

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the Planning and Licensing Committee meeting held via Zoom at 12:00pm on Friday 18th October 2024

Present: Cllr G Holland (in the Chair), Cllr E Ashy, Cllr J Ashby, Cllr V Ashfield, Cllr C Lattin and Cllr S Walker.

Also present: Mr A Shanley (Parish Clerk) and Mr John Lowe and Mr Allan Gemmill (members of the public).

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillor N Brown. The Chair **accepted** that Councillor V Ashfield was attending the meeting as Councillor N Brown's substitute.

No further apologies were received.

2. To receive any declarations of interest from members.

Councillor J Ashby declared an interest in applications DM/23/01154/FPA and DM/23/01155/LB and took no part in the discussion or vote on these applications.

3. To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th October 2024 were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

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

Mr John Lowe advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items.

Mr Allan Gemmill advised that he was attending the meeting with a general interest in all Agenda items.

Mr Allan Gemmill also highlighted the issues associated with application DM/24/02571/TPO in that the developer appears to have carried out these works in advance of consent being granted. Mr Gemmill asked if the Parish Council had taken any action on this. The Clerk advised that, whilst he was awaiting a response to his initial email to officers on this matter, the Committee had reviewed this and agreed that, as the works amounted to pruning only – rather than more serious action such as felling of the tree – the Committee had **agreed** to simply note this issue.

Mr Allan Gemmill also highlighted the issues associated with 41 Fieldhouse Lane. Mr Gemmill advised that the property appears to have been let to students in advance of the pre-occupation planning conditions being discharged. The Committee **agreed** to seek formal enforcement action on this matter.

5. Consultation on the Durham City Vision and Strategic Place Plan (SPP).

The Clerk introduced the ongoing consultation for updating the Vision 2020 plan, emphasizing the council's role in representing local priorities. Council members noted the importance of establishing a clear vision for the city centre that reflects specific local needs and projects rather than generic goals.

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of direct outreach from consultants to the parish council. Councillors Susan Walker and Victoria Ashfield agreed to follow up with consultants to ensure the council's involvement in the consultation process, emphasising the council's role as the voice of the city.

Members discussed options for submitting feedback, considering both a full council response and input from relevant committees (Environment and Business). A deadline of November was highlighted for the council's response.

Councillor John Ashby suggested a dedicated workshop to define a cohesive council response and also highlighted the extensive work carried out as part of the Looking Forwards document, which sat alongside the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.

Members also discussed holding a workshop, potentially during the Council's upcoming planning away day.

6. Consultation on the draft Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan.

The Clerk commended Lee Hall's detailed work on the Conservation Area Management Plan, noting successful changes, particularly retaining St. John's Road within the Conservation Area. The Clerk also highlighted collaborative input from council members and volunteers, with full support expressed by the council for the document's adoption.

Councillor J Ashby shared feedback from a recent AAP presentation by Lee Hall, explaining the new divisions within Durham's conservation area, each with unique preservation requirements. Councillor J Ashby noted the public interest in addressing inappropriate plastic window replacements, with policies in place to preserve historic features.

Members also discussed the removal of the 20th Century housing estate at the Sands as part of the proposals and the importance of preserving the Sands' green features such as trees and green spaces. Councillor J Ashby noted the statutory protections for the area, while Adam Shanley suggested educating residents about the process for obtaining Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect trees if the area is excluded from the conservation area boundary. It was agreed that the Environment Committee should pursue this matter further.

7. Proposed letter to DCC regarding the introduction of geothermal energy capabilities at Aykley Heads Innovation District.

The Committee took the opportunity to thank Durham University for its recent presentation to Members on the proposed new Data Centre as part of Plot D in the Aykley Heads Innovation District.

Members who attended this session expressed strong support for this initiative at this site but stressed the need for a fully-sustainable development in order to deliver on both the economic and environmental aims of the Aykley Heads Innovation District.

The Committee considered a proposal to write directly to Durham County Council to seek assurances regarding the capture and re-use of the excess heat energy from the Data Centre. However, it was **agreed** that the Committee should await sight of the formal application before deciding on this aspect of the proposal.

8. Matters arising:

(a) To approve the draft response(s) to the following planning and/ or licensing application(s)/ matter(s):

Appeal for DM/24/00402/FPA | Change of use of ground floor office (E) to a 2-bedroom flat (C3) for student accommodation including replacement of 1no window for 1no door and window to rear. The Committee **approved** the response to this appeal.

DM/24/02174/FPA | Conversion and subdivision of dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) with erection of single storey rear extension to form 2 No. apartments (Use Class C3) (description amended). The Committee **approved** the response to this application.

Letter to Planning Development Manager re: planning portal issues. The Committee thanked Councillor J Ashby for his letter and **agreed** that sections of its content should be used to follow up on the previous letter to the Planning Development Manager regarding the issues associated with the planning portal administration.

(b) To consider the latest update(s) on the following planning and/ or licensing application(s):

DM/23/01154/FPA and DM/23/01155/LB | Single storey rear extension (revised description). The Committee considered the amendments to the original proposals and **agreed** to note these applications without any further comments or objections.

9. To consider the following new planning applications in the parish area:

a) To note:

DM/24/02184/FPA | Erection of two-storey extension to the rear of the existing Miners Hall to accommodate toilets, vertical circulation space and associated alterations to the rear of the host building. It was **agreed** to note this application.

DM/24/02683/LB | Reconfiguration to the internal layout and minor external alterations to St. Chad's College. It was **agreed** to note this application.

DM/24/02712/FPA | Replace 1no window with 1no door to front. It was **agreed** to note this application.

DM/24/02677/TPO | T1. Beech - fell|2 Almoners Barn Durham DH1 3TZ. It was **agreed** to note this application.

DM/24/02686/TPO | Pruning of sycamore maple tree by 5m|33 Dalton Crescent Nevilles Cross Durham DH1 4FB. It was **agreed** to note this application.

b) To discuss:

DM/24/02655/FPA and DM/24/02656/LB |Change of use of a restaurant (Use Class E) to a small house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4) and associated internal alterations. It was **agreed** to object to the FPA application. Councillor G Holland **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

DM/24/02710/FPA | Full planning application for the partial demolition, refurbishment and retention of the existing college buildings, and construction of a new two-storey teaching block and ancillary buildings (hay barn, sheep shed, grain store and bio-secure boot wash) with associated external works, substation, landscaping and access. It was **agreed** to defer a decision on this application until a site visit could be arranged to look over the plans in more detail. The Clerk **agreed** to arrange a site visit accordingly.

DM/24/02734/AD | Installation of 1no. illuminated fascia sign | Nando's Unit 5 Freemans Place Durham DH1 1SQ. It was **agreed** to object to this application. The Clerk **agreed** to draft the response to this application.

10. Dates of future meeting(s) of this Committee:

1st November 2024
15th November 2024
29th November 2024

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

Signed,

G. Holland

Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council Planning and Licensing Committee
(1st November 2024)