

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP  
Aire House  
Mandale Business Park  
Belmont  
Durham, DH1 1TH  
17 May 2020

Dear Ms Jennings

The City of Durham Trust is concerned about the ongoing increase in the number of planning applications seeking to convert family dwellings to houses in multiple occupation or to increase the size of existing HMOs, even in the outskirts of the city. This is increasing the imbalance between the student population and the long-term resident population of Durham City. Instead we need to promote and preserve inclusive, mixed and balanced communities (NPPF, 8b).

Accordingly, Trustees wish to object to application **DM/20/00532/FPA**. It proposes to convert 13 Belle Vue Terrace from Class C(3) (a) to Class C4 small HMO.

The applicant states that *only 8.6% of properties within a 100m radius of 13 Belle Vue Terrace are student properties as defined by Council Tax records. This information was derived from a Council Tax data extract dated October 2019.*

However Trustees argue that this figure of 8.6% is too low for two reasons.

Firstly, on 20 December 2019 approval was given to application **DM/19/03029/FPA** to convert 6 Belle Vue Terrace, into an HMO, thereby increasing the percentage of student properties within a 100m radius of 13 Belle Vue Terrace.

Secondly, the emerging County Durham Plan states that new build HMOs will not be permitted if - **including the proposed development** - more than 10% of the total number of residential units within 100 metres of the application site are exempt from council tax charges (Class N Student Exemption). Trustees believe that the emerging Plan carries weight, as it is now at an advanced stage of preparation.

When these two factors are taken into account the percentage of properties within a 100 metre radius of and including 13 Belle Vue Terrace is more than 10%. Approval would be contrary to Durham County Council's current and emerging Interim Policy on Student Accommodation.

Yours sincerely

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John Lowe,  
Chair, The City of Durham Trust