

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH

5 January 2023

Ms Ruth Howell
The Planning Inspectorate
Room 31
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

By email only to: north2@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Your ref: APP/X1355/W/22/3312412
Application number: DM/22/01134/FPA

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Appeal by Mr & Mrs W Byng
Site Address: 1 Boyd Street, DURHAM, DH1 3DP

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT BY THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

1. The City of Durham Trust's letter of objection dated 18 May 2022 to the development proposed in application DM/22/01134/FPA should be in the County Council's bundle provided to the Inspectorate. This additional statement concerns the appellant's Statement of Case paragraph 3.11 and Appendix 1 referencing claims of an insufficient supply of student accommodation to meet levels of demand.
2. There have been a number of such references in recent applications for developing more student bed-spaces in Durham City, claiming that there is a shortfall now and for meeting the University's growth Strategy up to the Academic Year 2026/27. The applicant's Statement Appendix 1 describes severe queuing and panic amongst students trying in October 2022 to secure accommodation for the next Academic Year starting October 2023, and one of the factors to which this is attributed is a shortage of sufficient accommodation.
3. The Trust has been closely involved in the local debate about this issue and is able to offer the following information which demonstrates that there is more than sufficient accommodation already; the queuing and panic is a result of misleading headlines in the local newspaper that there is a 3,400 bed shortfall (see our attached Appendix A) coupled with an artificial urgency amongst students to secure something at almost any price in case the headlines and rumours and statements by letting agencies are true.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

4. The first and most obvious demonstration that there is not a shortfall in student accommodation now or for the University's target for 2026/27 of 21,500 students is that in both the current Academic Year and in the previous Academic Year the number of Durham University students has been above the target for 2026/27. Last Academic Year it was 22,219 and in the current Academic Year it is 22,250. So more students are already here and accommodated than is planned as the target in four year's time. The overshoot is because of the national experience of higher-than-expected grades being awarded consequent upon Covid, and offers could not be withdrawn. The University is reducing intake levels over the next few years to bring numbers back to the target of 21,500 in the year 2026/27.
5. A more analytical approach can be taken to address the headline "More than 3,400 beds needed for students" in the Northern Echo of 7 November 2022 -see our Appendix A. The article attributes this assertion to a publication by StuRents, a national company that provides a paid-for service to private developers, private landlords and investors. StuRents estimate that there will be a demand for 21,317 beds for Durham University students in the coming Academic Year 2023/24. They compare this with the 17,914 student beds in Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and in Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) developments they list on their website. Taking the latter figure from the former gives them their figure that there is a 3,403 bed "deficit".
6. The crucial mistake made by StuRents and the Northern Echo is that they forget that Durham University has Colleges, seventeen of them in fact, such as St Chad's, St John's, Hatfield, Trevelyan, Collingwood, Van Mildert, to name a few. The University accommodates some 7,500 students, mainly first-years, in these Colleges. StuRents do not list these 7,500 University bed-spaces because their business is getting student tenants for private landlords. Their message, and the resulting headline, has caused panic amongst newly-arrived first year students and led them to form rushed alliances into paying over-the-odds for next year's accommodation.
7. Thus the total number of student bed-spaces for 2023/24 will be StuRents' 17,900 in private accommodation plus 7,500 in University's accommodation, that is a total of 25,400 - well above StuRents' projection of 21,317 as next year's need. The City of Durham Trust concludes that there is not a deficit, there is a surplus, a considerable one, providing a good degree of choice. The applicant's Statement of Case is erroneous in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Francis Pritchard

Secretary, City of Durham Trust

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2022

More than 3,400 beds needed for students

By Phoebe Abruzzese
Trainee Reporter

THE shocking lack of accommodation for students in Durham has been laid bare by a website which shows a deficit of 3,400 beds in the city.

Data from the student accommodation listing site Studenta highlights the state of the student housing crisis.

According to data supplied by the site, there is a deficit of more than 3,400 student beds in the city for the 2023-24 academic year.

The revelation comes after weeks of panic in the city saw students queuing overnight to secure places to live, and student protests staged about the housing market.

Using their data, Studenta said that "the issue is unlikely to materially improve in the years ahead".

They have estimated increases in rent prices for houses of multiple occupancies (HMOs) in the Durham area, and have shown that the average rent price increases by approximately 19 per cent year-on-year.

Every year, Studenta calculated an estimated figure for how many student beds are needed in a city and their estimates for Durham for the 2023/24 academic year outline show a demand of 21,517.

This is significantly more



Students have had to queue in a desperate bid to find accommodation

than the supply of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) beds that have been listed on the

Studenta platform, which stands at 17,014.

According to Studenta, this means that there is a 3,403 deficit in available beds.

Studenta has only counted properties listed on their site to come up with their supply statistic, meaning that there could be houses not listed on

Studenta that have been left out of the count.

However, a spokesperson for Studenta said: "The vast majority of landlords and agents in Durham list with Studenta, and overall Studenta is the largest dedicated student accommodation portal in the UK."

Studenta's stats on rent show a year-on-year average rent increase of 19 per cent - which could see average weekly prices for rooms increase from the £50-£100 range to between £60 and £245.

Reacting to the rent price data, Mary Kelly Fox MP for Durham, said: "This rent price data supports what a huge number of students have told me.

"Student rents are spiralling at an eye-watering pace. Landlords are demanding rises well above inflation - and the vast majority of students, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, are struggling to

