

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

---

Phone (0191) 386 2595  
Email: [chair@durhamcity.org](mailto:chair@durhamcity.org)  
Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP  
Aire House  
Mandale Business Park  
Belmont  
Durham, DH1 1TH  
9 November 2022

## PRESS RELEASE

### Developers withdraw from Sniperley Park Public Inquiry

The City of Durham Trust has welcomed the news, on 3 November, that developers have withdrawn from the proposed public inquiry into their plans for a major housing development at Sniperley Park on the outskirts of Durham. The Inquiry has now been abandoned.

This happened after the Planning Inspector had refused a belated attempt to shoehorn in changes to the applications after the appeals had been submitted. The County Council robustly opposed this and the Inspector has backed the Council. The Trust applauds the Council's stand and urges that the letter of the County Plan's policies continue to be honoured when considering any renewed applications.

The approved County Durham Plan allocates 1,700 houses to be built as a "sustainable urban expansion" at Sniperley Park on former green belt land west of the A167. Strict conditions included comprehensive masterplanning. The Trust had earlier opposed the loss to the green belt, but accepts this now as an opportunity for a new community to be built here to the highest standards of design in housing, infrastructure, sustainable transport and energy use. After consultation, Durham County Council approved a masterplan in June, a document which the Trust broadly support.

However, last year two developers, Bellway Homes Ltd and County Durham Land LLP, put in two complementary applications for 1,920 houses in total at Sniperley Park. This sidestepped the fact that the Council was developing a masterplan as required by Policy 5 of the County Plan, and offered no real equivalent in their own plans. Numerous other shortcomings against the County Plan were pointed out by Council Officers earlier this year. However, both developers chose not to work with them on due revisions to their applications. Instead, they jumped into making an appeal to Central Government in August, complaining of the Council's delay in not yet formally deciding their case. In effect, this would have meant the national Planning Inspectorate would decide the applications, measured against the Council's submitted evidence for its being "minded to refuse" them, as its Planning Committee decided on 6 September.

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

---

The public inquiry would have opened on 16 January, with the Trust, the City of Durham Parish Council and CPRE supporting the County Council.

The threat of two substandard planning schemes for Sniperley Park seems to have receded for now. However, the consultant's letter on behalf of County Durham Land LLP states that "it is our intention now to resubmit the planning application with the amendments before the end of the year".

John Lowe,  
Chair, City of Durham Trust