



City of Durham Parish Council

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Date of Summons: 17th July 2024

SUMMONS

To all Members of the City of Durham Parish Council: Councillors E Ashby, J Ashby, V Ashfield, L Brown, N Brown, A Doig, D Freeman, R Friederichsen, R Hanson, G Holland, C Lattin, R Ormerod, E Scott, S Walker and H Weston.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Meeting of the Council** to be held in the **Main Hall of the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Rd, Durham DH1 3QF** on **Thursday 25th July 2024 at 7:00pm** for the purpose of transacting the following Agenda business as shown.

Members of the public and press are also cordially invited to attend. Members of the public may address Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings for up to three minutes, with the agreement of the Chair of the meeting, provided that the statement is related to an item on the agenda. The speaker should approach the Clerk before the meeting commences to request to speak during the meeting.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Civility and Respect and Human Rights plus Social, Economic and Environmental matters.

Yours faithfully,

A. Shanley

Mr Adam Shanley

Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council

AGENDA

- 1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27TH JUNE 2024**
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. COMMITTEE UPDATES**

- **Planning and Licensing Committee minutes from meetings held on 14th and 28th June 2024**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/planning-committee/>

- Proposed joint project with Durham County Council on producing an evidence-base for non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) within the Durham City Conservation Area.
- Response to Durham County Council's Regulation 7 Direction renewal application for the Durham City Conservation Area.

- **Environment Committee minutes from meetings held on 11th June 2024**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/environment-committee/>

- **Business Committee minutes from meetings held on 21st May 2024.**

Copies of all approved minutes from these meetings can be found here:

<http://cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk/agendas-minutes/business-committee/>

- Proposal by Visit County Durham on joint project for Travel Trade promotion
- Proposal from Durham BID on proposed improvements to Silver Street/ Fowler's Yard

- 6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair will provide a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 27th June 2024

- 7. REPORT ON GRANT FUNDING IMPACT FROM 2023-24**

- 8. COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION EXPANSION CONSULTATION**

- 9. TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED ADVERT FOR A SHORT-TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT**

- 10. REPORT(S) FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- Report by Councillor J Ashby on the most recent meeting of Durham University's Student Housing Management Group.

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Thursday 27th June 2024 at 7:00pm in the Main Hall of the Merryoaks Community Hall, Park House Rd, Durham DH1 3QF.

Present: Councillors S Walker (in the **Chair**), E Ashby, J Ashby, L Brown, N Brown, A Doig, D Freeman, C Lattin and E Scott.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley, Mr Bill McArdle, Ms Alyson Learmonth and Ms Lynda Delf (members of the public) and Ms Dorothy Hamilton (North East Community and Network for Seniors)

1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE (OR NOT) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM TODAY'S MEETING

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillors V Ashfield, R Friederichsen, R Ormerod, G Holland and H Weston.

No apologies were received from Councillor R Hanson.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

Councillors S Walker declared an interest in the grant application by the Merryoaks Community Hall and took no part in the discussion or vote on this application.

Councillors A Doig declared an interest in the grant application by the Merryoaks Community Hall and item 13 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussion or vote on these matters.

Councillor L Brown declared an interest in item 10 on the Agenda and took no part in the discussion or vote on this matter and left the room whilst this was debated.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 23RD MAY 2024

The minutes of the annual meeting of the Parish Council held on 23rd May 2024 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings, subject to the amendment under item 13 of the minutes that the University's Student Housing Management Group be added to the list of outside organisations on which the Parish Council has a representative and that Councillor J Ashby is the agreed representative of the Parish Council on this group.

4. PRESENTATION BY DOROTHY HAMILTON, NORTH EAST COMMUNITY AND NETWORK FOR SENIORS, ON HOUSING FOR SENIOR RESIDENTS

The Chair welcomed Ms Dorothy Hamilton from North East Community and Network for Seniors to the meeting and thanked Ms Hamilton for joining the meeting to discuss the matter of housing for senior residents with the Parish Council.

Dorothy advised that she is currently trying to get a group of people and organisations together who want to progress the idea of building a small development of bungalows which are super energy-efficient, fully accessible if any resident should develop a disability, and with access to a community room and community gardens which could also be used by the wider community.

Dorothy advised that County Durham has an ageing population, and a shortage of housing which is ready for older people as they age. Dorothy highlighted that this puts pressure on the health service (e.g. falls due to steps, difficulties discharging patients from hospital because of stairs etc.). Dorothy also advised that it puts pressure on the social care system (e.g. people having to go into care homes because they can't manage at home). It can also make it difficult for home carers to help people with everyday tasks such as bathing and getting in and out of bed. Loneliness is also a problem for many older people, as their network of friends and acquaintances diminish over the years.

Dorothy advised that many retired people in County Durham live as the single occupant in a large family house. This wastes energy, as well as costs a lot in fuel bills per individual. By creating the right-sized attractive homes for retired people, family houses could be freed up for families, helping to solve the housing crisis.

Dorothy advised that, drawing on some of the best innovations in housing which are happening in other parts of the country, her plans included:

- A community of about 16-20 bungalows, with one bedroom and a spare room.
- Bungalows laid out in a series of short terraces arranged around a courtyard with a community building for weekly shared meals and other meetings, with informal social spaces.
- Each bungalow to have a small garden area outside the property.
- A community garden which is shared with the wider community of non-residents.
- Shared parking areas at the periphery of the development, with one car per bungalow max, and a small number of visitor parking spaces.
- Bungalows built to zero or very-low carbon standards, using extra-thick non-flammable wall, roof and floor insulation. Energy saving measures to include mechanical heat recovery fresh air systems, triple glazing and electric heating using heat pumps and solar panels, and some battery storage of electricity. There would be no gas connections, which would also provide greater safety for residents. By being zero or low-carbon, and largely energy self-sufficient, residents would have very low energy bills, benefitting them as well as benefitting the climate.
- Each bungalow to be designed and built to lifetime homes standard (now referred to as M4(2) in planning. This means that:
 - All doorways would be slightly wider than normal, allowing wheelchair access to every part of the property, should this ever be needed:
 - Bathrooms would be designed with suitable drainage so that flat floor showers could be easily accommodated.

- Stronger ceiling timbers would be included in the appropriate places where ceiling track hoists could be inserted if needed in the future.
 - The bungalows would look like ordinary homes, but they would be a little more spacious in layout to allow for turning circles for wheelchairs.
- Dorothy advised that the homes would need to be very well built – meant to last for the use of future generations. A very good example of lifetime homes bungalows is those built by the Joseph Rowntree Trust in York – the bungalows at Hartrigg Oaks are lovely – great for active retired people with lots of hobbies and interests, but also suitable should their health decline.

Dorothy advised that, in order to progress this, it was her intention to do the following:

- Find a group of people aged in their 50s to 70s who want to move into the development in 3 – 5 years' time, and who are prepared to work as a group towards achieving this.
- Find a developer who will build this specification then sell or rent the bungalows to the community group members? Ideally, this would be a not-for profit developer, such as a charity. The leases would involve financial contributions to the common facilities.
- Find a housing association which would build to this specification then rent some of the bungalows to residents in financial need, and sell the other bungalows to community members on full or shared ownership terms, without making profit.
- Community members could set up a mutually owned company to borrow the build cost from organisations such as the Ecology Building Society, using existing assets as security, then pay back the loan when the bungalows are built by selling the bungalows to the residents, who would be able to sell their existing houses. This would be a kind of group self-build.
- Wider community members could set up a not-for-profit social enterprise or charity with trustees, who would manage the finances of the development, selling leases for bungalows, and raising money from trusts etc. to provide reduced cost leases or rents for people in financial need who wanted to live in the development. Income for the charity could also be achieved through a financial contribution each time a property is sold.
- Service charges could be kept much more affordable than in many retirement housing schemes through the voluntary work of residents. Drawing on the experience of cohousing schemes, residents typically do about 10 hours a month voluntary work to keep their little community serviced, e.g. cleaning common areas, gardening, admin, helping with the weekly shared meals. Residents act as good neighbours to each other, like a paid scheme manager might do in large developments. Where professionals are needed, such as plumbers or electricians, these professionals would be paid for by the service charges or individual house owner.

Dorothy advised that Local Councils and Councillors can help to achieve this through the following actions:

1. Help to Identify pieces of land where this type of development would be an asset to the community. (about 1 acre)
2. Help the council to balance the financial value of keeping older people's care needs low against the financial value of council-owned land for housing which meets the needs of the ageing population.
3. Lobby political parties to support housing schemes to meet the needs of an ageing population. Ask for a presumption in favour of planning permission for new developments that are lifetime homes standard and carbon neutral.
4. Read up about successful schemes in this country, e.g. New Ground cohousing in London, <https://newgroundcohousing.uk/>
5. Find out about policies of the Netherlands which is promoting self-help housing communities for older people as an alternative to institutional care. You can find the review of Dutch Policy by Maria Brennan on the UK Cohousing website <https://cohousing.org.uk>.
6. Hold a housing event to provide information about housing options for older people, so that people can plan realistically for their own futures. Dorothy advised that waiting until there is a crisis is not the best time to find out that many of the options we thought might be available to us are not feasible, or are more expensive than we thought.

The Chair thanked Dorothy for her extensive presentation on this matter.

Councillor J Ashby highlighted that the need for this type of housing is established in the local development plan for the area (the County Durham Plan) and also advised that the Belmont and Gilesgate Neighbourhood Plan Group may be looking to identify plots of land within its area for the purposes of this type of housing.

Councillor E Scott advised that she was very much in favour of this initiative and that she certainly recognised the need for this type of housing.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted the new legal requirements for developments to deliver a % net gain in biodiversity and advised that she felt that there should be a similar legal requirement for developments to deliver a % gain in housing for older residents.

There being no further queries from Members, the Chair thanked Dorothy for her presentation.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Bill McArdle and Ms Alyson Learmonth advised that they were attending the meeting to showcase their Climate Fresk workshop display to Members. The Chair encouraged Members to take part in this display following the conclusion of this meeting and thanked Bill and Alyson for putting this together.

Ms Lynda Delf advised that she was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items on behalf of Elvet Residents Association.

6. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• **Planning and Licensing Committee**

Councillor S Walker presented the minutes of the Planning and Licensing Committee meetings held on 17th and 31st May 2024. There were no queries from Members.

• **Environment Committee**

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 14th May 2024. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Response to the Air Quality Management Plan consultation

Members considered the content of the Air Quality Management Plan consultation and agreed that whilst the ambitions of this Plan were most welcome, the Plan seriously lacked any measurable targets from which the success of any actions could be assessed.

Councillor C Lattin took the opportunity to thank Councillors R Friederichsen and V Ashfield for their work in drafting a proposed response to this important consultation. Councillor D Freeman echoed those thanks and highlighted the importance of this consultation.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he was content with the response as it was presented but advised that he was unsure about the accuracy of the reference to the White Church junction and felt that this should be removed from the section relating to active travel. This was agreed by Members and, as such, Members unanimously **agreed** the following response to the Air Quality Management Plan consultation:

1. Introduction

The County Council is required to produce a revised Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and is currently consulting on a draft.

Air pollution is associated with adverse health impacts and is specifically recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affects the most vulnerable in society: children, the elderly, and those with existing heart and lung conditions. Key measures to reduce air pollution have significant co-benefits for health (active travel) and climate (active travel and public transport).

Several areas of the city have long been identified as air pollution hot spots. The Parish Council and residents have previously urgently been exploring solutions to localised air pollution problems and supported the more decisive encouragement of active travel.

The Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to engage with DCC around the AQMP and all measures that will improve air quality in Durham city.

2. Analysis of the AQMP

There is a contradiction at the heart of the AQMP. It is that a) the root causes and the nature of the problem of air pollution are very well understood by all key actors, and b) the existing policy vision and policies are clear about the direction to take; however, c) the impact of the solutions is not sufficiently measured, the implementation of solutions is not resourced appropriately or implementation is insufficient for other reasons, which means the problem has persisted for over a decade and it will continue to persist. The evidence for this reading of the AQMP can be found in the AQMP itself as follows.

Causes and nature of the problem: The AQMP states that the main source of air pollution is road traffic (p. 12) and differentiates in detail which categories of vehicles cause which locations to be affected by air pollution.

Figure 1 (p.13) illustrates the extent of the AQMA right across the city from Stonebridge in Southwest to Sunderland Road in the Northeast; and from New Elvet to Church Street. The worst affected locations, listed on p. 14, are located within the AQMA and NO₂ mean annual concentrations are **predicted** to be between 32 and 40 µg/m³. The national air quality objective for NO₂ is 40 µg/m³ which was due to be achieved by 31 December 2005 (and maintained thereafter) (see [DEFRA online](#)). The WHO guideline level for NO₂ is 10 µg/m³ (See [WHO Air Quality Guidelines](#)).

The AQMP fully acknowledges the complexities of air pollution. Its health impact which tends to affect deprived areas most, the connection to climate action, and numerous policies and plans that affect air quality (pp.17-20).

Overall, the Parish Council is satisfied that the AQMP presents the nature of the problem of air quality appropriately. However, the report fails to acknowledge the frustrating lack of progress on air quality. It is content, with qualifications, that "air quality is improving" (p. IV). There is no summary assessment of the impact on air quality made by the previous AQMP and the current plan does not convey a sense that DCC wants to learn from experience regarding which measures have worked and which haven't.

Stating plainly that, despite the AQMA being in place since 2011, significant numbers of Durham residents are and will continue being denied their legal right to clean air would signal a more appropriate level of urgency (see Figures A15 to A17 on pages 74-76 marking non-compliant properties. The residents of the properties marked with red dots are the worst hit and they will continue to suffer dangerous and illegal levels of air pollution, keeping in mind that the UK legal standard itself is four times the level internationally agreed as safe.

Vision and policy context:

The AQMP lists the visions of various policy documents, including

- the Northeast Transport Plan vision of "moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East" (p. 18), and
- the Durham County Council Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-29 vision "to make cycling and walking part of Durham's culture and

to make them safe, affordable, enjoyable, everyday modes of transport for everyone.” (p. 19)

Moreover, the resulting imperative to **increase highway space for active travel**, to reach air quality as well as climate targets is mentioned (p. 19).

The Parish Council strongly supports the policy vision presented in the AQMP and to which it is designed to contribute. We also note that the connections between the AQMP and CERP are only mentioned most briefly (p.18); they fail to point out the very important alignment of climate and clean air policy goals that can be reached through transport policy. We are very concerned that the ambitious target mentioned in the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (p. 122 – to achieve “35,000 fewer petrol and diesel cars on our roads” across the County between 2019 and 2023) is not updated and broken down to a goal to reduce the number of cars on the roads of Durham City as part of the AQMP.

Implementation, impact and resourcing:

Table 11 on pages 40 to 47 detail the AQAP Measures. They are not ordered from top to lowest priority, but it is not explained how they are ordered.

The table’s column “Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure” is the closest the report gets to quantifying the impact of the proposed measures. The reductions in air pollution to be achieved by each measure are most welcome but the amount of data provided is very limited. As a consequence, the Parish Council feels that the AQMP fails to give it the required information to monitor and assess the impact of the AQMP as a whole. Therefore, the AQMP fails to give levers to residents and the Parish Council to hold the County Council accountable for the success of the AQMP.

The Parish Council wishes to comment on the AQMP actions by **key theme** and in descending order of priority as we perceive it (numbers of actions are as in the AQMP, pages IV and V).

- 1. Active travel:** Despite its focus on the health impact of air pollution, the AQMP does not mention that the health benefits of active travel constitute significant co-benefits, which may be part of the reason why the action “Implement the Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan 2019-2029” is item 20, i.e. the second lowest priority on the list of 21 actions (p. IV). This action should be given a much higher priority. The resourcing of this line at £10k-£50k and the comment “not progress to date” (p. 44) consolidate the impression that, in total contradiction to the vision for active travel, it’s actual promotion is in fact being utterly deprioritised.

Public transport: We welcome the intention of action 8 to reduce the level of pollution caused by buses but note that it is resourced at only £10k-50k and are concerned that this is a minor action with potentially very minor impact. We urge DCC to add the stretch action to the final AQMP. We welcome actions 14, 15 and note that action 15 will have negligible impact on the city’s air quality.

We feel that opportunities afforded by the new bus station have been missed: Only bus providers using electric, or retrofitted buses should be allowed to use the bus station. For years climate campaigners have been

asking DCC to engage with bus operators to agree dates for the upgrading of buses. No agreements have been negotiated. We strongly suggest adding a timetable for the exclusive use of electric buses at the new Bus Station.

- 2. Park and ride:** We welcome actions 5, 7, 11 and the work that has already begun to expand park and ride sites. We would like DCC to consider means of incentivising more people using fewer cars to come to the Park and Ride, e.g. by applying charges per car instead of per bus passenger. More passengers riding in fewer cars would reduce the air pollution in the periphery of the city.
- 3. Planning:** We welcome actions 2 and 3. However, the development at Bent House Lane is very much in contradiction to the AQMP: This huge development has been allowed to commence without any requirements for ceasing gas use in houses and improving bus routes so that they serve the whole of the development. We urge DCC to engage with the Parish Council and developers to avoid increasing further the flow of polluting traffic through Gilesgate.
- 4. Freight and delivery freight:** We welcome action 19 because it addresses the growing issue of home deliveries. We are concerned that “obtain a better understanding” and “potentially followed by a feasibility study” demonstrates a low level of ambition.
- 5. Parking:** We welcome action 6.
- 6. Electric vehicles:** We welcome actions 4, 12 and look forward to learning how much impact it will have had in due time.
- 7. Workplace travel plans:** We welcome action 9 and look forward to learning how much impact it will have had in due time.
- 8. Awareness raising:** We welcome actions 10, 13, and 117, and look forward to learning how much impact they will have had in due time. We note that given the start of AQMA in 2011, it feels very late indeed to “Define and Implement a Public Awareness Campaign focusing on air quality” in 2024.
- 9. Taxis:** We are disappointed by the lack of ambition of action 16. We urge DCC to go much further, starting with setting strategic goals for the reduction of emissions by the taxi fleet and the level of its electrification.
- 10. Green infrastructure:** We note action 18 is at a very early stage and look forward to learning more about the potential contribution of Green infrastructure to reducing air pollution (and contributing to the resilience and adaptation capacity of the city during the climate emergency).
- 11. Traffic flow:** We are pleased that the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system is operational (action 21) and would welcome further improvements it might deliver for Claypath. We are disappointed to not see more ambition on reducing the amount of traffic through the city.
- 12. Cross-cutting measures:** We support an overall higher level of ambition (working with organisations such as Climate Action Durham, Space for Durham, cycle groups in Durham, etc).
- 13. Actions missing from the AQMP:** We urge DCC to work with
 - a.** schools across the county to find ways to reduce car-based school journeys, implement “school streets”, and parking enforcement in the vicinity of schools, and

- b. Durham University to support the introduction of restrictions on student cars.

14. Making progress on the AQMP transparent and enabling accountability: We note the detail provided in table 11 but strongly suggest it is insufficient to enable residents to monitor progress satisfactorily. In particular, each action in the AQMP must have a) a target that specifies the measurable improvement in air quality each action is expected to deliver; b) clear timescales (start and completion dates); c) monitoring (who is responsible for checking that progress towards targets is on track at regular intervals) and d) explanation of how the AQMP meets the needs of DEFRA targets

3. Conclusion

The Parish Council concludes that the AQMP in its current form does not provide a credible path towards solving the problem of dangerous and in certain places illegal levels of air pollution in Durham City.

We appreciate the measures proposed in the AQMP and have detailed requests for additional and more ambitious measures to bring the AQMP in line with DCC's stated policy visions and national air quality standards.

Significant detail must be added to the plan to enable the measurement of progress towards specified targets. In the absence of mechanisms that allow residents to check and verify the level of progress made, the AQMP is not a credible tool to achieve safe and legal air quality for all Durham City residents which calls into question its very purpose.

End of response

• Finance Committee

Councillor A Doig presented the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 17th January 2024. There being no queries from Members, Councillor A Doig moved on to Committee reports.

Report on proposed reallocation of funding from underspends in 2023-24

Councillor A Doig advised that, after a total expenditure of £283,545 during the financial year 2023-24, the Parish Council ended the financial year with just over £65,000 remaining in its account. Councillor A Doig advised that this includes the Parish Council's reserves which now stand at £45,000 – an appropriate level of reserves based on national guidance.

In addition to which, the Clerk highlighted that our VAT rebate from expenditure from financial year 2023-24 totals £9,526.48. The Clerk advised that this will be repaid to the Parish Council this financial year and effectively means that the Council ended FY 23-24 with approximately £74,000 remaining in the account.

Councillor A Doig advised that the Council based its budgeting process for this current financial year on an assumption that we would be left with £45,000 in

reserves only. Effectively leaving a £29,274 surplus. The Clerk highlighted that Members also need to consider that the contingency fund, which sits alongside our reserves, is also replenished from our precept this current year.

Councillor A Doig advised that the recent Finance Committee meeting had considered the reallocation of funds for FY 2024-25 and agreed to the reallocation set out in the report provided. Members unanimously **agreed** to the reallocation of funding as set out below:

Total remaining fund from 23-24 (post VAT rebate).	£29,274
Allocations for FY 24-25	
Greening the parish area - carried over	£5,036
Green Move Out – carried over	£4,363
Durham Fringe	£5,000
Grants	£2,400
Operation Lentil (ringfenced contingency)	£12,475

7. CHAIR’S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 23rd May 2024 as follows:

The Chair began by thanking everyone involved in the successful Beacon Lighting event on 6th June to mark the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

The Chair advised that D-Day on June 6th 1944 was the largest naval, air and land operation in history, involving many hundreds of thousands of brave men who had to leave their families at home, not knowing if they would ever return; a feat we hope will never have to take place again. The heroism of those who landed on the shores of the Normandy beaches represented a beacon of light for the world during a particularly dark period of war.

The Chair advised that the lighting of our City’s beacon is therefore a deeply important ceremonial event in tribute to the light of peace. The Chair highlighted that the Parish Council took the lead in organising this important event as part of the national commemorations and we were delighted to be joined by His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant and the new Mayor of Durham Councillor Liz Brown.

The Chair expressed her best wishes to all those attending congregation this week the very best of luck in their future endeavours. The Chair remarked that it was really wonderful to see the City so full yesterday in the beaming sunshine as our student residents collected their degrees. A very proud moment for any family and we send them our best wishes.

The Chair also offered a big congratulations too to the six recipients of honorary degrees announced by the University this year.

The Chair thanked Councillor Esther Ashby for her continued work in bringing the City Theatre project to fruition. Once complete, the Chair advised that this should improve the building quality of the Theatre as well as the wider look and feel of Fowler's Yard in the City. The Chair highlighted that the Council heard earlier this month that the application for £20,000 from the Council's Targeted Business Improvement grant had now been accepted.

The Chair thanked everyone involved in the work to respond to the most recent Supplementary Planning Documents being consulted on by the County Council – four very important topics indeed and highlighted that the Planning and Licensing Committee meets tomorrow to confirm our stance on these SPDs.

The Chair highlighted that the proposed redevelopment at Prince Bishops is going to Committee on 3rd July this year – a very speedy turnaround indeed to get this in front of the Committee so quickly. The Chair advised that our Planning and Licensing Committee will be reviewing the content of the 80-page Committee report at its meeting tomorrow. The Chair remarked that this is a major development in our City and we must get this right in such a sensitive location and ensure the long-term prosperity of our High Street.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for arranging the joint operation with Police and Parking Enforcement Agents this evening to tackle the issue of cars waiting in both the Market Place and Elvet Bridge late into the evening – a very big issue we are receiving frequent complaints about.

The Chair remarked that she is pleased that the Clerk has arranged a photo with a handful of Members after this meeting too so that we can send the message that we are being as proactive as possible on this matter. In the meantime, the Chair highlighted that the Clerk and local Members David Freeman and Richard Ormerod are keeping a very close eye on the new Traffic Regulation Order and we wish that TRO every haste in coming into force.

Finally, the Chair offered a very big congratulations to Professor Jon Gluyas and the team at Durham Energy Institute. Fifteen years ago this year, visionary colleagues at Durham University recognised the urgency of addressing the climate crisis through interdisciplinary research collaborations, giving birth to the Durham Energy Institute. Since then, the institute has embarked on a remarkable journey, garnering pride as the university's flagship entity.

The secret to their success lies in their inclusive nature, broad horizons, and the unwavering support of an exemplary Advisory Board. Over the years, the team has witnessed remarkable growth in the number and diversity of colleagues, research activities, generated income, public profile, regional influence, and their ambition and scope. The Chair offered a very big congratulations to all involved in this work.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S ARMED FORCES CHAMPION

The Chair reminded Members that the Parish Council had previously considered this item at the annual meeting of the Parish Council and had agreed to defer a decision on this matter until Councillor E Scott was able to attend this meeting.

Councillor C Lattin offered her apologies for misunderstanding this role and that this was a pre-existing role agreed by the Parish Council and advised that she would like to propose acceptance of this report (including the Terms of Reference for this role) and propose Councillor E Scott for this role for this year of the Parish Council, this was seconded by Councillor L Brown and unanimously **agreed** by Members.

9. REPORT ON GRANT FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR 2024-25

The Clerk reminded Members that, at the January meeting of the Full Parish Council 2023, Councillors formally agreed to allocate £10,000 of the budget for 2024/25 towards grants for local and voluntary organisations.

The Clerk advised that the grant funding window opened on 1st April 2023 and this has been advertised on social media, the Parish Council's website, through the local press and through direct e-mails. The Clerk reminded Members that organisations were asked to apply by 2nd June 2023 in order that the Finance Committee may consider this at its meeting in June and make a recommendation to Full Council in June.

Once approved, all grant payments will be made at the end of June 2022. The Clerk advised that Members have been provided with the full details of all applications.

The Clerk advised that, at its most recent meeting, the Finance Committee noted that there was an underspend from the previous financial year and agreed to reallocate £2,400 of this funding towards additional funding for grants this financial year. Members considered the merits of each application and unanimously **agreed** to allocate funding as follows:

Organisation	Project	Amount requested	Amount agreed by Full Council
Call Yourself An Artist CIC	Collecting stories and holding public consultations on mural artwork for Durham City based on the heritage of the ice rink. This funding will enable us to gather vital evidence so we can seek further funding from larger pots. We will also do some small scale public mural works to gather interest. Our work is to gather communities together and help them represent their histories, tackling isolation and documenting our shared culture.	£2,000	£0
Alington House	Alington House exists to serve the community of Durham City and surrounding areas with activities which enhance confidence and combats loneliness. We promote this through volunteering and we act as a hub for organisations which deals with rape counselling, victims of abuse, homelessness and rehabilitation of offenders. Seeking funding for Chair Exercise for the over 50's (Tutor Fees)	£3,000	£0
Durham Hospital Radio	Whilst the radio station is manned by a team of dedicated unpaid volunteers it still incurs operating costs of over £3000 pa in order to provide the service. The grant would be used towards those running costs.	£1,000	£1,000
Friends of St. Margarets	Purchase of equipment to allow us to run 'bioblitz' sessions, i.e. public participation in surveying and identifying plants and animals of the churchyard throughout summer months, to help us make a record of the wildlife of the churchyard as a baseline from which to make habitat improvements, and to provide a fun way to raise public awareness of the importance of this green city space.	£200	£200

Merryoaks Community Hall	To enhance the privacy of our function rooms, which feature windows and glass doors overlooking a public park, we seek funding to install window coverings on as many of these windows and doors as possible. This enhancement is crucial to ensure that health and mental health consultations, support groups focusing on delicate topics, exercise classes addressing specific health concerns (such as pelvic floor classes), and other activities requiring confidentiality can take place without the risk of being observed by passersby. By ensuring a private and secure environment, participants will feel more comfortable and safer, thereby encouraging greater engagement and attendance. Furthermore, the ability to exclude light will significantly improve the visibility of presentations shown on our audio-visual equipment, thereby enhancing the learning and participation experience for all attendees. These improvements will not only meet the immediate needs of our community but also allow us to expand the range of activities we can offer at the centre in alignment with our charitable objectives, ultimately fostering a more supportive and inclusive environment.	£2,000	£2,000 (subject to full cost estimates being provided).
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St. Leonards Boat club	The club faces significant challenges that make its continued success and improvement difficult. Not least of these is the fact that the club's boathouse is not fit for purpose. We have no changing or basic hygiene facilities at the boathouse and that limits its use to no more than a boat storage facility. We have none of the necessary utilities with no running water or power supply. This restricts our ability to maximise the use of the boathouse and means that the club is significantly disadvantaged in terms of how we can develop this asset and attract new members. We have negotiated with a neighbouring building to link into their water and electricity supplies. This will involve considerable work by approved contractors to install the necessary connections and dig the lengthy trench to allow the cables and pipes to be laid underground. All approvals have been sought and estimated costs are in place. Once connected to mains services we will be able to provide a safer and healthier working environment for our rowers and volunteers. The project should take two or three weeks to complete and cost approximately £7000. This is a chance to make a real difference allowing the boathouse to be used to its full potential.	£2,000	(up to) £2,000
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St Oswalds Brownies	In the last two years we have successfully ran two Unit away days from our usual meeting place, so that our girls get to experience Guiding but in a less familiar environment. Our first was a camp in a day, which saw us complete camp-based activities with a camp themed menu which girls enjoyed thoroughly. This year we ran Around the World in a day, where girls hopped around continents completing activities and crafts from around the world and had a global feast. We hope to run a similar event in Feb 2025. Whilst we are unsure of the theme this will take our girls have suggested animals, safari, and magic. It has become a popular and somewhat requested activity by our older girls and the feedback from parents after we run the events has always been positive and girls are always exhausted and happy when they leave at the end of the day. Due to the rising cost of living and the fact that our national subscriptions in Feb 2024 were over £1044 and we already know the individual rate will be increasing we are unlikely to have funds available to run it as we want to minimise the cost imposed on the families involved and whilst we have remaining funds from this year's Unit day we have ear-marked them for a Christmas Cinema Treat to minimise the cost for families ahead of Christmas.	£200	£200
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Durham City Street Friends (DAAC)	Street Friends are a group of volunteers based in Durham City Centre working collaboratively with Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham. In conjunction with the SWAN Hub and Op Lentil Officers a group of volunteers patrol the city on a Wednesday (during university term time), Friday and Saturday evenings offering practical support such as directing them to the SWAN Hub, basic first aid, handing out water to calling loved ones and helping report a crime. The volunteers have radios connecting them to the CCTV control room, as well as security staff at other town centre venues. It aims to increase safety and the feeling of safety, particularly among women and girls in the town centre. The purpose of the grant is to support the ongoing service in the city centre which requires the purchase of more equipment which is used out on patrol to help those in need along with more uniform as the volunteer cohort increases. The vision is for Street Friends to be the main project in the city for those members of the public who wish to donate to help those in need in Durham City Centre rather than giving out cash. The purpose of this is so to prevent giving cash directly to rough sleepers for example who have been witnessed to purchase alcohol and illegal substances which has had a negative impact on anti-social behaviour within the local parish area.	£5,000	£5,000
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Durham Sixth Form Centre	There are limited opportunities in Durham city for local people to access subsidised and accessible creative art classes, local people need a place to go that is welcoming, warm and open to people with a range of experience. Building on the successes of our 2022 and 2023 programmes, we have class planned up until the summer holidays but are seeking funding for the Autumn/Winter programme 2024. We have now successfully delivered a series of over 40 community classes to local people largely recruited through local charities and organisations. Our community classes are open to all and deliberately promoted these via charities in the first instance. This includes local art and mental health charity RT Projects, local branches of national organisations such as Age UK and Mind UK. We also have established a list of wider organisations and charities. Our classes were promoted to local community groups and church groups with flyers delivered to key locations or organisations. Our local community needs places and activities like this to meet new people, support their wellbeing and spend time with artists and creatives in a safe accessible space. The class is open to all and is hosted in an accessible space. We have found that many of our participants have disabilities such as hearing impairments, heart conditions and limited mobility. The people we work with face several increased challenges post pandemic and in a cost-of-living crisis. The most significant of which is being isolated. We find that many of your participants come not solely for the art activities, but to meet people and talk to others. Many of our participants live alone and have made friends already through our classes.	£2,000	£2,000
	Total	£17,400	£12,400

10. REQUEST FOR A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE MAYOR'S CHARITIES APPEAL

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council has received correspondence from the Mayor's PA at Durham County Council on behalf of newly elected Mayor of Durham City Councillor Liz Brown, asking if the Parish Council would consider supporting this year's Mayor's Charity Appeal.

Following her election as Mayor in May 2024 and in a break with tradition, Councillor Liz Brown announced that she would be supporting two charities, both representing causes close to her heart: Feeding Families and Stray Aid

The Clerk advised that no specific amount has been requested in the letter from the Mayor's PA and any offers of a donation will be gratefully received and acknowledged and any donations will be divided equally between both charities.

In 2020, 2022 and 2023, the Parish Council supported the previous Mayors' appeals with a donation of £500 towards the Fire Fighters Charity, Durham Samaritans and St. Cuthbert's Hospice respectively.

Members unanimously **agreed** to support the Mayor's Charity Appeal for Feeding Families and Stray Aid with a total donation to the appeal of £500 (divided equally between each charity).

Councillor L Brown returned to the meeting following the debate and vote on this matter.

11. PROPOSALS ON FUNDING TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council, in agreeing to continue to provide professional support for local businesses, had agreed at its March Full Council meeting to continue to fund the Indie Durham City project for a further 2 months' period until the end of May only.

The Clerk also highlighted that the Business Committee held a special meeting in mid-June to discuss this in more detail and wishes to propose the following projects and virements to its budget for 2024-25.

Current budgets

- Professional support for businesses – remaining budget of £8,100.00 (upon payment of June invoice).
- UKSPF match funding project for meanwhile uses - £5,000.

Proposed changes

Indie Durham City

Members felt that social media marketing of the city is already delivered well by bodies such as Durham BID and Visit County Durham and attractions and events are very often publicised on the Parish Council's website. In addition, whilst the added positive social media presence for the City through Indie Durham City is welcome, Members did not feel that this was a measurable service which delivers the best value-for-money outcomes for the aims of the Parish Council.

As such, it was agreed that this element of the Indie Durham City project should be withdrawn.

Members felt that the filling of empty business units and supporting prospective businesses to collaborate and engage more positively with landlords and agents was a top priority for the Business Committee.

As such, Members approved the funding of one day per month for Indie Durham City (£300 per month and a total cost of £2,700 for the remainder of the financial year) towards specifically supporting the marketing and future filling of empty business premises across the parish area. A number of units are currently being marketed in the city as vacant business premises and Members felt that this could be a measurable outcome they'd like to see delivered from the Indie Durham City relationship.

Project with Durham University Business School

Members agreed to support a proposal that the Parish Council seeks to partner with Durham University's Business School on a project to work alongside secondary schools and sixth forms to support school leavers to set up their own businesses in the City.

The Committee felt that this would be a positive project engaging with both the University and local schools; highlighting our commitment to supporting young people in the parish area and also help to promote a spirit of youth entrepreneurship in the city.

The Clerk has arranged a meeting with the Business School in late July to discuss this and Members have provisionally agreed to allocate £5,000 towards this project.

UKSPF funding

At present, Members did not feel that there is a strong demand for use of this funding on this particular priority and instead agreed to collaborate with partners such as Durham BID and/ or Visit County Durham on a project relating to events and/or promoting group travel offer to Durham City. VCD has already agreed to meet with the Business Committee at its next meeting on 16th July 2024.

Members unanimously **agreed** to carry out a joint project with Visit County Durham and Durham University Business school, as set out in the report provided.

Members also **agreed** to delegate to the Business Committee responsibility to continue with the Indie Durham City project on a one day per month basis and based on the Committee's identified priorities for this element of the budget.

12. PROPOSAL TO FUND THE PRODUCTION OF A CITY SAFETY CARD

The Clerk highlighted that the Parish Council takes an active role on issues such as anti-social behaviour, tackling crime and supporting vulnerable residents.

As part of this commitment, the Clerk advised that the Parish Council is an active member of the City Safety Group, the City's Operational Group

(alongside Durham Police), a key funding partner for the Safety Hub, ShopWatch, PubWatch and much more.

Through the Parish Council's engagement with Durham Police and other partners, the issue of signposting both partners and residents to the most appropriate service and having an easy to access, distributable information source has been highlighted as an issue in the city.

The Clerk advised that there are very many organisations working to support the physical and mental health of residents as well as those involved in supporting residents with addiction and crime issues. It is felt that a closer collaboration between and identification of these services could prove vital moving forward.

As such, it was proposed that the Parish Council funds the production of a City Safety Card with key partner contact details to signpost residents to appropriate services. The content has yet to be formally agreed however it was highlighted that signposting to housing solutions, local neighbourhood police contact details, opening times for Sanctuary 21, the Safety Hub, emergency services, details of public toilets in the city and much more could be included in this Safety Card.

The Clerk advised that he was able to design this leaflet and the cost of production for 10,000 x 6-sided, Z-fold, full colour A6 size card would be: £1,024.00.

The Clerk highlighted that this work builds on the "Who to contact if you have a local issue in Durham" leaflet the Parish Council produces and distributes annually to local residents. Whilst it is proposed that these cards could be used and handed out by the Police, emergency services, local Members, Durham University, etc, it is not proposed to distribute these to every household in Durham.

The Clerk also advised that the design and content of this Safety Card will also be approved by Members prior to printing.

Councillor C Lattin advised that she felt that this is a fantastic idea and expressed the hope that there may be space for content of the Parish's community emergency plan on this leaflet. The Clerk advised that he would be happy to work alongside Councillor Lattin on this leaflet.

Members unanimously **agreed** to fund the production of this leaflet, as set out in the report provided and to delegate to the Environment Committee and the Clerk responsibility for the content of the leaflet.

13. ARRANGEMENTS FOR WORKS TO THE CITY THEATRE

The Clerk reminded Members that improving the quality of Fowlers Yard in our parish is a key aim of the Parish Council's Business Committee. Amongst other issues, two pressing matters remain top priorities for the Business Committee:

- a) Tackling the proliferation of bins in the service yard area of Fowlers Yard.
- b) Replacing the windows and re-pointing the brickwork to the façade of the Victorian section of the Durham City Theatre building – the current windows are seriously impacting on the façade of the building and the wider area and are also proving hazardous to the integrity of the building and repair works are deemed urgent.

The Clerk reminded Members that he had recently submitted a planning application for the like-for-like replacement of the windows to this section of the building (application ref: DM/24/00447/FPA) and this has now been approved. Equally, the brick re-pointing is permitted development and does not form part of the application submitted for the Theatre but does form part of the grant funding provided for these works.

The City Theatre has managed to secure £20,000 in monies from the Targeted Business Improvement fund from Durham County Council. This funding must be spent by October 2024.

In total, the works (including production, fitting, scaffolding, permits and brick repointing) will be £29,728.40 (ex VAT).

Earlier this year, Members also approved the reallocation of the £10,000 earmarked for improving public toilets to this project. The requirement for this full amount is now no longer required as the City Theatre is able to allocate £4,000 of its own funds to this project. As such, there is now only a requirement for the Parish Council to provide £6,000 of its own funds towards this project.

The Clerk highlighted that Durham County Council has set out a number of conditions associated with its funding to the Theatre and it is understood that the Theatre is happy to accept these conditions in their entirety.

In addition to those DCC conditions, it is also proposed that the Parish Council attaches a number of conditions to the funding being provided by the Parish Council.

The Clerk highlighted the logistics involved in the delivery of the City Theatre project and advised that he is carrying out a site visit with key stakeholders later this week to discuss how this should be managed.

Councillor E Ashby highlighted the enormous amount of work involved in getting the project to this stage and she felt uncomfortable at the proposal that the Parish Clerk should be responsible for project managing these construction works. These concerns were also echoed by Councillors J Ashby and A Doig who advised that the Parish Council should provide the funding for this project as agreed and

they felt the City Theatre or its contractor should take responsibility for the project management and delivery of this construction project.

It was also agreed that the City Theatre should pay invoices for these works directly, rather than the Parish Council fund this and then subsequently claim these funds back from the Theatre or Durham County Council. This was unanimously agreed by Members and it was agreed that Councillors E Ashby and J Ashby should accompany the Clerk on this forthcoming site visit.

14. RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR DURHAM CITY CONSULTATION

The Clerk reminded Members that Durham County Council is presently seeking public views on anti-social behaviour issues in Durham City and measures which could be introduced to help tackle these issues.

One of these measures is a Public Spaces Protection Order. The City already has such Orders for issues such as street drinking and dog fouling in place. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council has previously agreed to support the introduction of this PSPO and also funded the production and distribution of a leaflet to every residential property in the Parish area, in order to promote as wide a public engagement as possible on these important issues.

The Clerk highlighted that he has circulated a response in writing to all Members and this was approved in writing and submitted to DCC. The content of this response was unanimously **agreed** as follows:

Response to consultation

The City of Durham Parish Council write to express its full support for the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) on anti-social behaviour in Durham City and to urge Durham County Council to introduce this PSPO at the earliest possibility.

As you are aware, the County Council launched a public consultation exercise between 18th March 2022 and 29th April 2022 to seek public views on whether a PSPO should be introduced to control aggressive begging in Durham City. At that time, the Council's Cabinet felt that there was insufficient evidence to justify the introduction of the PSPO and rightly asked that a larger evidence base be provided ahead of any further formal review.

Given that these orders can restrict what people can do and how they behave in public spaces, the County Council rightly takes the view that it is important that the restrictions imposed are focused on specific behaviours and are proportionate to the detrimental effect that the behaviour is causing or can cause, and are necessary to prevent it from continuing, occurring or recurring.

The legal tests focus on the impact that anti-social behaviour is having on victims and communities. A Public Spaces Protection Order can be made by the Council if

they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activity or behaviour concerned, carried out, or likely to be carried out, in a public space:

- has had, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;*
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;*
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and*
- justifies the restrictions imposed.*

Whilst we recognise that introducing a PSPO for specific activities cannot always be a silver bullet solution to what are often complex and personal issues, this can be an effective additional tool for the police and local authority to deal with issues where they are causing a public nuisance in our City. By way of an example, the Council's highly effective PSPO against street drinking has had a tremendous impact on our City and is reducing the number of incidents through effective education and enforcement.

The Parish Council also commends the County Council for its recognition that the enforcement of this PSPO should only be used along with a range of other intervention methods including education and support services. As you aware, the Parish Council is very heavily involved in organisations such as the City Safety Group (and its ASB-sub group prior to this), Durham University's Community Engagement Task Force, PubWatch, ShopWatch and Durham BID, we are a main funding body for the Durham City Safety Hub and Durham City Street Friends, we provide additional Police Officers as part of Operation Lentil in City and additional Neighbourhood Wardens through a Service Level Agreement with the County Council. This is in addition to the regular grant funding we provide to key partners such as Harbour support services, Sanctuary 21, the Winter Night Shelter and many more. No third parties can be in any doubt that our primary goal is to support vulnerable individuals.

Evidence base

Anecdotal evidence from members of the public, partner organisations and businesses in Durham City highlights that begging and anti-social behaviour are occurring more frequently in our City and that this is having a negative impact and perception of our community.

Since DCC Cabinet's decision in 2022, we understand that Durham Constabulary has undertaken key scanning and analysis of the situation in Durham City, in order to present two statistical reports underpinning the need for a PSPO. This reflects the evidence Darlington provided in their successful application for a PSPO.

The advantage of this approach is that the quality and reliability of the evidence is high. However anecdotal evidence suggests that the scope and scale of the issue is heavily unreported.

In August 2023, the impact of this behaviour was set out in a Victim Impact Statement on behalf of no fewer than 80 local independent businesses in our city (see Appendix 1), in which businesses stressed that nuisance begging in and around the Market Place is disruptive to their trade and is having a detrimental impact on the sense of safety and good ambiance we should all expect in Durham. In submitting this Statement, local independent businesses asked the Council to urgently review its position on the anti-social behaviour PSPO in the city.

The Parish Council supports the proposed PSPO area, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet¹ and consequently we have analysed data on relevant crime and incidents categories in the D1 Beat area (primarily Durham City Centre), as set out below:

Anti-social behaviour incidents

Between 1st July 2023 – 30th April 2024 there were 377 ASB incidents in Durham City. The most common type of ASB is ASB Nuisance which equates to 75%, followed by ASB Environmental at 18% and ASB personal at 7%.

Of 377 ASB Incidents in Durham City 81 (21%) were given a youth qualifier, 135 (36%) had an alcohol qualifier and 9 (2%) had both alcohol and youth qualifiers.

87% of ASB incidents in Durham City are not youth related.

Alcohol and drug-related incidents

*There were **3659** incidents overall within the Durham City area between the 1st of July 2023 – 30th April 2024. Of these, **830 (23%)** had an alcohol qualifier, **176 (5%)** had a youth qualifier and **21 (1%)** had both alcohol and youth qualifiers.*

*Between 1st July 2023 – 30th April 2024 there were **118** incidents in Durham where there was a “drug” qualifier linked to the incident.*

Homeless incidents

*Between 1st July 2023 – 30th April 2024 there were **85** incidents in Durham where there was a “homeless” qualifier linked to the incident. (**Please note:** ‘homeless’ is a tag placed on an incident by a call handler, based on information given in the call and the perception of the caller).*

*In relation to the type of homeless incident reported, the most common type is ASB Nuisance (**35%**), followed by concern/collapse/inj/illness (**21%**).*

Theft

*Between 1st July 2023 – 30th April 2024 there were **538** theft offences in Durham City, of which 48.1% were a shoplifting offence.*

¹ <https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s186328/PSPO%20Final.pdf>

Conclusion

We trust that this data, alongside the Victim Impact Statement from local businesses, is sufficient to support your assessment. As always, we welcome the opportunity for partnership working with the Council, in order to address issues of concern in the City.

We look forward to reviewing the results of this consultation and to your eventual subsequent report to Cabinet on this matter.

End of response

15. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S CUSTOMER ACCESS POINTS

The Clerk highlighted that Durham County Council is presently consulting on proposed changes to the Council's Customer Access Points (CAPs), with the proposal being that the Customer Access Point in Durham City (presently located in Clayport Library) should be reduced to a Thursday-only face-to-face service.

Members expressed disappointment at this move and felt that this would adversely impact upon the good service offered by Durham County Council.

Councillor D Freeman highlighted that only 8 appointments on average were being requested or delivered each week and therefore this demonstrated that the vast majority of customers are accessing DCC's services via the telephone or online.

Councillor E Scott highlighted the difficult financial decisions facing the County Council over this financial year and future years for the foreseeable, without additional Government support.

Councillor S Walker advised that she regularly sees a large queue of customers at the Customer Access Point at Clayport Library and she felt that the service was invaluable and must be retained. This was echoed by Members and it was agreed by majority votes (6 votes in favour and 3 abstentions) to object to these proposals and submit the following response to this consultation:

Response to consultation

The City of Durham Parish Council wishes to register its serious concerns at the County Council's proposals to limit the face-to-face Customer Access Point (CAP) opening times at Clayport library to one day per week (Thursday). The access statistics highlighted in your consultation material go some way in demonstrating how much this facility provides essential advice and support and serves as a crucial interface between the County Council and our community.

The face-to-face Customer Access Point at Clayport is invaluable in assisting residents with a wide range of issues, including housing, social services, benefits and other Council services. We regard the easy access, predominantly appointment-free, face-to-face aspect of this service to be of real benefit to our residents.

For many in our community, especially the elderly, disabled and those without reliable internet access, the CAP represents a vital resource for obtaining information and support. The face-to-face assistance offered at the CAP cannot be replaced for 80% of the working week by online services or telephone support, which we know some residents find difficult to navigate.

Limiting access to this facility would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable members of our community who rely on direct interaction to resolve their issues. It would also undermine the Council's commitment to accessibility and community support.

Just as seriously however, the CAP is also the go-to location in the City for many support services in the event that someone is in urgent need of housing. The Parish Council office sits just above this facility and we regularly see prison-leavers and other individuals seeking housing and other support from the CAP staff. Limiting this service will surely impact on other Local Authority and Policing services and leave individuals without any support at all.

The presence of the Customer Access Point (CAP) within the city not only enhances the quality of service provided by the Council but also fosters a sense of trust and accessibility and the CAP is a crucial part of the Council's dedication to being present and responsive to the needs of our residents.

The County Council quite rightly already integrates this service with the library as part of a cost-saving co-location of services and this is to be commended. Whilst the Parish Council fully appreciates the financial situation facing Durham County Council and other Local Authorities across the UK, we firmly believe that any suggested cost savings from this proposal cannot be used to justify a policy that will worsen accessibility, safety and access to other key services.

We would urge the County Council to consider this proposal carefully and to explore alternative solutions that would maintain this critical service 5 days per week.

Preserving the face-to-face Customer Access Point in Durham City is essential to ensuring that all residents have equitable access to the services and support they need. We sincerely hope that the Council will take our concerns into account and, as ever, we would be happy to work with you on supporting the continuation of this service in its present form.

End of response

16. REPORT(S) FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Councillor C Lattin presented a report on the most recent meeting of the University's Community Engagement Task Force's Lived Environment Sub-Group, as set out in the report to Full Council included with the Agenda. There were no queries from Members on this report.

The Clerk presented a report on the most recent meeting of Durham BID's board, as set out in the report to Full Council included with the Agenda. There were no queries from Members on this report.

Councillor J Ashby presented a report on the most recent meeting of the University's Community Engagement Task Force, as set out in the report to Full Council included with the Agenda. There were no queries from Members on this report.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked Members for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting.

Signed,

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(25th July 2024)**

ITEM 5: PROPOSED JOINT PROJECT WITH DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL ON PRODUCING AN EVIDENCE-BASE FOR NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (NDHAs) WITHIN THE DURHAM CITY CONSERVATION AREA.

As Members are aware, the Parish Council is working together with Durham County Council on the production of a Conservation Area Management Plan. As part of this, the Parish Council is part-funding the officer time required to produce this Plan.

As part of this work, Lee Hall needs to produce an evidence base for the existing list of non-designated heritage assets within the Durham City Conservation Area. Most of these assets have been identified over time either through the day-to-day planning process, the creation of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan or the production of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal in 2016.

In total, there are currently 314 such assets on the existing list and each one of these needs to be assessed via a survey, with the asset being scored based on a set of criteria. There is also a need to provide an up-to-date photo of the asset itself.

A copy of all of these assets has been provided along with this Agenda for Members' consideration. These do not include NDHAs identified outside of the Conservation Area (such as the Hill colleges) nor those assets identified through the local list project, from which surveys already exist from those who nominated each asset.

A copy of the survey to be undertaken for each asset is also included with this Agenda.

Due to current resourcing issues, it is not possible for Lee and DCC's Conservation team to carry out this work alone and they have therefore reached out to the Parish Council as well as colleagues within the City of Durham Trust to ask for our support in producing this evidence base.

Local heritage, whether it is protected in law or not, plays an important role in creating and being part of our collective sense of place. It is the make-up of our towns and cities, their history and evolution that contributes to how we recognise and identify the local character and distinctiveness of the places we call home or visit.

Non-designated heritage assets can include locally identified:

- Buildings
- Monuments
- Sites
- Places
- Areas of landscapes

These assets are identified by plan making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets (such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, etc).

The identification of a non-designated heritage asset via the planning process or its inclusion on a local list, means that any proposals requiring planning permission which have an impact on its significance or setting would fall under Policies 44 and 45 of the County Durham Plan as well as section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant policies within Neighbourhood Plan.

The planning process provides a balanced judgement which will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. For instance, the County Durham Plan advises that: *"Heritage assets; designated and non-designated, are irreplaceable so any harm or loss will require clear and convincing justification."*

The deadline for completing this survey work is the end of August/ beginning of September 2024.

There is scope to identify additional NDHAs through this process, however for the purpose of this information gathering for the Conservation Area Management Plan, the focus should be those within the existing (excel) list. If any others are known or spotted, Lee Hall is happy to be contacted about these separately.

In terms of the scoring of each asset, the final score must be based on the number of boxes ticked within the survey in answer to the specific questions, if there is anything particularly distinctive about the building/site or it is recognised as being of higher quality that may elevate its special interest not covered by the questions, this can be highlighted in the comments box. The final score will be reviewed by the Design and Conservation team.

Clearly, there is a need for additional volunteers to be identified to support this project and it is hoped that circa. 30 volunteers in total would make this task more achievable. It is also recommended that volunteers with some background of history/ architecture/ heritage be identified.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to work positively with Durham County Council and colleagues on the production of this evidence base and to take all actions necessary to support the production of these surveys within the timeframe identified above.
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ITEM 5: RESPONSE TO DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S REGULATION 7 DIRECTION RENEWAL APPLICATION FOR THE DURHAM CITY CONSERVATION AREA

As Members are aware, the County Council has introduced a Regulation 7 Direction to the entire Durham City Conservation Area which effectively enforces the non-display of To Let boards without prior consent.

Following a Hearing on 21 May 2019, a Government Inspector and the Secretary of State were satisfied that the Direction should be made for five years. DCC undertook statutory notification that the Direction would come into force from 17 October 2019. This means that from that date, the display of to let boards in Durham City Conservation Area will only be lawful if Durham County Council has granted express consent for them.

The Regulation has proved to be a successful method of controlling the display of large numbers of To Let boards on individual properties for extended periods within the Durham City Conservation Area.

Durham County Council is therefore intending to submit an application to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to renew the Regulation 7 Direction for another five years.

The application is scheduled to be submitted by the Secretary of State on 1 August 2024. Before this, Durham County Council has asked for our views on this application.

This matter was considered by the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee at its meeting in June and the Committee proposes to submit the following response to this consultation:

Response to Regulation 7 Direction consultation

The City of Durham Parish Council writes to express its full support for the Local Authority's renewal application for the Direction made under Regulation 7. This Direction covers part of the Durham City Conservation Area and removes deemed consent rights for the display of estate agents' boards falling within Class 3A of Schedule 3, Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Background to the current Direction

The current Direction runs for a period of 5 years and we understand expires in October 2024. Although the original consultation on the current Direction pre-dated the formation of the City of Durham Parish Council, we are aware of the very substantial work by the Local Authority, the Durham City Neighbourhood Planning Forum and many others prior to the introduction of this Direction to address this issue and the Parish Council fully supports this Direction in its entirety.

In particular, prior to its report setting out the case for this Direction to Durham County Council's Cabinet in February 2018², the Local Authority had sought to tackle this issue with a Voluntary Lettings Board Code (2011-2018). Whilst the introduction of the Voluntary Code affected a limited improvement to the situation, it was not considered successful in addressing the issue.

Between 9th January 2017 and 17th February 2017, the Local Authority undertook an extensive public consultation on options to address this issue. A total of 104 responses were received at that time, of whom 90% considered To Let Boards to be a significant problem within the City with only 2% considering there to be no issue at all. 87% of those who responded also

² <https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/25290/Proposals-to-restrict-Letting-Boards-in-areas-of-high-number-student-properties-Report-to-Cabinet-7-February-2018/pdf/LettingBoardsReportCabinet7Feb2018.pdf?m=1531308504553>

considered option 3 (introduction of the Regulation & Direction) to be the preferred solution with only 3% considering that the continuation of the current Voluntary Code as being an effective solution.

*Prior to the introduction of the Direction, there had been an excessive proliferation of estate agents' boards in areas of the City where former family homes have been transformed into Houses in Multiple Occupation (see **Appendix 1**), resulting in a transient population with frequent letting and sale of units.*

Whilst To Let boards act as a direction to students of property available to let for future terms, they also promote high proportions of multi occupied properties available in the central area of the City which is considered by residents to be detrimental to the enjoyment of permanent residents and also to tourists visiting the beautiful asset of the famous Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site and its surrounding complementary features.

The area covered by this Direction forms part of Durham City Centre Conservation Area within which there are also a number of listed buildings. As such, the Local Authority is under a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of these assets. The untidy and cluttered street scene resulting from the proliferation of estate agents' boards certainly detracted from the character and appearance of the area at certain times of the year prior to 2019.

Whilst a range of options to address this issue were considered by the Local Authority in 2018, the existing Direction has been successful in keeping streets in our City clear of these estate agents' boards. Residents indicate to us that there has been a marked improvement in the visual appearance of these areas and indeed there is now an almost total absence of estate agents' To Let Boards year-round within the City.

Taking the above into account, there is clear evidence of the Direction working. This is acknowledged in many of the representations we receive from those locally who strongly support the renewal of the Direction. Substantial satisfaction is expressed by residents in the notable improvement to the character and appearance of the City since the Direction has been in force.

Policy context

Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, and explains that the consent process for advertisements should be operated in a way that is simple, efficient and effective.

Paragraph 042 of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains what is required for a Direction under Regulation 7 to be made. It states that 'it must be clear that one or more of the deemed consent provisions has had such adverse effects on the amenity or public safety of the area that there is no prospect of an improvement in the quality of the

advertising in a locality, unless the local planning authority are given the power to control that particular type of advertisement.'

Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan (CDP) is considered relevant and relates to Sustainable Design stating that proposals should ensure that adverts and signage are not detrimental to visual amenity or highway safety and sited in inappropriate locations.

The application to renew this Regulation 7 Direction is considered to comply with the NPPF. Moreover, the continued requirement that all To Let boards within the designated area need express consent from the Local Authority is considered reasonable. The removal of high concentrations of To Let Boards which have evidently been detrimental to visual amenity within the City also accords with the aims of adopted local development plan policy.

'Deemed consent' rights

The deemed consent rights it is sought to remove do have some restrictions. Only one board is permitted to be displayed per property and they are not permitted to be displayed for more than 14 days following the sale or lease of the property. However, even with these limitations the Parish Council considers that, in areas of high concentrations of HMOs, even the lawful display of boards will undoubtedly result in a cluttered and unsightly street scene.

Powers do exist for Local Authorities to secure prosecutions in such cases. However, not only is this time consuming but it can be difficult to secure prosecutions in those cases where it is not always known when a lease for each individual bedspace within a property has been concluded. This being so, it seems that only the renewal of the Direction will protect the character and appearance of the areas in question from the harmful effects and a proliferation of estate agents' boards.

Conclusion

The areas covered by the Direction are ones where the preservation or enhancement of their character or appearance should be given substantial weight. Harm to their character and appearance has arisen in the past, but has been prevented by this Direction since its introduction in 2019. To prevent a recurrence of harm, we fully support the renewal of this Direction without delay.

End of response

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to endorse the response to this consultation, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 5: PROPOSAL BY VISIT COUNTY DURHAM ON JOINT PROJECT FOR TRAVEL TRADE PROMOTION

Following the review of the Parish Council's budget aimed at providing professional support for local businesses, the Parish Council's Business Committee has been working to establish a different approach to the way the Parish Council markets the City centre, with a preference to move away from traditional social media marketing and more focus on driving visitor numbers directly.

Durham City is a unique and historic location with immense potential for tourism and local commerce. However, to maximize this potential, it is crucial to attract both domestic and international visitors.

Visit County Durham is the official tourism management organisation for the region and the Parish Council's Business Committee is proposing a partnership with VCD as this presents an opportunity to amplify our marketing efforts effectively.

The Parish Council has recently supported VCD and Durham County Council in its efforts to achieving 'coach friendly status' for Durham City and the result of this application is expected imminently.

The Business Committee wishes to take this further and work collaboratively with VCD on driving additional footfall to the City directly through a travel trade promotion and recently met with Sarah Johnson the Marketing and Communications Manager at Visit County Durham to review these opportunities.

Visit County Durham is able to offer the following package for advertising Durham City through its travel trade promotion:

- Discover Durham annual membership, invitation to meetings, social media support
- Dedicated page on the Discover Durham website, featuring content on retail, food and drink and events
- Key City events featured in the What's On section
- Dedicated Durham City solus e-newsletter to groups and travel trade database
- Dedicated Christmas Festival solus e-newsletter to groups and travel trade database
- Dedicated Christmas Festival or general banner advert on DiscoverDurham.co.uk x 2 months
- Dedicated Christmas Festival or general e-newsletter banner advert x 2 months
- Joint funding of an advertorial in one of the travel trade publications
- Joint funding of a media visit (potentially linked to the Fringe)

The total cost for this package is £3,000 and this is well within the defined budget for this priority.

The Business Committee has also clarified that the promotion does not necessarily need to focus on Christmas events solely and this can be tailored according to our preferences, with the caveat that there is approximately 9-12 months of lead-in time required in advance of any events we'd like to see visitors coming to the City for.

At its most recent meeting, the Business Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council acceptance of this funding.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to agree to provide £3,000 towards the travel trade promotion alongside Visit County Durham, as set out in the above report.
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ITEM 5: PROPOSAL FROM DURHAM BID ON PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO SILVER STREET/ FOWLER'S YARD

Through its association with Durham BID, the Parish Council has been aware of a recent meeting with Silver Street businesses with the Durham BID board regarding their concerns relating to the poor street scene and visual appearance of Silver Street.

In a joint meeting with the BID, businesses asked that the BID and other partners work to improve the street scene and also support initiatives such as events to drive additional footfall.

In addition, businesses raised concerns about anti-social behaviour, nuisance begging and non-paying customers asking to use the premises toilets and the business not being aware of where to signpost these individuals to the nearest public toilets. On these latter issues, Members will be aware that the Parish Council is funding additional Neighbourhood Wardens and Police for the City centre, the Council has also produced an evidence base in favour of the proposed Public Space

Protection Order against anti-social behaviour and begging in the City centre and is presently producing a City Safety and Wellbeing card which includes details of all public toilets in the City.

Durham BID has reached out to the Parish Council for financial support on an initiative to fund improvements to premises frontages and the entrance to Fowler's Yard from Silver Street (alley running next to the Fancy Dress store on Silver Street). Members are aware of the substantial ongoing work to improve the waste situation and general appearance of Fowler's Yard by the Parish Council and it is positive news to be aware that there are additional efforts by Durham BID to improve one of the access routes into the Fowler's Yard area.

Durham BID is also looking at introducing bunting to Silver Street as well as providing silk floral displays to shop frontages. AN example of the type of floral frontage the BID is looking for is provided below:



The premises the BID is looking to introduce this type of display to include: Uno Momento, Tortilla, Holland and Barrett, Kokoro, Cafe Nero, Vodaphone, Making Faces, Faru, Fusha, Nanakeet, Grape Tree Feed Good Food, Coviello, Moon, T4, Treats, Everyday Food and Durham Gin.

The total cost for providing this type of display is £10,600 (+ VAT) and Durham BID has asked if the Parish Council would be willing to make a financial contribution to this project for a display over the summer holidays.

The BID has assured the Council that the installation of these displays does not involve drilling or any permanent building damage.

Members will be aware that there is £4,000 remaining in the Parish Council's budget on improving Fowler's Yard (previously agreed as part of a £10,000 budget to improve public toilets). £6,000 of this funding is already committed to the City Theatre project which begins in mid-August.

It is hoped that a positive decision on this initiative may result in further positive engagement on the waste issue at Fowler's Yard.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to decide whether to support the initiative by Durham BID, in collaboration with local businesses, in order to improve the street scene of Silver Street in the parish area.
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ITEM 8: COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION EXPANSION CONSULTATION

Introduction

The Health and Care Act 2022 provides powers for the Secretary of State to introduce, vary and terminate community water fluoridation schemes. The Government's plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry sets out a focus on prevention of tooth decay. This includes the long-term ambition to systematically bring water fluoridation to more of the country, with a particular focus on the most deprived areas, which stand to benefit most.

Before using these powers, public consultation is required on the proposal and the Government is therefore consulting with local communities via local authorities on this issue. As Durham City is one of the target areas, it is proposed that the Parish Council considers the consultation documentation accordingly.

The Government is consulting on a proposal to request the relevant water company, Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL), to enter into new fluoridation arrangements, and to vary existing agreements, in order to expand community water fluoridation schemes across the north east of England. This is because of the significant and long-standing inequalities in the region and is part of the government's plan to improve dental health.

The Government's proposals

Around 1 in 10 people in England currently have fluoride added to their drinking water supplies. The Government proposing to expand community water fluoridation further in the north east. Following this consultation, subject to a decision by the Secretary of State, the government would enter into agreements with NWL to increase the level of fluoride to the water supply in specified areas. The Secretary of State is also responsible for reimbursing water companies for costs associated with water fluoridation schemes with no impact on customer bills.

This proposal builds on earlier work supported by local authorities and partners in the north east to publicly consult on expanding community water fluoridation.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a maximum level of 1.5 milligrams of fluoride per litre of water (mg/L). There is strong scientific evidence that water fluoridation schemes can help reduce tooth decay and is a safe and effective intervention.

The government can require water companies to increase the naturally occurring concentration of fluoride in water supplies to 1.0 mg/L. This is well within WHO's recommended maximum level known to reduce tooth decay. Similar schemes operate around the world covering an estimated 400 million people, including in the USA, Canada and Ireland. Around 6 million people in England already have extra fluoride added to their water supply, while some supplies provide a similar level of fluoride naturally.

The Government has asked NWL to investigate whether it would be operable and efficient to supply fluoridated water throughout the rest of the north east of England. This could largely be achieved by introducing the necessary equipment at existing water treatment works.

Expanding community water fluoridation in the north east will generate a net social benefit of £315 million to:

- reduce tooth decay in children and adults
- reduce the disparities in dental health, particularly for children
- reduce the need for dental services and costs to the NHS, such as children going to hospital for tooth extractions due to decay and managing the burden of pain and infection

Existing areas

Many places in the north east of England are already covered by existing agreements to increase fluoride levels, dating back to the late 1960s and around half the population of the area. These existing areas include:

- parts of County Durham
- Gateshead
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- North Shields
- Wallsend
- Whitley Bay

Proposed expansion areas

The Government's proposal would extend this further so that the following local authorities would all have fluoridated water at a level that reduces tooth decay:

- Darlington
- Durham
- Gateshead
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle
- Northumberland
- North Tyneside
- Redcar and Cleveland
- South Tyneside
- Stockton
- Sunderland

Because of the way water is provided, there would also be some supply to neighbouring parts of Westmorland and Furness Council and North Yorkshire Council areas.

Excluded areas

Feasibility work has identified that there are some isolated rural areas where it would be impractical due to their location to supply fluoridated water in a cost-effective way.

Areas in and around Hartlepool are also largely supplied by Anglian Water where water naturally contains fluoride at a level that is beneficial to dental health. Those areas are also therefore not part of the proposal to expand the community water fluoridation scheme.

Oral health needs in England and the region

While oral health has improved greatly in recent years, tooth decay remains a significant, yet largely preventable, public health problem in England. It is caused by consuming sugary food and drinks and poor dental hygiene. It affects people at all stages of life and is the most common oral disease in children. Tooth decay

is also a progressive disease which, if left untreated, can cause severe pain and infection leading to difficulties eating, sleeping and socialising. Evidence (see the health monitoring report for England 2022) shows water fluoridation is one effective way to help prevent tooth decay.

In the school year 2021 to 2022, almost a quarter (24%) of 5 year olds in England had experienced tooth decay. Those in the most deprived 20% of areas of the country were 2.5 times as likely to have experience of tooth decay as those in the least deprived 20% of areas. In the same year, some groups were more affected by tooth decay. The oral health survey of 5 year old children 2022 showed 38% of children in the Asian or Asian British ethnic group were affected by tooth decay. School children in year 6 living in the north east were more likely to have tooth decay (16%) compared with children living in the south west who were less likely (12%).

Tooth decay can disrupt children's learning and development as pain and infections from decayed teeth can result in school absences. In 2019, data showed 6% of children aged under 16 in England had time off nursery or school in the previous 6 months because of problems with their teeth, mouth or gums.

Tooth decay is still the most common reason for hospital admission in children aged between 6 and 9 years. Tooth extractions in hospital can also impact schooling and educational attainment, as well as being a distressing experience for children and their families.

The adult dental health survey 2009 showed that 30% of adults in England had decayed teeth with 34% of adults in the north east affected.

Tooth decay also has a considerable impact on the NHS. The costs to the NHS of hospital admissions for tooth extraction in children aged 0 to 19 years have been estimated based on the latest NHS national cost collection data. The costs were £64.3 million for all tooth extractions and £40.7 million for tooth decay related extractions in the financial year 2022 to 2023.

There are large inequalities in oral health across the north east of England. Every child who has teeth is at risk of tooth decay, but the risk increases for those living in more deprived areas.

Local and regional needs assessments have also identified lack of access to water with adequate levels of fluoride as an important gap for improving oral health.

Health

The 4 UK Chief Medical Officers have concluded that on balance there is strong scientific evidence that water fluoridation is an effective public health intervention for reducing the prevalence of tooth decay and improving dental health equality across the UK. It should be seen as a complementary strategy, not a substitute for other effective methods of increasing fluoride such as fluoride toothpaste. Good practices such as regular dental check-ups and limiting sugar are important, but water fluoridation does have a positive effect even when those practices are absent.

There have been multiple systematic reviews of water fluoridation schemes from around the world. The common finding of these reviews is that water fluoridation is a safe and effective public health intervention for reducing the prevalence of tooth decay. There is evidence that levels of tooth decay are lower in fluoridated areas compared to areas without water fluoridation schemes. Systematic reviews which have looked at the general health effects of fluoridation have found no credible evidence that water fluoridation is harmful to health at permitted levels.

There is a legal obligation to monitor health impacts of water fluoridation schemes every 4 years. The health monitoring report for England 2022 looked at the prevalence and severity of dental caries in 3 to 5 year old children and hospital admissions for removing teeth due to decay in children and young people.

This latest report found that 5-year-olds in areas with a fluoridation scheme in place were less likely to experience dental caries than in areas without a scheme. It also found that children and young people in areas with a fluoridation scheme in place were less likely to be admitted to hospital to have teeth removed due to tooth decay than in areas without a scheme. These effects were seen at all levels of deprivation, but children and young people living in the most deprived areas benefitted the most. The findings of health monitoring reports are consistent with the view that water fluoridation is an effective and safe public health measure to reduce the prevalence and severity of tooth decay and reduce dental health inequalities. The next monitoring report will be produced in 2026.

There are well-established adverse associations between levels of fluoride in water and the prevalence of dental mottling, referred to as dental fluorosis. Severe fluorosis can cause brown staining and pitting of teeth but is generally seen in those countries with very high naturally occurring levels of fluoride in groundwater. These levels of fluoride are above those used in water fluoridation schemes and this proposal. There is a small risk of dental fluorosis from levels of fluoride used in schemes, but this is not the same in all areas. It can also affect people in non-fluoridated areas.

The government considers that the overall weight of evidence and authoritative reviews of a large body of relevant and suitable studies indicates that fluoride, at the levels permitted in drinking water, presents no risks to health.

Environmental impacts

The Environment Act 2021 places a duty to have 'due regard' to the environmental principles policy statement when developing policy. The Government has identified potential environmental effects of expanding community water fluoridation in the north east and used environmental principles to inform this consultation.

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in water and some foods. The amount of naturally occurring fluoride in water varies across the UK due to geological differences.

There may be environmental impacts from the introduction and operation of new fluoridation plants, as well as the wider supply chain - for example, increased

transport from delivery lorries. However, there is an existing framework of requirements to protect the environment and public health that would apply and are explained below. This proposal would be integrated into the existing framework helping to prevent or mitigate impacts.

The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016, as per WHO's recommendation, allow for up to 1.5 mg of fluoride to be present per litre of water, whether present naturally or as a result of water fluoridation. The Water Industry Act 1991 also sets out a requirement that the compounds used in the process must meet the relevant British standards.

In 2011, the European Commission Scientific Committee on Health and Environment Risk review concluded that fluoridation of drinking water is not expected to lead to unacceptable risks to the environment.

More recent research by Trinity College Dublin in collaboration with University College London, has quantified the environmental impact of water fluoridation and compared it to the environmental impact of other ways of increasing fluoride, such as fluoride varnish and toothbrushing programmes. The researchers found that water fluoridation had the lowest environmental impact of the 3 interventions.

Community water fluoridation reduces tooth decay. It is therefore expected to contribute to a reduction in the carbon footprint of dentistry. Analysis of the carbon footprint identified both patient and staff travel and resource intensive treatments such as fillings, replacement of extracted teeth and dental materials as a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

The main route for fluoride to enter the environment would be water going to sewage and then to wastewater treatment works. Based on the concentration that would be dosed in drinking water, releases of fluoride to the environment will not exceed the Environment Agency's non-statutory quality standard, which is set to protect aquatic life.

To assist water companies who dose supplies in line with agreements, the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) has published a 'Code of Practice on Technical Aspects of Fluoridation of Water Supplies 2021' (on the DWI Guidance and codes of practice page). This outlines principles and minimum expectations to be followed by water companies and licensed suppliers operating fluoridation schemes. Fluoride levels in drinking water supplies are also carefully monitored by water companies and this data is assessed monthly by the DWI so that they do not exceed safe levels.

The Government has considered currently available evidence suggesting minimal impact of the intervention, particularly when compared to other interventions that improve dental health. Further environmental screening would be considered further as part of any subsequent implementation.

Ethical arguments

Despite the evidence that water fluoridation is a safe and effective public health intervention for reducing tooth decay, some people disagree with adding fluoride

to drinking water. Some people hold the view that water fluoridation limits the rights of individual people.

Others make a counter argument that adding fluoride to public drinking water is the ethical thing to do because it prevents pain and suffering caused by tooth decay and because it can reduce inequalities in dental health. It is also particularly intended to improve health outcomes for more vulnerable groups, such as children or the elderly, who are not always able to make healthy food choices, maintain adequate tooth brushing or benefit from other targeted interventions. Decisions to introduce the intervention require a trade-off that balances personal preference with the ability to improve outcomes for the whole community.

Given the strong scientific evidence, the government considers that the ethical balance favours water fluoridation. This is due to the large potential health benefits, particularly for more vulnerable groups. Parliament has also confirmed that the Secretary of State can introduce water fluoridation schemes provided that specific steps are followed before they are implemented.

Impact assessments

A consultation stage impact assessment has been published alongside this document. This sets out the costs and benefits of expanding water fluoridation in the north east of England as proposed. It estimates the expected impact on reducing tooth decay, assesses the health benefit to individuals, cost savings to the NHS and improved productivity. It also considers the costs of implementation and the value for money of the proposal.

An equalities impact assessment has also been published.

This consultation seeks responses on whether there is further scientific evidence available to inform final impact assessments.

DECISION REQUIRED	For Members to consider the above information and decide whether they wish to take part and respond to this consultation.
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ITEM 9: TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED ADVERT FOR A SHORT-TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

As Members are aware, in agreeing its budget for financial year 2024/25 in January 2024, Members unanimously approved a fund of £15,000 towards assistance for the Clerk in supporting the functions and aims of the Parish Council.

Although originally envisaged to be administrative support, Members are aware that previous efforts to recruit at this level have been unsuccessful and the Council is presently investigating technical/ automated solutions to support the Clerk's work with minute taking (as one example).

The Council has previously expressed a desire to focus on acquiring external funding for projects within the City of Durham parish area. As such, it is recommended that this fund be used to finance a number of one-off, time-limited pieces of work on a contract basis.

The Parish Council has successfully been able to deliver on a number of projects on a similar contractual basis with external consultants; including the investigation into HMOs across the City, retail support for City centre businesses, the production of an evidence-base for an Article 4 Direction in Mount Oswald and a report into the distinction between planning/ licensing hours in premises across the City.

At a recent meeting of the Council's Personnel Committee and provided that Members are in agreement about the use of this funding, the Clerk has indicated that he feels that the Parish Council should focus on 3 particular areas for achieving external finance from this budget: a clean air project, heritage at risk and culture.

As part of a clean air project, the Environment Committee has recently discussed the proposal of revisiting the green roof bus shelters and has expressed a desire to look at delivering 5-6 such shelters in Gilesgate (Gilesgate bank), Lower Claypath and Elvet (Church Street). The total cost for such a project would likely range between £87,000 - £105,000.

It is hoped that this particular project could be delivered by a consultant within a budget of approximately £5,000 depending on their inclusive daily rate.

The delivery of such a project has been supported by the local Residents' Associations in these areas and would be a welcome and proactive step by the Parish Council in taking action on clean air in the city.

The Personnel Committee met earlier this month and have agreed that the below advert should be recommended to Full Council for approval as soon as possible.

DECISIONS REQUIRED	1) For Members to agree to the use of this budget for a short-term consultancy project, as set out in the above report. 2) If 1) is agreed, for Members to agree to the advert provided with this report and to ask the Clerk to advertise this accordingly.
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Advert for short-term consultancy contract

The City of Durham Parish Council is currently seeking bids to carry out a fundraising/ bid writing project within its community on a contractual arrangement.

About us

The City of Durham Parish Council is an ambitious, pro-active Council which works to deliver a wide range of projects and events, focusing on the living environment and community wellbeing.

The contract

Durham City currently has an air quality management area (AQMA) in place and the Parish Council is keen to be as proactive as possible on initiatives to improve the air quality in key parts of its parish area.

The Parish Council is presently looking to deliver a number of green-roofed bus shelters alongside other projects to improve the air quality in the City.

We are seeking bids from an experienced bid/ grant fundraising officer to work on a time-limited, contractual basis to support us in the delivery of this project.

If successful in this bid for contractual work with the Parish Council, you will be responsible for researching, writing, and submitting effective applications for funding. The successful candidate will have demonstrable experience working in fundraising, with success in drafting proposals, raising funds, and applying different research techniques in identifying funding opportunities.

Your excellent written and verbal skills will enable you to create compelling content to engage and influence partners and grant funding organisations.

Whilst this is a one-off and time-limited consultancy contract, the Parish Council hopes that future consultancy opportunities will be available for similar projects in the near future.

Key responsibilities as part of this contract

A non-exhaustive list of the key role responsibilities and duties to be carried out by the successful contractor.

- Writing, editing and formatting documents to create clear, concise and powerful bid and fundraising content.
- You will source and evaluate relevant tender and fundraising opportunities.
- Liaise with the Parish Council's Environment Committee, partners, and grant funding organisations to identify and bring to life successful funding bids.
- To draft financial costings for proposed bids.
- Use online tendering systems and portals to communicate with prospective grant funding organisations and submit bids.
- Proactively follow up relevant opportunities.
- Record and track bid progress.
- Consistently review the quality of your own work, proofreading, checking consistency and accuracy.

- To attend meetings and events as may be required in relation to this contractual role.
- To ensure compliance with the City of Durham Parish Council's Policies, Regulations and Procedures at all times.

Desired experience

- Knowledge of public sector procurement processes.
- Experience of writing successful bids.
- A solid educational background with well-developed literacy and numeracy skills.
- Experience of working alone and flexibly as part of a team.
- Excellent time management and organisational skills, able to work calmly and efficiently in a time sensitive environment.
- Excellent IT skills and experience of working with data systems.
- A personal drive to make positive change within a community.

All bids must include a timetable for delivery (including expected number of days for this project) as well as an inclusive daily rate. Payment terms can be negotiated.

All bids should be submitted to the Parish Clerk by **no later than 5pm on XX 2024** via email to parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

All bids must be supplemented by evidence of recent successful fundraising projects the contractor has undertaken.

It is hoped that funding may be acquired for the delivery of this project by no later than **XX 2024/25** but the Council is able to be flexible with this deadline.

Should you have any queries about the bid process, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Clerk Adam Shanley via email at parishclerk@cityofdurham-pc.gov.uk

ITEM 10: REPORT(S) FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Report by Councillor J Ashby on the meeting of the University's student housing management group held on 25th June 2024

1. The County Council's Housing Strategy has now been approved by Cabinet and recognises the particular nature of the housing market in and around Durham City and the need for affordable housing for students.
2. The case for an Additional Licensing Scheme was to be the subject of a report to the County Council's Cabinet in June but this has not yet occurred. There was to be a meeting with officers of the County Council later today. I do not know what, if any, progress was achieved.
3. The Durham Students Union has completed a survey of nearly 300 student tenants and recorded very many complaints, mainly about the state of the property and the responses of letting agents/landlords.
4. Work is on-going for the Do-it-Online reporting system to be more user-friendly, and for a student housing issues on-line hub. By the end of 2024 the aim is to add issues about mould etc to be raised on-line for non-licensed HMOs, which of course comprise 75% of the HMOs in the city.
5. The University presented finalised results of this year's intense analysis of student addresses. This analysis matches the University's records against the County Council's Class N Exemptions. A report will be made available soon. We can now be absolutely definite on the question of quantitative "need" that is required by County Durham Policy 16.2: there are more student beds than students, and the number of students is going to be stable from now on at around 21,500 so there is no case on quantitative grounds for additional student beds.