

City of Durham Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the City of Durham Parish Council held on Wednesday 22nd October 2025 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**), L Brown, G Bignardi, T Cleaver, R Cornwell, D Freeman, R Handy, G Holland, C Lattin, F Robinson, E Scott and L Wilson.

Also present: Parish Clerk Adam Shanley and 4 members of the public.

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

Apologies were received and **accepted** from Councillors V Ashfield, E Hopgood and P Layton.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September were unanimously **agreed** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Matthew Phillips addressed the Parish Council, presenting a statement concerning the ongoing clean air challenges in the Elvet area. Mr Phillips highlighted the long-standing and serious air quality issues affecting Church Street, noting that the street has remained an Air Quality Management Area for over eleven years and continues to experience persistently high nitrogen dioxide levels.

Mr Phillips referred to the evidence that 59% of nitrogen oxide emissions on Church Street arise from bus traffic and emphasised that previous interventions had not delivered meaningful improvements.

Mr Phillips drew Members' attention to the proposals advanced by the Elvet Clean Air Group, including the introduction of zero-emission buses, consideration of a congestion charging zone, and measures to reduce student car usage. He highlighted the health risks associated with current pollution levels, noting the proximity of a primary school and the high volume of pedestrians using Church Street daily.

Mr Phillips further referenced the recent regional investment in zero-emission buses through the ZEBRA 2 programme and reiterated the critical need for Church Street to be prioritised in future allocations.

Mr Phillips urged the Parish Council to take further action and to continue lobbying all relevant bodies, including the North East Mayor, Durham County Council and Durham University, to address the clean air issues in Elvet without delay. He stressed the importance of coordinated and decisive action to safeguard public health and improve the environment for residents, schoolchildren and students. He also encouraged the Parish Council to ensure full consideration of all available measures that could reduce emissions and congestion within the area.

Mr Phillips concluded by expressing the hope that the Parish Council would demonstrate leadership on the matter and work collaboratively with community groups and statutory bodies to secure meaningful improvements in air quality across Elvet.

The Chair thanked Mr Phillips for his statement.

5. COMMITTEE UPDATES

• Planning and Licensing Committee

Councillor G Holland presented the minutes from the Planning Committee meetings held on 8th and 19th September 2025. There were no queries from Members on these minutes.

• Environment Committee

Councillor C Lattin presented the minutes from the Environment Committee meeting held on 9th September 2025. There being no queries from Members, Councillor C Lattin moved on to Committee reports.

Proposal for a new heritage blue plaque dedicated to former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam at Trevelyan College

Councillor C Lattin presented a report concerning a proposal for the installation of a heritage blue plaque at Trevelyan College, Durham University, in commemoration of The Rt Hon Dr Marjorie "Mo" Mowlam, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and alumna of the University.

The report, submitted by the Durham Women's Banner Group, sought to recognise Dr Mowlam's distinguished public service and her strong historical associations with the City of Durham. It was noted that the year 2025 marks the twentieth anniversary of Dr Mowlam's passing, thereby meeting the qualifying period for such an honour.

Councillor C Lattin outlined the purpose of the Parish Council's blue plaque initiative, which aims to celebrate individuals who have significantly influenced the city's history, culture, and society, with a particular emphasis on women whose contributions have shaped Durham. Within this context, Dr Mowlam was identified as an exemplary candidate, given her pioneering political achievements, her formative years spent at Trevelyan College, and her enduring legacy both nationally and internationally.

The Council was informed that Dr Mowlam's time at Durham University included studies in Sociology and Anthropology, active involvement in student political life, and early leadership roles which foreshadowed her later career in public service. Trevelyan College already honours her connection through a named room and a commemorative bust displayed within the college.

Councillor C Lattin further reported on Dr Mowlam's national significance, particularly her central role in the Northern Ireland peace process as Secretary of State between 1997 and 1999, culminating in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Her approach to public life, characterised by integrity, empathy, and courage, was highlighted as part of the justification for formal recognition within the Parish Council's heritage programme.

The proposed location for the plaque is Trevelyan College, subject to the necessary permissions from both the College and Dr Mowlam's surviving relatives. The Clerk has traced contact details for Dr Mowlam's sister and will make contact should the proposal proceed. It was noted that the plaque wording would be agreed with the family. An unveiling event was proposed for International Women's Day on 8 March 2026, reflecting the wider significance of Dr Mowlam's achievements.

The report set out the financial considerations for the project. The cost of the plaque is £707.09 including VAT, and Trevelyan College would be asked to assume long-term ownership and maintenance responsibilities. The Parish Council would fund a small reception following the unveiling and work with the College on arrangements and potential shared costs.

Councillors D Freeman and F Robinson expressed their support for this proposal and thanked Councillor C Lattin and the Environment Committee for this paper.

Members unanimously **approved** (in principle) the proposal for the blue plaque, subject to successful liaison with Trevelyan College and Dr Mowlam's relatives to secure the necessary permissions

Members also unanimously **agreed** the associated expenditure for both the plaque and the unveiling reception.

Follow-up report from the Elvet Clean Air group on clean air initiatives for the Elvet Area

Councillor C Lattin presented the report from the Elvet Clean Air Group on clean air initiatives for the Elvet area. Councillor C Lattin outlined the long-standing air

quality issues affecting Church Street, which has been designated an Air Quality Management Area for over eleven years and continues to experience persistently high nitrogen dioxide levels, largely attributable to emissions from bus services.

The proposals submitted by the Elvet Clean Air Group were presented to Members, including the prioritisation of zero-emission buses on the Church Street corridor, the creation of a congestion charging zone in Elvet as well as measures aimed at reducing student car usage.

Councillor C. Lattin highlighted that the draft Air Quality Action Plan identifies that 59% of nitrogen oxide emissions on Church Street are caused by bus emissions.

Councillor C Lattin highlighted the previous lobbying undertaken by the Parish Council to the North East Mayor requesting prioritisation of Church Street for zero-emission bus investment, and to the Mayor's response acknowledging the concerns and confirming that this request would be considered in future funding allocations.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he felt that the principal and immediate focus of the Parish Council should continue to be the introduction of zero-emission buses on all routes serving Church Street, recognising this as the most effective intervention within the Council's influence to reduce pollution levels.

Councillor D Freeman advised that he could not support two of the proposals submitted by the Elvet Clean Air Group; namely the introduction of an Elvet congestion charging zone and measures aimed at reducing student car usage through local restrictions.

Members expressed concern that a congestion charging zone could displace traffic onto already congested routes, including the A167, and noted that responsibility for reducing student car use rests primarily with Durham University.

Councillor E Scott also proposed that the Parish Council should write directly to the relevant Cabinet Member at Durham County Council seeking clarity on which actions within the *Climate Emergency Response Plan 2024–2027* are scheduled for imminent progression, with specific reference to measures relating to air quality and sustainable transport.

Members unanimously **agreed** to continue lobbying of the North East Mayor to prioritise the introduction of zero-emission buses on all routes serving Church Street.

Members also unanimously **agreed** to write to the relevant Cabinet Member at Durham County Council seeking clarity on imminent actions within the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2024–2027.

Members also unanimously **agreed** not to progress the proposals for a) an Elvet congestion charging zone and b) student car use reduction measures through local restrictions.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATES

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters arising since the Full Parish Council meeting on 22nd October 2025 as follows:

The Chair expressed thanks to the volunteers who have recently worked with the Parish Council to enhance the local environment. The Chair noted that tens of thousands of bulbs have been distributed across the parish and commended the Environment Committee for its efforts. It was further reported that additional fruit trees will be provided across the area in the coming weeks.

The Chair expressed disappointment regarding the announcement that the current year's Durham Lumiere event will be the final one, noting the event's significant cultural and economic contribution to both the City and County. The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring that investment previously directed to Lumiere is retained for the benefit of the City.

The Chair informed Members that earlier in the month he had addressed the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Policy Committee concerning the Parish Council's campaign to amend national legislation so that public health becomes an objective within the Licensing Act 2003. The Chair reported that NALC is supporting the campaign and that Members of Parliament Luke Akehurst and Mary Kelly Foy have agreed to raise the matter with the Deputy Prime Minister.

Members were reminded that the heritage blue plaque unveiling for former Crossgate Councillor Sam Green will take place on 16 November. The Chair encouraged Members to attend and extended thanks to Councillor Roger Cornwell, Jean Rogers, and Professor Simon Forrest for their roles in hosting the event and reception. The Chair highlighted Sam Green's historic achievement as the first openly gay councillor elected in Britain.

The Chair further reminded Members that the annual Remembrance Sunday service and parade will take place on 9 November 2025. Members intending to participate were asked to notify the Clerk and provide height details to assist with robe arrangements. The Chair expressed appreciation to the Clerk, Councillor Elizabeth Scott, and volunteers for their work in preparation for the event.

The Chair reported that a joint drop-in consultation event regarding the first phase of the new World Heritage Site Management Plan will be held on 4 November at 6pm in the Town Hall. The Chair encouraged residents to participate, emphasising the importance of the World Heritage Site to the identity and heritage of Durham.

The Chair extended thanks to Councillor Elizabeth Scott for her work with Durham University's estates team in seeking a resolution to ongoing power and water supply issues affecting St Leonard's Boat Club. A positive meeting had been held with the University's Director of Estates and Facilities, and a solution is expected to be progressed. The Chair noted that the Parish Council had previously awarded a grant to support this work.

Finally, the Chair congratulated the Clerk, Adam, on being named a finalist in the County Durham Together Awards in the Public Service Award category. The

awards ceremony will take place on 4th December at Hardwick Hall Hotel, and Members conveyed their best wishes.

7. COMPLETION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25

The Clerk reminded Members that each year the Parish Council undergoes two sets of audits - one internal audit and one external audit. These audits are a legal requirement which assess the Parish Council's policies, standing orders, financial regulations, VAT returns, cashbook, bank statements, minutes, website and more to ensure good governance and compliance.

Earlier this year, the Internal Auditor carried out a review of the Parish Council's workings and provided a positive report, as provided to Members. Mazars LLP have now completed their external audit for the year ended 31st March 2025 and have certified the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The Clerk advised that no issues have been identified in the external audit review. As such, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what the Parish Council must do at the conclusion of this audit.

Members thanked the Clerk for his work on this audit and unanimously **agreed** to note the conclusion of the external audit for 2024/25 and to instruct the Clerk to take all appropriate action, as set out in the report provided.

8. STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROPOSALS AFFECTING PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

The Chair provided a brief update on Durham County Council's changes to its Procedure for Member Code of Conduct Complaints. Members were informed that the most significant reform is the creation of a Standards Assessment Board (SAB), which would replace the Monitoring Officer as the body responsible for the initial assessment of complaints. This new sub-committee would consist of elected members and operate in private session.

The Chair reported that the County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) has expressed concern that shifting decision-making from an independent officer to elected members risks introducing political influence into what has traditionally been an impartial process. The Chair advised that CDALC has invited parish and town councils to indicate whether they support retaining the current system or the proposed transfer of responsibilities, with early indications showing a preference for maintaining the Monitoring Officer's role.

The Chair noted that other procedural amendments include making informal resolution mandatory and refining investigation rules, but emphasised that the central issue is the governance impact of the SAB proposal.

9. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2026/27 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026/27-2029/30

The Chair reported that Durham County Council is undertaking a public consultation on its draft budget proposals and financial planning assumptions for the financial year commencing April 2026, together with its medium-term financial outlook to 2029/30. The purpose of the consultation is to align future budget

planning with the Council's priorities and to support openness and engagement with residents and stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The Chair advised that the consultation is open to residents, stakeholders and other interested parties who wish to provide comments, suggestions or concerns regarding the proposals.

The Chair further reminded Members that a special meeting of the Parish Council's Finance Committee had been held earlier in October to consider the proposals, noting that the information provided by the County Council is presented at a high-level and does not include detailed figures for individual budget areas.

Councillor R Cornwell expressed a particular concern relating to the potential withdrawal of 100% Council tax relief for some of County Durham's poorest residents.

Councillor L Wilson also expressed his concerns at the proposal to charge for transport for learning disability day services and highlighted his professional work on this service.

Members carefully considered each of the proposals as part of the County Council's budget for 2026/27 and medium-term financial plan and unanimously **agreed** the following response to this consultation:

In present circumstance, this is clearly a difficult consultation to undertake. The City of Durham Parish Council recognises that the factors which have led to this consultation are largely beyond the control of the County Council which include the increasing demand pressures in statutory social care, significant cuts to local Government funding from Central Government and increasing costs to deliver these services.

The outcome of this consultation remains uncertain given recent public commitments by the present Administration with the introduction of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and the obscure nature of their involvement with the Medium-Term Financial Plan. There is currently no publicly available information about who this organisation is or its source, what their track record is, or the specific scope and timeframe of their work in auditing the books and delivering the Administration's desired efficiencies. Furthermore, it is unclear how DOGE intends to access and handle highly confidential financial and organisational information held by the County Council. This lack of transparency raises legitimate concerns about governance, accountability and data security within this Medium-Term Financial Plan.

We will address each aspect of this consultation in turn.

Central Government funding

The fact that Durham County Council has had to achieve £288 million in savings since 2010, whilst also maintaining frontline statutory services, which for too many of our residents are life and death services, is astonishing and it is to the enormous

credit of every member of Durham County Council's workforce that our frontline services have been retained so effectively and with such dedication to date.

In that context, the City of Durham Parish Council also applauds the Government's ambition through the Fair Funding Review 2.0 to modernise the approach to distributing central Government funding to local authorities, most notably by reducing the number of Relative Needs Formulae from 15 to 9, introducing a robust Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) to account for labour, property, accessibility and remoteness costs as well as applying a "notional" or assumed Council Tax level to equalise resource capacity across authorities.

Crucially, the Government proposals appear to suggest that deprivation (via the Index of Multiple Deprivation) would be embedded as a key driver in the Foundation Formula, ensuring that areas with concentrated social and economic disadvantage have their needs better recognised.

County Durham already includes some of the most deprived communities in England, with their higher demand for social care, children's services, homelessness support, and home-to-school transport subsidy. As such, we join with you in recognising how essential it will be that any new funding regime fully reflects these pressures rather than assuming a uniform "average" service demand.

Accordingly, we want to reassure Durham County Council colleagues that the City of Durham Parish Council is a proactive and collaborative partner in lobbying central Government for a fairer settlement, due to be announced in December 2025. We believe that it is essential that these new funding formulas and cost adjustments recognise County Durham's high levels of deprivation and service demand.

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for working age people

Durham County Council has long shown itself to be a compassionate authority, whether through the retention of part of the LCTRS grant paid to Parish and Town Councils or, as one of only a few remaining local authorities in the country to do so, the provision of support offered to the most vulnerable households in our county through Council Tax discounts.

Earlier this year, Durham County Council consulted on proposed changes to the LCTRS and it remains our firmly held position that Option 1A (the introduction of a simplified, income-banded LCTRS that retains the availability of up to 100 per cent support for eligible working-age residents), as proposed in that consultation is our preferred option. The Parish Council would not support any other changes to this support.

Whilst the financial modelling showed that Option 1A is effectively cost neutral in terms of overall scheme expenditure, it would still deliver an estimated £131,000+ in administrative savings through reduced recalculations and a reduced staffing requirement.

The Parish Council is particularly mindful of the local context that the consultation specifically highlighted in the Equality Impact Assessment that 44.7 per cent of current claimants have a disability or are part of a household where disability-related benefits are in payment, and over 62 per cent of claimants are women. Option 1a provides these residents with that continuity of support and removes the risk of regressive changes that could disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups. Similarly, it is noted that the largest proportion of LCTR claims in the County are located in areas of high deprivation and therefore any reduction in support would be felt most acutely in those communities already facing entrenched disadvantage.

Increases to Council tax / changes to Council tax base/ Council tax premium

The level of financial risk to which Durham County Council is presently exposed is deeply concerning. The Local Authority approved its 2025/26 budget on 19th February 2025 and used £3.503 million from reserves to balance the budget in 2025/26 and now begins the budget planning for 2026/27 with a £3.503 million deficit to address.

As the consultation highlights, the County Council also faces a £71.019 million funding gap between 2026-2030 without council tax increases.

Moreover, the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP 16) assumes general inflation at 3% in 2026/27 and 2.1% in subsequent years, with pay awards forecast at 3% then 2% per annum, and the National Living Wage rising by 5% in 2026/27 and 4% annually thereafter. These are prudent assumptions. Yet even they are likely to prove conservative if current CPI trends (3.8% as of July 2025) persist. In this context, proposing or maintaining a Council Tax freeze would be highly irresponsible and financially unsustainable. A freeze would erode the Council's real-term spending power just as inflation, wage growth, and social care demand intensifies, forcing deeper cuts to essential and statutory services or the depletion of reserves that are already under strain.

Whilst the City of Durham Parish Council supports efforts to minimise the tax burden on residents during this cost-of-living crisis, it also recognises that a realistic and sustainable fiscal strategy, supported by fairer national funding, is vital to protect frontline services and the most vulnerable communities across our County. We therefore cannot see how the proposed Council tax freeze is in any way responsible or deliverable in this current climate.

The MTFP 16 also assumes that the Council Tax base will increase by approximately 0.5% per year over the plan period which is equivalent to an additional revenue of around £2 million in 2026/27 and £1.5 million in each of the following years. However, it is unclear whether this assumed growth is based on current Local Plan housing targets, the actual rate at which homes are being built in County Durham or on new housing targets announced by the Government earlier this year.

The City of Durham Parish Council fully supports Durham County Council's approach to applying and strengthening the Council Tax premiums on empty and second homes. These measures are both fair and necessary, encouraging the better use of existing housing stock while generating modest but valuable revenue at a time of acute financial pressure.

The introduction of a 100% premium on second homes from April 2025 and the earlier application of empty property premiums after 12 months of vacancy are consistent with national policy and help to reduce the number of properties standing empty.

The planned review of the discretionary relief scheme is also welcome, provided that genuine cases, such as homes in probate or under active renovation, continue to receive appropriate flexibility.

Raising additional income

The City of Durham Parish Council is very concerned about the proposed introduction of a £2.00 per journey (£4.00 return) charge for transport for learning disability day services. This is expected to generate a mere £13,500 in annual savings from 2026/27 and cannot be supported.

Whilst the stated aim of harmonising charging arrangements across adult social care transport services is understood, this measure would deliver only a marginal financial benefit within a broader savings requirement exceeding (in the event of no Council tax increase) £70 million, yet could have a disproportionate impact on some of the county's most vulnerable residents. The absence of a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at this stage is particularly worrying, as there is a clear need to evaluate the affordability of such charges and their potential impact on service access, independence and inclusion for adults with learning disabilities and their carers.

We therefore urge the County Council to pause implementation of this proposal until a full EIA is undertaken and published and to ensure that any future charging policy for Learning Disability Transport is founded on fairness, affordability and genuine consultation with affected service users.

Whilst the Parish Council broadly supports all of the proposed other income raising measures detailed within this consultation, a long-term strategy for how Durham County Council manages and/or retains its 850+ building assets across the county is clearly missing from these proposals and that absence must be remedied.

The City of Durham Parish Council notes that, whereas the MTFP 16 references the Council's extensive property portfolio and identifies limited savings from office accommodation changes, it does not present a coherent or transparent strategy for managing or rationalising the Council's 850-plus building assets across County Durham. This should be an urgent priority for this new Administration to identify an opportunity for both generating further income as well as potentially dealing with other priority issues such as addressing the housing crisis in our county. As

of January 2023, 10,271 residents were on a waiting list for a social house with those in Band 1 waiting on average 227 days (FOI response ref: 5796513).

It is simply not acceptable to have assets in our parish alone such as Hopper House (albeit this is currently showing as now under offer), the CAP and other office space at Clayport library, the former toilet block at Elvet Waterside or the units at Fowler's Yard sitting vacant for extended periods of time, with seemingly no plan for what to do with these buildings.

It is therefore essential that the County Council has a clear, evidence-based asset management plan to ensure that every building is being used efficiently, maintained sustainably, and aligned with the Council's own service priorities. Without such a strategy, there is a risk that valuable assets may remain underutilised or that future maintenance liabilities will continue to grow unchecked. The Parish Council would therefore urge Durham County Council to publish, alongside the next iteration of the MTFP, a comprehensive estates and asset management strategy setting out how and where the Council intends to review, retain, dispose of, or repurpose its property assets in support of long-term financial resilience.

Savings and income generation

County Durham residents will note that the MTFP provides a one-off £1.5 million uplift to the energy budget in 2026/27 to absorb higher utility costs for Council buildings. This is listed as a budget pressure within the overall forecast of £117.8 million in cost increases over the MTFP period and no further growth in energy budgets is assumed in later years, implying an expectation that energy prices will stabilise after 2026/27 — though this is noted as a risk assumption.

However, the City of Durham Parish Council is concerned at the lack of any detailed long-term energy or carbon management strategy within the MTFP and the apparent lack of any forward plan for further investment in energy efficiency or renewable energy generation across the Council's estate.

This short-term approach is fiscally and environmentally irresponsible, with the Local Authority effectively turning its back on the climate crisis at a time when sustainable investment could deliver both long-term savings and new income streams.

Durham County Council has already demonstrated the value of such investment: the Morrison Busty Depot, a flagship low-carbon site, showcases how renewable power, electric vehicle infrastructure and heat-pump technology can reduce costs as well saving approximately 500 tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

Similarly, the Council's own Climate Emergency Response Plan 2024–2027 highlights that its renewable energy installations generated over two and a half million kWh of electricity in the past year—cutting bills and providing over £200,000 in income for the Council.

Moreover, the Council's Street Light LED Replacement Programme has already saved over £5.5 million in avoided energy costs and will continue to deliver significant annual savings.

The Parish Council therefore urges this Administration to reinstate a clear programme of investment in green technology and estate decarbonisation, recognising this not as a discretionary environmental initiative or something which is "bankrupting County Durham" but as a sound financial strategy that reduces our exposure to volatile energy markets and secures lasting and ongoing revenue benefits for County Durham.

Thank you for your consideration of our response to this important consultation.

End of response

Due to the confidential nature of the following items, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in 3 paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972 Act and section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. At this point in time the press and the public were asked to leave the room.

10. REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Members received a part-confidential report from Councillor R Cornwell on the most recent Student Housing Management Group meeting which was held on 29th September 2025.

The main points covered were:

- The Student Housing Survey 2024 had revealed that most students felt that their accommodation did not give good value for money. Worries about housing distracted them from their studies. The existing accreditation framework for student accommodation needs to be comprehensive and set clear quality standards beyond current licensing requirements.
- Additional licensing is needed to drive up standards.
- Housing standards is an ongoing concern for students living in HMOs. About 50% of those living in HMOs reported problems with damp. Councillor Cornwell shared the Parish Council's concerns that when planning applications brought to light properties not complying with HMO standards the Council's Environmental Health Department was not checking that these faults had been rectified.
- The University is working on its Strategy to follow on from the current one that expires in 2027.

- The Renters Rights Bill will change how the housing market operates and this will have a considerable impact on student lettings.

Members were also advised (and - at the time of the publication of these minutes - the University has now disclosed some of the housing statistics that were given in confidence in October, in a response to a planning application for Hopper House:

The updated figures for 24/25 show there were at least 18,834 bedspaces in the DH1 postcode area comprising:

- 8,927 bedspaces in 'off-street' properties (HMO / 1- and 2- bed student lets)
- 9,907 bedspaces in University owned/managed (7,856) and privately provided PBSA (2051)
- total bedspace demand at 95.7% (18,026 bedspaces)

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

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. A. Walker', written in a cursive style.

**Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council
(26th November 2025)**