lack of public knowledge about what is going on Night-time economy focussed on drinking</p>
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Opportunities	Threats
<p>Sites suitable for housing for families with children and for older people</p> <p>Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) on University estate</p> <p>Arts/cultural facilities, including community arts facilities Information hub</p>	<p>Ageing population</p> <p>Whole areas devoid of long-term residents</p> <p>Lack of variety of housing provision to meet established demands, particularly affordable housing and housing for older people</p> <p>Expansion of the University student population, if not managed to mitigate the impact on an already unbalanced community</p> <p>Fast expanding student population will put a strain on the GP practice</p> <p>Social misbehaviour that deters families, older people and tourists from using the City centre's leisure facilities Emphasis on electronic delivery of public services</p> <p>Under-funded council services (refuse collection, health etc.) having to serve a fast expanding student (non-contributory) community</p>

## Employment, education and skills

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>City centre still an attractive location for retail ventures Major employment centre</p> <p>High quality education</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Employment dominated by public sector Relatively poor retail offer</p> <p>Loss of sites in the City Centre for retail, commercial and leisure purposes because they have been developed for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)</p> <p>Lack of a tourist information office</p> <p>Low-level of educational attainment across the North East, affecting employment in Our Neighbourhood</p>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p>Favourable location on transport networks</p> <p>Future growth of Durham University</p> <p>High-tech small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)</p> <p>Specialised small shops, particularly for the tourist trade</p> <p>Enhancing and increasing the tourist offer</p>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p>Long-term economic depression in the North-East</p> <p>Austerity</p> <p>Brexit</p> <p>Lack of job opportunities</p> <p>Detrimental effect on small 'town' centres of out of town shopping sites and on-line shopping</p>

## Transport







<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Compact, walkable neighbourhood with many footpaths Attractive pedestrianised shopping streets</p> <p>Good range of daytime bus routes</p> <p>Fast long-distance rail services to many parts of the UK, and frequent services to Newcastle, Darlington and York</p> <p>Comparatively cheap car parking</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Poorly maintained pavements and steps; lack of leaf clearance and gritting</p> <p>Badly managed shared roadways, with surfaces damaged by motor traffic</p> <p>Some pedestrian routes highly congested in University terms Many challenges for people with mobility problems</p> <p>Cycle network is highly disjointed, with few alternatives to the busy roads</p> <p>Difficulty of getting between the bus and railway stations</p> <p>Poor public transport across County affects take-up of employment opportunities in Our Neighbourhood</p> <p>Poor train services to local destinations such as Chester-le- Street, Sunderland and Middlesbrough</p> <p>Localised peak-time road congestion during school terms</p>
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Opportunities	Threats
<p>Potential to enable more active travel journeys (walking and cycling) by improving infrastructure, connectivity and prioritisation</p>	<p>Increased pavement congestion resulting from University expansion</p>
<p>New bus station, by redeveloping the existing site Better co-ordination of bus services, ticketing, and network coverage</p>	<p>Prioritisation of motor traffic flow for short-term air quality improvements limits scope for walking and cycling infrastructure improvements</p>
<p>Extending the Park &amp; Ride services into the late evening</p>	<p>Wrong location for bus station, if moved to the North Road roundabout</p>
<p>A frequent hopper bus service for the city centre accessing retail, leisure, community and cultural facilities for residents and visitors</p>	<p>Cuts to bus services lead to social exclusion or more car journeys</p>
<p>Reopening Leamside line could improve local rail service provision</p>	<p>Poor management of car parking harms city centre economy Over-development, or development in the wrong locations, results in more congestion and pressure to expand road network</p>

## Conclusions on the key sustainability issues from the current situation if nothing is done

3.42 The baseline information on prevailing conditions in Our Neighbourhood set out in this chapter can be summarised in terms of a 'traffic lights' system, namely green if the situation can be allowed to continue, amber if there are grounds for concern, or red if action must be taken to halt the current state of affairs and trends. The following table presents the summary in these terms for Our Neighbourhood.

**Table 12: Summary of the sustainability situation in Our Neighbourhood**

Topic	Sustainability situation	Traffic light rating
Landscape and natural environment	Strong landscape and natural assets but current and future development threats to both that need to be managed or valued landscapes and habitats will be lost.	
Air, water and climate	Air quality in parts of Our Neighbourhood fails government limits and flooding from the River Wear and from inadequate storm drains are continuing risks.	
Heritage	Our Neighbourhood possesses not only world class heritage assets but also an exceptional number of nationally and locally important historic buildings. Whilst existing statutory protections are often sufficient there are threats which need to be addressed with more detailed and specific criteria and standards..	
Human population, health, housing and services	Health services will be stretched if there is significant population growth. Current housing trends in Our Neighbourhood are failing to provide for balanced communities and for sufficient affordable housing and accommodation for the elderly.	
Employment, education and skills	Good educational provision in and around Our Neighbourhood and diverse employment offer but there are weaknesses such as the dominance of the public sector.	
Transport	Congestion problems for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and motor vehicles, coupled with a limited capacity to accommodate any increase.	

3.43 The foregoing analysis shows that the current position is unacceptable for the heritage, environmental and social issues facing Durham City and in particular Our Neighbourhood. The sensitivity and vulnerability of the historic environment here, the pressures of University expansion, grossly unbalanced nature of local communities, developers' demands for development in the Green Belt, and the consumption of virtually all developments sites within our Neighbourhood by Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) all require a robust statutory plan as soon as possible. There will in due course be a County Durham Local Plan, which may or may not concentrate development in Durham City rather than spread across the County, but it will lack the fine-grain detail at Our Neighbourhood level. In the meantime the urgent need is to have in place planning policies that provide the necessary legal framework for protecting and enhancing the part of Durham City covered by the Neighbourhood Plan

3.44 Some of the above pressures have been tackled on an interim basis, most notably through an interim policy adopted by the County Council for controlling Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). This is most welcome; the Neighbourhood Plan will be able to both learn any lessons from how that interim policy works in practice and also bring it within the formal planning policy system.

3.45 With regard to the other pressures, however, the future scenario without a Neighbourhood Plan is of great concern. Despite the protections for our exceptional heritage assets available through Conservation Areas and an Article 4 Direction already in place, there are major questions about whether the built and natural qualities that make Our Neighbourhood such an outstanding environment can survive the scale of the University's expansion aspirations. The loss of year-round residents undermines schools, everyday shops, and other services. Our Neighbourhood, in the worst-case scenario, will complete its transition to being merely a Durham University campus. In the long run, such a scenario may also have a negative impact on the University as the characteristics which make Durham attractive to students and staff will have been lost.

3.46 On less dramatic but equally important aspects, the lack of a Neighbourhood Plan would deprive the area it covers of the detailed policies for ensuring sensitive development, retention and improvement of green spaces, effective provision for sustainable pedestrian and cycling movement, enhancement of the tourism and cultural offer, inclusion of affordable housing and of appropriate housing for the elderly and special categories of residents, and further improvements in the town centre.



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## • **CHAPTER 4: POSSIBLE OPTIONS**

4.1 The end of the previous chapter reflected on the possible outcomes of taking no action to address issues identified in our sustainability situation analysis. Now this chapter identifies the possible options it is reasonable to consider in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan for our part Durham City. These options are derived from four main sources:

- an analysis of the responses received during public consultations and discussions with stakeholders, mentioned in Chapter 1;
- a study of the strategy documents discussed in Chapter 2;
- an analysis of the baseline information set out in chapter 3;
- a reflection on the probing questions in the Sustainability Framework given in Chapter 5.

### **Landscape and Natural Environment:**

4.2 The options presented here are really a matter of degree: to what extent should we protect and enhance the key features of our landscape and natural environment? It would not be reasonable to consider deliberately harming them. There are many protections already in place to safeguard their qualities. So, to what extent if any should we add further policies to protect and enhance:

- the Wear Valley setting of the World Heritage Site
- the green spaces that contribute to Our Neighbourhood's character
- the green spaces that provide leisure opportunities
- the green spaces that provide wildlife habitats
- the green spaces that help to combat climate change.

Our conclusion is that the Neighbourhood Plan has only two options: either (a) rely upon the existing protections afforded to the World Heritage Site, landscape, green spaces and habitats under European and national statutes and the Saved Policies of the City of Durham Local Plan, or (b) develop more detailed and prescriptive policies that provide more stringent requirements and safeguards.

4.3 A further consideration under this heading is whether to promote the development of green infrastructure networks, linking existing green spaces. The choice is between (a) leaving the situation as it is (i.e. do nothing) or (b) to develop a policy or policies that identify what should be done and where to form a defined set of links that comprise a network.

4.4 There are also questions to be asked about the Green Belt that provides the “green bowl” setting for the World Heritage Site. These will be addressed in the forthcoming County Plan. One option for the County Plan as suggested in the Issues and Options Report of June 2016 is to seek to reduce the Green Belt and permit extensive housing and office development in parts of that area. We have the options of (a) to try to protect the part of the Green Belt within Our Neighbourhood from such developments, or (b) to allow some degree of development in certain circumstances, or (c) do nothing and leave it to the County Local Plan to decide this issue. In considering these options it is important to examine whether we could find some uses for the Green Belt that would be beneficial to the community and compatible with its fundamental purposes.

## **Air, water and climate:**

4.5 Poor air quality is an issue in Our Neighbourhood so it must be addressed it within the scope available to us. It would be unreasonable to do nothing in the face of this serious health hazard and it would obviously be unreasonable to propose anything that made the problem worse, so we shall only consider positive options. One option - option (a) - is to leave the problem entirely to the County Council, bearing in mind that the recent government proposals (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017b) place the responsibility for tackling poor air quality very squarely on local authorities.

4.6 The Government's framework for clean air zones (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport, 2017a) is relevant here as it makes clear that local land use plans and policies and transport plans have a contribution to make to cleaner air. Thus there is a second option, namely (b) to consider whether our land use and transport proposals and policies can contribute to cleaner air. It is intended to include the Clean Air Zone and its boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan in order to demonstrate the relationship between transport, the World Heritage Site, conservation, and clean air.

4.7 Our Neighbourhood enjoys a good water supply and sewerage system, but parts of it are subject to flash flooding after heavy rainfall and significant areas are vulnerable to flooding in the Wear Valley. This has been taken into account when considering sites for development, particularly for housing. Again, it was not a reasonable option to propose housing developments in the flood plain; we are obviously bound by the requirements of the Environment Agency. So we have not developed alternative options for this aspect of the Plan.

4.8 Climate change is an overarching consideration in neighbourhood plans including this one. Although the County Council has the primary responsibility for combating climate change, we recognise the importance of sustainability in all developments. So the option to consider is that sites and buildings seeking planning permission must take measures to promote sustainability; and that developers should be required to minimise greenhouse gas emissions through waste management, to use recycled and renewable materials, and to improve energy efficiency. Heritage conservation can impose restrictions on green energy generation and insulation but we have decided to put heritage conservation first. Accordingly, developments involving sites and buildings of heritage and conservation importance should incorporate the highest practicable green energy features compatible with achieving full heritage conservation.

## **Heritage:**

4.9 The World Heritage Site is the jewel in the crown of the historic City of Durham. No one can doubt the beauty and significance of its many heritage assets and so, as with our Landscape and Natural Environment, the options we are faced with here are really a matter of degree: to what extent should we protect and enhance these assets beyond the level

required by statute and existing planning policies? It would not be reasonable to consider deliberately harming them. So, to what extent should we protect and enhance:

- the World Heritage Site, working in accordance with its management plan
- the Conservation Areas and character areas that comprise the exceptional townscape of Our Neighbourhood
- our Listed Buildings and non-designated heritage assets.

We have concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan has only two options: either (a) rely upon the existing protections afforded to the World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas and character areas, and our Listed Buildings under European and national statutes and the Saved Policies of the City of Durham Local Plan, or (b) develop more detailed and prescriptive policies that provide more stringent requirements and safeguards.

4.10 We have also considered how our heritage assets can be used to promote sustainable tourism in a way that also protects and enhances the assets themselves, and ways in which residents and visitors can be helped to appreciate and understand better the heritage assets. For example, the proposed extension to the boundary of the World Heritage Site should be supported, and the possibilities of providing a visitor/interpretation centre and associated interpretation panels across Our Neighbourhood should be considered. This possibility is included as Project 3 in Appendix I of the Neighbourhood Plan which sets out projects to improve the economic, environmental and social realm for further consideration by the public and action by the most appropriate bodies.

#### **Human population, health, housing and services:**

4.11 Clustered under this heading are the issues that most closely affect those who live in Our Neighbourhood. The profile of our population shows that just over half of those living here are students and that proportion is set to increase significantly as the University expands and brings back students from Stockton. This gives rise to a number of key issues with options to tackle them:

- Given the very limited availability of development sites, we could 1(a) allocate every possible site to be only for non-student residential development, or 1(b) concede the two sites that the University has earmarked for its own development (Bede/Hild Colleges and Hollow Drift in Green Lane)
- The interim student accommodation policy coupled with the Article 4 Direction is very welcome; we have the option of 2(a) simply confirming it as a statutory development policy in the Neighbourhood Plan or 2(b) learn from the implementation experience over the past 11 months and fine-tune it accordingly. We should take into consideration a possible additional strengthening measure by the County Council of the extended mandatory licensing of HMOs.

Whichever of the above options are chosen a scheme is needed to return Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) to family use. There will also need to be an increase in the provision of GP and other medical services to cope with the growth in student numbers.

4.12 Our Neighbourhood has a retired and elderly population that is higher than the County average; this will also put pressure on these medical services as well as social care

provision. We consider that we have no reasonable option other than to address these needs and also the need for suitable housing for the elderly.

4.13 The development of community facilities and services to meet the needs of the whole population is a realistic aspiration, for which no distinctively different options are put forward. Instead, we wish to strongly encourage the fulfilment of this aspiration and the options are merely the degree to which it proves possible to meet it. Similarly, we will not suggest an option over striving to enhance the artistic and cultural facilities of Our Neighbourhood but again the ways and means for doing so may be limited. The same applies to support for the provision of an information hub to ensure that everyone is aware of the employment, social, leisure and cultural opportunities and thus reduce social isolation. The position we are taking of not putting forward what would seem to be fabricated options also applies to measures we can take to promote safety and reduce crime and the fear of crime and support for walking and cycling to improve the health of the population? Finally, although there is a major issue of excessive drinking and anti-social behaviour associated with the night-time economy, this is not a land-use matter for which the Neighbourhood Plan can provide solutions.

#### **Employment, education and skills:**

4.14 Only a third of the population of Our Neighbourhood was classed as “economically active” in the 2011 census. This is in contrast to the County as a whole where over half the population is economically active. The reason for this difference is that our population includes a large proportion of students and elderly people. Nonetheless, the City is an important location for employment for people who live here as well as for those who travel to work here. The key characteristic of the employment opportunities in Our Neighbourhood is that they are predominantly in the public sector. The options are (a) endorse the present situation as acceptable given the nature of the regional economy is public sector dominated or (b) promote more private sector employment. This option would involve for example making provision for more modern office spaces in Our Neighbourhood. It would also probably involve supporting the County Council's scheme to vacate County Hall and enlarge the business park at Aykley Heads (though not necessarily endorsing using land in the Green Belt), the development of high-tech small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and business incubators, encouraging specialist, independent retailers that cater particularly for tourists, and finding a balance between supporting and enhancing electronic communications infrastructure because of its economic benefits and preventing structures such as phone masts from having a detrimental visual impact on the World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation Area.

4.15 Our Neighbourhood is well served by educational establishments, from nurseries to the University. A key option is whether (a) to support the University's plans for significant expansion or (b) to oppose them. In considering these alternatives it may be suggested that the University's growth be made conditional upon its contribution to funding the additional services that will be required or instead regard the growth of the University as in itself providing sufficient direct economic benefit to the city, County and region. In any case it is important to encourage graduates to remain in the area and contribute to economic growth.

## Transport:

4.16 The County Council has received from its consultants JMP a Sustainable Transport Strategy for Durham City. It emphasises the hierarchy that prioritises walking, cycling, public transport and services, and then private vehicles. It is not a reasonable option to go against this strategy, but there are options for how to support it. Pedestrian traffic, especially during University term-times, is ~~as~~ congested, uncomfortably and dangerously so in particular locations. We could (a) seek adequate provision to accommodate comfortably all of the pedestrian volumes now and anticipated or (b) oppose developments that do not and cannot be accompanied by adequate provision at the site and elsewhere on the network.

4.17 In accordance with the Strategy cycling needs to be safer and more attractive. It is recognised that there are problems in trying to find room for safe cycling routes in this hilly and constrained City. In relation to provision for residential cycle parking the options are (a) to endorse the absence from the County Durham Parking and Accessibility Standards for residential cycle parking, or (b) to propose specific standards for residential cycle parking;

4.18 Measures are needed to ease road traffic congestion in the City centre, acknowledging that this is primarily the responsibility of the County Council. One of the key causes of road traffic congestion is cars entering the town centre to park. We could (a) not concern ourselves with this, or (b) we could propose measures to discourage people from bringing cars into the City for example restrict on-street parking and/or (c) at the same time make on-street parking more flexible to help people, including disabled people, to access shops and businesses.

4.19 Direct influence on future provision of public transport services and facilities through the land use policies and proposals of this neighbourhood plan is limited to ensuring that new developments are sited so that they are accessible by public transport. The key measures considered in the County Council consultants' Sustainable Transport Strategy for Durham City are very welcome and include: increase the number of Park & Ride sites to cover all main approaches to the City centre, extend the hours during which the service operates, revise the charging regime, support an integrated ticketing system, improve the city centre bus station, and introduce electric buses to provide a City circular service linking the main tourist attractions and local facilities.

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• **CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS**

5.1 This Scoping Report will be submitted to the consultation bodies for their consideration and approval. After that, the working group will move on to Stage B of the process, namely to assess draft Neighbourhood Plan policies against our Sustainability Framework, choose a set of preferred options (the draft neighbourhood plan) and explain our reasons for the choices in the Appraisal Report.

**The Sustainability Framework**

5.2 The Sustainability Framework comes from advice given by the Council and from the guidance prepared by the specialist consultants Levett-Therivel for Neighbourhood Plans. All of the Plan’s policies will be assessed against the following draft seventeen sustainability objectives. We have also developed some 'probing questions' to help assess and test whether the emerging Plan policies satisfy the sustainability objectives.

• <b>Sustainability objectives</b>	• <b>Probing questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1. To build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan ensure that sites approved for development will promote sustainable development?</li> <li>• Will the plan identify strategic and local sites for a range of prestige developments for businesses, university research-based and high technology industries, and business incubators?</li> <li>• Will the plan provide land and buildings of a type required by businesses?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2. To identify and then meet the business and other development needs of Our Neighbourhood, including the retail offer and tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan increase employment opportunities through the establishment and support of large and small enterprises?</li> <li>• Will the plan secure the vitality and competitiveness of the City centre through balanced retail developments?</li> <li>• Will the plan enhance the tourism and leisure experience of the City?</li> <li>• Will the plan promote heritage based sustainable tourism?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3. To identify and coordinate development requirements, including the provision of a modern transport and communications infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan ensure that new developments are served by sustainable transport?</li> <li>• Will the plan support sustainable economic growth?</li> <li>• Will the plan avoid unnecessary travel resulting from new developments?</li> <li>• Will the plan reduce road congestion?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4. To support strong, safe, vibrant and healthy communities and enable all residents of Our Neighbourhood to live in a decent and affordable home that meets current and future needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan create pleasant and healthy streets, public places and areas of natural environment?</li> <li>• Will the plan promote the provision of a range of the highest quality health, educational, artistic, cultural, social and general community facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors?</li> <li>• Will the plan enhance a sense of safety and security and deter/prevent crime?</li> <li>• Will the plan reduce social isolation and strengthen the links between communities?</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan consider the size, type, and tenure of the housing mix in the area?</li> <li>• Will the plan change the imbalance towards student accommodation back to a sustainable balanced community?</li> <li>• Will the plan encourage the conversion of House in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) back to family homes?</li> <li>• Will the plan strengthen the current interim student accommodation policy?</li> <li>• Will the plan encourage graduates to live and work within Our Neighbourhood?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5. To provide the supply of affordable housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan provide housing designed for the needs of older people and people with disabilities?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan provide affordable housing for all sectors of the community, but particularly for families with children and young people starting out?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan site new housing in deliverable locations linked to identifiable need?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce homelessness?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6. To provide accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, leisure, social and cultural well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan retain and improve existing artistic, cultural, social and community facilities, including open spaces?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan provide new leisure or cultural activities?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan support and widen community uses through shared facilities?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan improve the built environment to increase community participation in generating and experiencing the arts?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan ensure that residents and visitors can access information about the City in an accessible, central location?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7. To alleviate deprivation and poverty and improve social inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan contribute to the promotion of healthier lifestyles, improve access to health care, and reduce health inequalities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan help those on lower incomes?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan contribute towards local regeneration initiatives or benefit areas suffering from economic deprivation?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce unemployment and encourage higher incomes?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce the number of unfit homes?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8. To conserve heritage assets so that they can be understood and enjoyed for their contribution to the local economy, particularly tourism, and to the quality of life of this and future generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan identify and protect heritage assets?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan contribute to the better management of heritage assets?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan provide for increased access to and enjoyment of the historic environment?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan provide for increased understanding and interpretation of the historic environment?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan promote heritage-based sustainable tourism?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan promote heritage-led economic, social and environmental regeneration?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9. To protect and enhance our natural, built and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan protect and enhance the site and setting of</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• historic environment, with particular reference to the quality of design required by the World Heritage Site and the special character of Our Neighbourhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the World Heritage Site?</li> <li>• Will the plan protect and enhance the conservation areas and their setting?</li> <li>• Will the plan uphold high standards of sympathetic, distinctive and innovative design?</li> <li>• Will the plan ensure that developments reflect the distinctive characteristic and appearance of the local area?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10. To protect and enhance the biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure within Our Neighbourhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan maintain and enhance the green assets of the World Heritage Site and its inner setting and of the character areas of the City's Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Will the plan address deficiencies of green infrastructure in Our Neighbourhood?</li> <li>• Will the plan improve access to open space/multi-functional green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Will the plan protect or enhance designated wildlife sites and protected species?</li> <li>• Will the plan protect and enhance biodiversity/geodiversity?</li> <li>• Will the plan protect and enhance ecological networks?</li> <li>• Will the plan improve green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Will the plan ensure consideration of the potential biodiversity of brownfield sites?</li> <li>• Will the plan take into consideration the need to protect the current Water Framework Directive status of the River Wear?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11. To use natural resources prudently, encourage the reuse of materials, and minimise waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan ensure that buildings approved for development will promote sustainable development?</li> <li>• Will the plan help to reduce the number of vacant buildings through adaptive re-use?</li> <li>• Will the plan minimise greenhouse gas emissions from waste management?</li> <li>• Will the plan encourage the use of recycled/reused materials and minimise the use of non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12. To encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield) and thus protect the Green Belt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan protect and maintain the openness of the green belt?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan promote good practice in land reclamation having regard to sustainable re-use appropriate to the locality?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan prevent the loss of high quality soils to development?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13. To make Our Neighbourhood resilient and able to adapt to climate change and specifically minimise flood risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan encourage new energy efficiency measures?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan contribute to the development/wider use of renewables?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan support the development of community energy schemes?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce the demand for energy or increase the energy efficiency of buildings, transport and industry?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan ensure that developments are able to deal with future changes in climate?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan minimise the risk from flooding?</li> </ul>

•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan steer development away from the areas of highest risk of flooding as identified by the Environment Agency (Flood Zones 2 and 3) and the most up-to-date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment?</li> <li>• Will the plan ensure that developments are able to deal with future changes in climate?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14. To protect and improve air quality in Our Neighbourhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan protect and improve local air quality?</li> <li>• Will the plan reduce vehicle exhaust emissions to meet climate change commitments and national air quality objectives?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15. To encourage and increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan make transport healthier and safer for all?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan improve the integration of public transport services?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce road congestion?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan avoid unnecessary travel resulting from new developments?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the plan reduce the impact of traffic, especially HGVs, on communities?</li> </ul>

### **Fine-tuning the Plan to minimise any adverse impacts**

5.3 Stage B will then involve taking an overview of all the positive, neutral and negative impacts of all aspects of the draft plan. This will enable actions and amendments that would improve the impacts of the plan to be identified.

### **The final Sustainability Appraisal report**

5.4 Stage B will conclude with the production of the Sustainability Appraisal Report which will take forward the contents of this Scoping Report and the subsequent work carried out. It will also set out information on how the impacts of the plan will be monitored as the plan is put into action.

### **Conclusions on scope**

5.5 Throughout the preparation of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, the Forum and working group have been conscious of its place in Durham County and the wider north east region. The World Heritage Site of the cathedral and castle means that it is the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the region and this has an effect on people living and visiting the City and has also attracted businesses to locate here and created the foundation of Durham University.

5.6 It is therefore evident that proposals for development in the Neighbourhood Plan and restrictions to development are likely to have an effect outside the Plan area. Such issues would normally be dealt with in the statutory Local Plan for the local authority area. Durham County Council is producing the County Durham Local Plan and this reached the 'Issues and Options' stage in the summer of 2016. However, progress has been 'paused' in order to take account of the Housing White Paper. As a result, the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum is developing this neighbourhood plan in the extremely unusual situation of there not being a fully up-to-date, NPPF-compliant statutory development plan within which to set more localised and fine-tuned policies and proposals. Nor is there an existing

comprehensive local plan evidence base available to draw upon. This is one of the key reasons why it has been felt essential to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal for our Neighbourhood Plan. The emerging County Durham Local Plan will form a more current strategic policy and evidential context in due course and this will require the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan to consider the need for changes as both plans progress.

5.7 The Forum has been active in promoting the creation of a Durham City parish or town council and it is hoped that this may come into existence in 2018, hopefully just in time to be able to receive the 'made' (i.e. approved) Neighbourhood Plan. One of the roles of the parish or town council will be to review and monitor the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and actions. A monitoring framework will be included in the Sustainability Appraisal report with key indicators and, where poor current conditions, and/or adverse effects of the Neighbourhood Plan have been identified that would exacerbate these conditions, then mitigation action will be required by the Parish Council and partner bodies. In the meantime, the Neighbourhood Plan will cover the period of years up to 2033 to correspond with the period of the County Durham Local Plan now in preparation.

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- **Appendix I: The Story so far**

Date	What we did	Who was involved	Problems encountered
<i>Activities leading to the setting up of the Forum</i>			
April/May 2011	Discussions among local residents groups about setting up a Neighbourhood Planning Forum	Crossgate Community Partnership; St Nicholas Community Forum	None.
24 June 2011	Meeting called by the local MP, Roberta Blackman-Woods to discuss reconstituting the Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum	MP, public	None.
15 November 2011	Localism Act becomes law		None.
8 May 2012	Public meeting about the new law in the Town Hall	Planning Officer, Durham County Council, public	None.
26 October 2012	The Balanced and Sustainable Communities Forum confirmed that it will be submitting an application to Durham County Council to become a Neighbourhood Planning Forum		Driven by unpopular planning decisions made by Durham County Council, particularly permission for Banks to build on Mount Oswald Golf Course
26 October 2012	An appeal from the MP's office for 21 people to sign up to become Neighbourhood Planning Forum members		A Neighbourhood Planning Forum requires a minimum of 21 members
<i>Forum activities</i>			
9 April 2013	First Forum meeting. Called by the local MP. Note: Forum meetings continued: Minutes are available on the Forum's website at: <a href="http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/resources/minutes-forum/">http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/resources/minutes-forum/</a>	People interested in being Forum members (28 people had expressed an interest)	Despite many requests, there was no involvement by Durham University: an on-going issue

23 May 2013	Forum Officers appointed	Muriel Sawbridge, Chair Roger Cornwell, Vice-Chair Teresa Hogg, Treasurer  Ann Evans, Secretary	None.
10 July 2013	Application to Council to become a Neighbourhood Planning Forum, in the absence of a town or parish council for the historic centre of Durham City		None.
16 January 2014	Council granted approval for the Forum		The long delay in obtaining this approval
30 January 2014	AGM/Public meeting held by Forum	Forum members, public	None.
February 2014	Engagement team was set up to publicise the work of the Forum and produce the Engagement Plan. Team	Muriel Sawbridge (Chair), Roger Cornwell (Vice Chair), Jonathan Elmer (Engagement Officer)	None.

	worked on outside formal Forum meetings.		
February / March 2014	Forum website set up <a href="http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk">http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk</a> NPF public email contact set up <a href="mailto:npf@durhamcity.org.uk">npf@durhamcity.org.uk</a> Regular postings of news items as well as information about the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.  Comments are received from members of the public		None.
22 March 2014	Muriel Sawbridge, Forum Chair, spoke at Durham City Trust meeting	Durham City Trust members, public	None.
1 April 2014	Engagement Team held a meeting with members of the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group	Engagement Team, members of the Sedgefield Plan Steering Group	As a Forum with volunteer members we do not have the resources to draw on that Parish Councils doing a Neighbourhood Plan have
24?5 April 2014	Forum Meeting. Forum agreed to set up Topic Groups to collect data about Durham City and to scope the topics. Note: Work carried on by the Topic Groups outside official Forum meetings	Forum members volunteered to be involved with the various Topic Groups which were: Communities and environment (Roger Cornwell); Housing (Mike Costelo); Infrastructure (tbc); Economy (Colin Wilkes); Conservation and heritage (Kirsty Thomas)	None.
24?25 April 2014	Sue Childs appointed as Treasurer		None.
June 2014	Forum Bank Account set up		None.
July 2014	Mailing list set up: private one		None.



	for Forum members only to conduct business		
July 2014	Contact started with Council support officer, Gavin Scott		Information sought by this route never seemed to materialise or be very detailed
31 July 2014 (pre-hearing meeting), 1-31 October 2014 Examination in Public	County Durham Local Plan Examination in Public	Forum member represented the Forum  Other Forum members represented other bodies,  e.g. Durham City Trust, Friends of Durham Green Belt, residents groups etc.	The coverage of Durham City in the Local Plan was so controversial that Forum business on the Neighbourhood Plan had to be delayed whilst the Forum became involved in the EiP making representations that reflected the views of local people
15 September 2014	Muriel Sawbridge, the Chair,  resigned for personal reasons		None.
4 October 2014	Grant received. Ref: NPG-00629		None.

6 October 2014	Training session run by Planning Advice Plus	Forum members	None.
November 2014	Survey placed on Web		Accompanying leaflet campaign was postponed because of EiP commitments so this survey was not successful
7 November 2014	Forum agreed that Roberta Blackman-Woods would take over the position of Chair		None.
January 2015	Property database put up on Forum website		None.
14 February 2015	Forum staffed a stall in Durham Market Place 10am to 4pm	Forum members, volunteers, public	None.
February / March / April 2015	Forum involved in public response to the Inspector's report on the Local Plan and the Council's reaction to the Report	Forum members, many acting as representatives of other bodies, other bodies representing the public	Once again, activities to do with the Local Plan affected progress on Neighbourhood Plan
26 / 27 April 2015	Draft Communications and Engagement Action Plan plus overview of the current stage of the Plan		None.
27 April 2015	First meeting of Working Group  Note: Working Group meetings continued on a monthly basis (later weekly): Minutes are available on the Forum's website at: <a href="http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/resources/working-group-minutes/">http://npf.durhamcity.org.uk/resources/working-group-minutes/</a>	Forum members and other volunteers to carry out practical activities to progress the Plan.	Progress via official Forum meetings was too slow

May to July 2015	Council and developers applied for a Judicial Review of the Inspector's report on the Local Plan and nominated a number of bodies representing local people as interested parties; Judicial Review takes place	Forum members involved with these bodies	Once again, activities to do with the Local Plan affected progress on the Neighbourhood Plan
April/May/June 2015	Planning for the Priority public consultation	Forum Working Group	None.
June/July 2015	Public consultation - Priority survey via questionnaire (delivered as a leaflet to every house in the Forum area) and also made available as an online questionnaire. 162 responses	Forum members, volunteers, public	None.
14 June 2015	Forum stall at Eco Festival	Forum members, public	None.
13th June and 20th June 2015, 11am to 1pm	Stall in Durham Market Place	Forum members, public	None.
15 June 2015	Data Protection Registration: this has been renewed on an annual basis		None.

29 June 2015, 7.00 to 9.00 pm	Public consultation - priority survey. Open meeting in Town Hall. 100 people attended	Forum members, volunteers, public	None.
8 July 2015, 7.00 to 9.00pm	Public consultation - priority survey. Additional open meeting in Town Hall. 12 people attended		None.
9 July 2015	Forum Facebook page set up		None.
July to September 2015	Survey responses analysed	Working Group members	None.
11 August 2015	Working Group email list set up		None.
17 August 2015	Public email list set up	All people who expressed interest in receiving further information during the public consultation	None.
7 October 2015	As agreed at a Forum meeting, Roger Cornwell became Chair; John Lowe became Vice Chair; Pippa Bell became Engagement Officer; Sue Childs remained as Treasurer		None.
16 October 2015	Meeting with members of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan	Forum members, members of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan	None.
29 October 2015	Attended County Durham Neighbourhood Working Group meeting	Pippa Bell, Engagement Officer	None.
30 October 2015	Forum responded to Council's consultations on planning issues; start of an on going activity of responding to relevant local and national consultations	Working Group on behalf of the Forum	None.

<p>October / November 2015</p>	<p>Developed the Plan's Vision, objectives and themes. Topic Groups morphed into Theme groups. Theme groups carried on work outside meetings, including contacting, and meeting with, relevant stakeholders and residents</p>	<p>Working Group using the results of the public consultation. Theme Groups: Theme 1: A City with a sustainable future (John Lowe and David Miler); Theme 2: A beautiful and historic City, (a) Heritage (Kirsty Thomas),  (b) Green Infrastructure (Sue Childs and Angela Tracy); Theme 3: A City with a diverse and resilient economy (Pippa Bell and Adam Deathe); Theme 4: A City with attractive and affordable places to live (John Ashby and Sue Childs); Theme 5: A City with a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure (Matthew</p>	<p>None.</p>
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		Phillips and Karen Elliott); Theme 6: A City with an enriched community life  (Roger Cornwell)	
October 2015 to March 2016	Survey of the views of children and young people carried out. Four schools covered; 70 children and young people took part		None.
9 November 2015	Council email to PSHBF members on behalf of Forum		Not many developers responded; those that did were placed on mailing list and contacted to set up meetings; only a few of these agreed to a meeting
November 2015	More activity on Forum's Facebook page	MP's intern on a voluntary basis	The day to day work of the Forum does not lend itself to regular Facebook posts (we met, then individuals went away and looked up information, wrote documents, contacted people etc.), and Forum news items are not common. Forum members do not have the time to spare for regular Facebook posting
November 2015	Developers mailing list set up		None.
16 November 2015	Ros Ward, an experienced planner, volunteered to be the Forum's Project Manager		None.

January 2016	University sent email to all students linking them to the students online priority survey		We had very few student responses to the June/July survey even though leaflets went into student houses, notices to colleges, and the survey period did overlap with term time.  Unfortunately, we received no responses to this email survey
January 2016. ongoing	Theme Groups started to draft policies	Theme Group members, based on results of public consultation and continuing feedback from relevant stakeholders and residents	None.
20 January 2016	Vision and Themes launched		None.
22 January 2016	Forum Twitter account set up		Similar problems as with Facebook page
11 February 2016	Email sent to residents groups asking them to identify significant heritage assets, green assets, open spaces, community facilities, and sites for new development.	Crossgate Community Forum; Elvet Residents' Association; Nevilles Cross Community Association; St Nicholas Community Forum; Sheraton Park	None.

		Residents' Association; Sidegate Residents Association; Whinney Hill Community Group; Merryoaks Residents Association	
18 February 2016	Meeting with the new VC of Durham University	Roger Cornwell, Chair, and others	None.
March 2016	Business questionnaire survey carried out. 13 responses		None.
18 March 2016	Forum AGM	Forum members, public Election of officers: Chair: Roger Cornwell Vice Chair and Secretary: John Lowe  Treasurer: Sue Childs Engagement Officer: Pippa Bell	None.
12 April 2016	Meeting with members of Durham County Council	Forum working Group, DCC staff: Gavin Scott, Jeanette Armin and David Sparkes. Involvement with DCC  became more active	None.
12 May 2016	Attended a County Durham Plan Business breakfast meeting at Rivergreen	Pippa Bell, Engagement Officer, Roger Cornwell, Chair, and Peter Jackson,  Forum member	None.
24 May 2016	Workshop to critique the draft  policies	Working Group	None.
19 June, 11am to 5pm	Attended Eco Festival. Carried  out pedestrian and cyclists survey	Forum working Group members, public	None.



7 July 2016	Attended County Durham Neighbourhood Working Group meeting, to study the relationship between neighbourhood plans and the County Plan	John Lowe Vice- Chair and Ann Evans	None.
August 2016	Arts and culture questionnaire survey carried out. 28 responses		None.
4 October 2016	Working Group Meeting attended by Durham County Council	Gavin Scott introduced Carole Dillon who was taking over the role of supporting the Forum. Since this meeting the Council has provided excellent support to the Forum	None.
13 October 2016	Grant received, for pre-submission consultation. Ref: NPG-02594		None.
18 October 2016	Technical support offer received, for assessment of housing sites. Ref: DR-00957		None.
20 October 2016	Forum Meeting to agree wording of Policies.	Forum members	None.

October, November, December	Production of list of policies to accompany SEA screening report; production of screening report; production of draft plan document		None.
November 2016	Harvey Dowdy, Estates, Durham University, joins the Forum and the Working Group		None.
1 December 2016	Attended County Durham Neighbourhood Working Group meeting, to look at independent examination procedures and policies on housing for older people	Pippa Bell, Engagement Officer, and Sue Childs, Treasurer	
6 December 2016	Agreed to hold the pre-submission consultation from Friday 17 February to Friday 31 March 2017	Forum Working Group	None.
14 December 2016	Meeting with DCC to discuss the SEA screening report and DCC's health check on our draft policies	Carole Dillon and Claire Hattam, DCC. Working group members	None.
22 December 2016	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Report sent to statutory consultees: Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England		None.
January/February 2017	Planning for pre-submission consultation		None.
January/February	Finalising draft plan document and putting it up on the website		None.

16 January 2017	Received DCC health check on the draft plan; ongoing - revised draft plan in the light of these comments		None.
19 January 2017	Historic England's feedback on the draft plan; ongoing - revised draft plan in the light of these comments		None.
19 January 2017	Participated in Durham AAP's Tripartite Meeting on the future of Durham City, with Durham University and Durham County Council	Roger Cornwell, Chair, and Sue Childs, Treasurer. Members of Durham AAP, public	None.
30 January 2017	Confirmation from DCC that we will not be provided with the most recent SHLAA and OSNA		Lack of this information which affects site selection
2 February 2017	News that Historic England felt that an SEA was required (letter dated: Historic England 26 January 2017). Environment Agency felt that		The concerns of the Environmental Agency were alleviated by changes to the sites selected.  Historic England however

	with agreed changes an SEA was not required (EA email 6 February 2017).		remained firm that an SEA was required. This news meant that the pre-submission consultation had to be postponed
14 February 2017	Meeting with DCC to discuss the SEA situation. The Forum agreed to undertake an SEA	Carole Dillon and Claire Hattam, DCC. Working group members	None.
17 February 2017	Forum AGM	Forum members, public Election of officers: Chair – Roger Cornwell Vice Chair – John Ashby Treasurer – Sue Childs Secretary – John Lowe Engagement Officer – Pippa Bell	None.
22 February 2017	Unspent grant returned		The requirement to carry out an SEA led to the postponement of the pre-submission consultation. As the Forum could not spend the grant money by the end of the 2016/17 financial year it had to be returned
February, March, April, June 2017	Drafting of the SA Scoping report; drawing up and piloting the sustainability criteria		None.
10 March 2017	Grant received, for pre-submission consultation. Ref: NPG-02963		We had to apply again for the money for the pre-submission consultation as this would now occur in the next financial year Administrative difficulties as tightening up of procedures required the Forum to have the grant managed by an incorporated organisation

31 March 2017	Meeting with Historic England. Discussed the SEA/SA requirement and how best to proceed	Jules Brown and Barbara Hooper, Historic England. Carole Dillon, Durham County Council. Forum  Working Group	None.
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- **Appendix II: References to the Evidence Base**

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[http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Building%20for%20Life%2012\\_0.pdf](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Building%20for%20Life%2012_0.pdf)

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for County Durham 2014-2030.

<http://www.countydurhampartnership.co.uk/media/12760/Sustainable-Community-Strategy-2014---2030/pdf/SCS2014.pdf>

DataShine Commute. <http://commute.datashine.org.uk>

Department for Communities and Local Government

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

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