

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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22 February 2022

Mr Leigh Dalby
Planning Development Central/East
Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City
DH1 5UL

Dear Mr Dalby

**DM/21/01611/FPA: Demolition of Existing Bingo Hall and
erection of 1no. 4 Storey Purpose Built Student Accommodation with associated parking, and
servicing facilities, Apollo Bingo, Front Street, New Durham, Durham DH1 2EP**

At our meeting on 15 February 2022 the Trustees of the City of Durham Trust observed that the above application remains on the Planning Portal as “pending decision” and that a new document has been submitted on behalf of the applicant entitled “DEMAND FOR PURPOSE BUILT STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN DURHAM”.

We agreed to re-affirm again our objection as submitted on 28 May 2021 and re-affirmed on 17 December 2021, and to offer comments on this new document.

The consultant’s paper forecasts 18,288 HMO and PBSA bed spaces in Durham if all developments currently approved are delivered, and asserts that there is therefore a shortfall of about 3,000 beds for the target number of students of 21,500 by 2026/27. It provides no information as to where or how this figure of 18,288 beds is derived. The paper embarks upon a discussion about rents and numbers of rooms from a single and questionable source as if it intends to show that there is a shortage at particular prices or clusters, but it does not develop, demonstrate and validate such a point and simply rests on the applicant’s unfounded and unproven assertion of a 3,000 shortfall.

This is of no assistance in meeting the requirements of Policy 16.2(a), namely that:

“All proposals for new, extensions to, or conversions to, Purpose-Built Student Accommodation on sites not allocated for student accommodation, will be required to demonstrate:

(a) that there is a need for additional student accommodation of this type in this location;

As the Trust pointed out at the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 January 2022, there are now some 22,220 Durham University students, well above the target of 21,500 for 2026/27. Quite obviously, even without the construction of any further PBSAs, there is already sufficient

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accommodation to meet the 2026/27 target number of students. The consultant's assertion that there is a gross need for 3,000 more beds is not merely unsubstantiated, it is simply wrong.

It is highly significant that the response from Durham University dated 6 January 2022 to the consultation required under criterion (b) of Policy 16.2 states that:

"The University does retain concern regarding the size and quality of communal facilities for student residents, the lack of an external area and its relative remoteness from campus. As such we don't consider that this PBSA would be suitable to form part of the University's accommodation offer to our students."

This provides an authoritative judgement from the education provider that the quality of the accommodation that is proposed is inadequate, and that the location referenced in requirement (a) is unsuitable.

The Trust requests that we may be granted the opportunity to address the Planning Committee when it meets to re-consider the application.

Yours sincerely

JOHN LOWE

Chair, City of Durham Trust