

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
27 May 2024

The Editor
The Advertiser Series

Dear Madam

We greatly appreciate *The Advertiser's* coverage of local news and events but feel that the front page story "Appeal fails over plan for football centre" on Thursday 23 May 2024 falls short of your usual standards. Whoever told you that this was part of an upgrade to its current facilities in Sunderland was ignoring a key fact – the Russell Foster Sports Foundation proposed Leamside as a replacement for the Sunderland facility, which they had already applied to be closed and turned into a very large garden! We are not the only ones to think that the large garden might soon be the subject of a substantial and lucrative housing development proposal.

The appeal Inspector thoroughly investigated the case put forward by the Russell Foster Foundation and she concluded that so many aspects simply don't stand up to scrutiny. The lesson is to come up with a scheme that isn't in the green belt and drops the flimsy claims. Attacking the Leamside residents and Durham County Council for defending local amenity and the integrity of the green belt is the wrong way for the Foundation to proceed.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust