

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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Aire House
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Durham, DH1 1TH
16 June 2020

Objection to the replacement of Common Land at the Sands, Durham City (CL29)

Dear Sir/Madam

The City of Durham Trust is the Civic Amenity Society for Durham City and the surrounding area. We were founded in 1942 and are familiar with the common land at The Sands; indeed we were the principal objector when in 2004 it was proposed to use part of the common land for a temporary car park during the construction of the nearby Walkergate development.

The Trust's objectives include *"To preserve for the benefit of the public the amenities of the City of Durham and Framwelgate and its surroundings"* and *"To aid in preserving and maintaining public rights of way in the neighbourhood of Durham, and to encourage public co-operation in the protection of objects of natural beauty and interest."*

I am writing in furtherance of those objectives to oppose the proposal by Durham County Council to remove the common land at the Sands.

We have seen the statement made on behalf of the City of Durham Parish Council and the Freeman of the City of Durham and wholeheartedly support it.

In support of the argument within that statement that "The Replacement Land is a walking distance of between 1.8 and 2.9 kms distance and would not serve the existing neighbourhood in any meaningful way", we would add as follows. There is both a natural barrier (the River Wear) and an artificial barrier (the East Coast Main Line) between the release land and the replacement land that is offered. Thus, although the replacement land is 799 metres away as the crow flies, these barriers more than double the distance a pedestrian would need to take. The shortest route is 1,860 metres but this involves using permissive paths which the County Council could close without any formal notice, and might well do as it proposes to redevelop the Aykley Heads estate through which this route passes. The shortest route entirely on public highways is 2,710 metres long. This uses public footpaths not open to motor vehicles and by car the route would be even further.

The Trust reserves the right to submit further evidence to explain its objections in detail and appear in front of an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to determine the Application.

Yours faithfully

John Lowe
Chair, The City of Durham Trust