CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the City of Durham Parish Council's Planning and Licensing

Committee meeting held on Monday 28th September 2026 at 11:00am via Zoom.

Present: Cllr L Brown (in the Chair), Cllr G Holland, Cllr R Handy, Cllr C Lattin, Cllr P Layton and Cllr R Cornwell.

Also present: Mr A Shanley (Parish Clerk), Mr John Ashby and Mr Francis Whalley (members of the public).

1. **Welcome and apologies**

No apologies were received. All members of the Committee were present.

2. **To receive any declarations of interest from members**

None received.

3. **To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2026 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 Ashby advised that he was attending with a particular interest in Agenda items 5, 6 and 7.

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

5. **To discuss the follow-up response from the Chief Fire Officer on HMO fire safety**

The Clerk reported that the Chief Fire Officer had referred the Parish Council's concerns to the relevant team at Durham County Council. Members expressed disappointment that the response had not addressed the full extent of the concerns raised, which included 21 examples of potential fire safety deficiencies.

The Clerk reported on Councillor Cornwell's presentation to Durham University's annual housing meeting and the University's public support for the Parish Council's efforts to improve fire safety. Members noted continuing misunderstanding amongst landlords of the distinction between mandatory HMO licensing and the additional licensing scheme sought by the Parish Council.

The Committee placed on record its thanks to Mr Allan Gemmill and Councillor Cornwell for their considerable work on this matter.

Following discussion, it was agreed to issue a press release, initially to Palatinate, to raise awareness of HMO fire safety and provide practical advice to students. The Chair agreed to draft this. Members supported referring identified fire safety

deficiencies to Environmental Health for urgent inspection, alongside representations on the relevant planning applications.

Mr John Ashby agreed to contact the President of Durham Students' Union to seek the inclusion of fire safety advice in its campaigning and housing hub work. The Clerk also reported that no acknowledgement had been received from the Cabinet member to the Parish Council's earlier correspondence on this matter.

6. To discuss forward planning for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

The Clerk reminded Members that the establishment, membership and terms of reference of the Working Group had been agreed. The review would need to align with the strategic policies of the new County Durham Plan, for which adoption was anticipated in 2029.

The Clerk reported that over 90 responses had been received to the Parish Council's public consultation. Representing residents on planning matters and upholding the Neighbourhood Plan were identified as a high priority, with protection of the Green Belt and studentification prominent concerns.

It was agreed to arrange an inaugural meeting towards the end of October. The Clerk would circulate possible dates to members of the Working Group, with the Muniments Room at Redhills suggested as a suitable venue. The first meeting would consider the scope of the review, further planning-specific consultation and arrangements for decision-making. Regular reports to this Committee were proposed.

It was further agreed to invite Durham Students' Union to nominate a representative to the Working Group.

Members expressed concern about changes to planning and appeal procedures and the implications for local representation. The potential future development of the Durham High School site was discussed, including its Green Belt location, community use and playing fields. No application for the site was before the Committee.

7. To consider DCC's Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement

The Clerk reported that Durham County Council could demonstrate a housing land supply of 3.92 years. Members expressed concern about the delay in bringing forward the 1,550 homes at Sniperley and the resulting risk of speculative development and additional pressure on infrastructure. Councillor Cornwell also drew attention to a substantial approved development in the Newton Aycliffe area which had not been delivered.

The Clerk confirmed that, in accordance with the earlier decision of Full Council, a draft letter to Mary Foy MP would be circulated to Members for approval, drawing attention to the shortfall and its implications.

8. Matters arising:

To approve the responses to the following planning/ licensing application(s)/ appeal(s):

DM/26/01812/FPA | First floor rear extension over existing kitchen offshoot to create 2no shower rooms with associated internal alterations to existing C4 HMO | 6 High Wood Terrace Durham DH1 3DS. The Committee considered the further response in light of the old licence supplied by the applicant. Members noted that the City of Durham Trust's submission addressed the points the Parish Council wished to raise and commended the work undertaken. The outcome of the application would be awaited.

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

a) To note:

DM/26/02046/FPA and DM/26/02047/LB |Internal structural and non-structural alterations with new shop front|76 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02204/AD | 1no externally illuminated hanging sign, 1no non-illuminated fascia sign, 2no non-illuminated poster signs, 1no internally illuminated brass sign, 3no LED floodlights and retention of 1no Lantern | The Bridge 39 - 40 North Road Durham DH1 4SE. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02311/LB | Targeted intrusive investigations to the Grade II* listed Tythe Barn (No. 1120616) and Grade II listed, Barns West (Officers Club (No. 1323279)), Barns east (Dojo (No. 1323279)), Link Building (No. 1323279) and the courtyard wall | H M Prison Durham 19B Old Elvet Durham DH1 3HU. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02283/FPA | Rear first floor extension and internal alterations | Whitworth House 7 Percy Terrace Durham DH1 4DY. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02315/TPO | H1 - 9 conifer trees fell to ground level, T1 - Elm fell to ground level, T2 Oak - reduce two branches by 2.5m, T3 Sycamore - reduce overhang to fence by 2m, T4 Sycamore - remove tree to ground level, T5 Sycamore - reduce overhang to fence by 2m, T6 Sycamore - reduce overhang to fence by 2m and T7 Poplar - reduce back to previous pruning cuts and points | Highgate House Flass Vale Durham DH1 4BN. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02319/TPO | Works to protected trees (PN1-319) as outlined in the 'Health and Condition Tree Report' dated 2nd September 2026 | 5 Almoners Barn Durham DH1 3TZ. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02344/FPA | Alterations to existing shopfront comprising re-decoration, replacement timber doors and windows with entrance ramp and installation of

internal security shutter | Faru 29 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RD. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02345/AD | 1no externally illuminated fascia sign and 1no externally illuminated projecting sign | Faru 29 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RD. It was agreed to note this application.

DM/26/02376/FPA | Change of use of vacant catering space (Use Class F1 [a]) to a retail unit (Use Class E [a]), including alterations to the elevation to incorporate the installation of an external door and louvres to be used as a customer entrance | Durham University Teaching And Learning Centre South Road Durham DH1 3LS. It was agreed to note this application. Members welcomed the proposed retail provision and noted that Elvet Residents' Association had been informed.

DM/26/02465/FPA | Replacement front porch and installation of conservation velux window to front roof slope with brick planters, raised patio and shed to rear garden | 22 Crossgate Peth Durham DH1 4PZ. It was agreed to note this application.

b) To discuss:

DM/26/02326/FPA | Replacement external balustrading and fenestration to front and rear elevations of host dwelling | 34 Albert Street Durham DH1 4RJ. Members considered the potential effect on the character of the terrace and noted the conservation officer's view that the proposals were acceptable, subject to further detailed window drawings. Councillor Holland agreed to speak to the occupiers about the proposals. It was agreed to leave the application as it stood, with the possibility of further consideration if clearer plans became available.

DM/26/02381/CEU | Certificate of Lawfulness for use of property as a Class C4 House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) | 4 Cross View Terrace Durham DH1 4JY. Members noted the property's longstanding use as student accommodation but emphasised the importance of supporting evidence being available on the planning portal. The Clerk referred to the declaration that sworn testimony had been supplied. It was agreed to leave determination of the application to Durham County Council.

10. To consider the following new licensing applications in the parish area:

Application for the grant of a premises licence by Mrs Sneha Laxmi Vundyala for St News Durham, 71C North Road, Durham DH1 4SQ, for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises Monday to Sunday, 9:00am to 10:00pm.

Members discussed the proposed premises layout and the intended opening of the shop until 3:00am, beyond the proposed hours for alcohol sales. Concern was expressed about the positioning of alcohol close to the entrance and the need to secure alcohol after 10:00pm, in the interests of preventing crime and disorder.

The Clerk reported that he had discussed the application with the police. It was agreed to await their representation and reflect the relevant concerns in the Parish Council's response, including the positioning and security of alcohol. Members also highlighted the importance of licensing enforcement monitoring the premises.

The Committee noted that the issues relating to Faru appeared to have been resolved following submission of the planning application, and that the anticipated licensing hearing might therefore be cancelled.

11. Any other business

Student accommodation. Members discussed information presented at the University's annual housing meeting, including growth in student numbers, temporary loss of accommodation and the limited margin between available beds and demand. The figures remained provisional pending the University's December census. Members also discussed the temporary closure of Dun Holm House for cladding replacement.

The Clerk raised the need to establish whether the Hallgarth Street student accommodation development was operating and whether the provision of adapted accommodation required by its planning condition was being fulfilled. The Chair agreed to contact Hannah at Durham University for clarification. The Clerk would pursue the matter with planning enforcement if necessary.

Request for contact details. The Clerk reported a request from a member of the public seeking contact with a former planning officer. Members supported withholding personal contact information and suggested explaining that the Parish Council held no records inherited from the former City Council.

HMO information. Councillor Cornwell reported that Durham County Council had refused his Freedom of Information request for a spreadsheet of HMO percentages by postcode in DH1 on grounds of personal information. He had challenged the refusal and would consider referral to the Information Commissioner if necessary. The Chair indicated that she would also request the information.

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

12th October 2026 – 11:00am

26th October 2026 – 11:00am

9th November 2026 – 11:00am

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

Signed,

Liz Brown

Chair of the Parish Council's Planning and Licensing Committee

12th October 2026