

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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DM/20/03238/OUT: PBSA at Mount Oswald

Dear Mr Harding

The City of Durham Trust has recently been asked to give Mary Foy MP our views on this outline planning application for a 850-bed PBSA at Mount Oswald. Until she approached us we were not aware that the consultation period had been extended and we hope that our views will still be helpful in the assessment of this application.

The Trust does not object in principle to this proposal which is supported by the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, but we do share the concerns of the Parish Council that it does not comply fully with Policies S1, G1 and T1 of that plan. At the very least the development must be required to comply fully with those policies.

The Trust also has specific issues with design aspects:

- The process of securing an outline planning approval leaves commentators short of real information on where the proposals may be heading in terms of design. The masterplan submitted is inadequate.
- Key constraints, such as the relationship with the adjacent new housing and any other non-TPO trees, aren't identified. Can we be sure that 850 bedspaces can be fitted onto the site? Any tree belt will take a substantial amount of time to soften the new development. Can we be sure that the footprint is correct – there were errors on another part of this site?
- The relationship with the adjacent colleges isn't identified and is crucial to creating a development that creates both a sense of place and distinctiveness.
- The simple 'box' styling shown for the individual blocks is not going to lead to a successful development that makes a positive design contribution to the area. It will not 'build beautiful'.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust