

**CITY OF DURHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

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21 October 2018

Susan Hyde  
Development Management Team  
Room 4/86-102  
Planning Department  
County Hall  
Durham City  
DH1 5UL

Dear Ms Hyde

**DM/18/02710/FPA:**

**Construction of a coach park area adjacent to the existing Carrville Park and Ride site, including a bus lay-by and associated footpath links, Belmont Park and Ride Ramside DH1 1SR**

I write in my capacity as Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council's Planning Committee which, at its meeting on Friday 19 October 2018, resolved to object to the above proposal. The Parish Council has delegated consideration of planning matters to my committee.

The Planning Committee has considered the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application. This says that "*The proposed facility will replace the existing coach park located in Durham City which will disappear with the development of the New County Council HQ*".

It is unfortunate, indeed improper, that this wording presumes that the current live planning application for the new County Council headquarters on The Sands car park and coach park will receive approval by the County Planning Committee.

The Parish Council is most concerned that the loss of the tourist coach park will require coaches to come into and leave the City centre twice instead of once – coming in to drop visitors off, leaving to park at Belmont, then re-entering the centre again to pick up their visitors and then leave again. This not only doubles the amount of such traffic but also increases the amount of air pollution, which already exceeds permitted levels in the City Centre. Moreover, Belmont is over 2½ miles from the City Centre, much further out than other comparable cities we have looked at.

The proposal also endangers the coach-based tourism businesses and jobs in the City. The coach-based tourism industry is extremely sensitive to problems at destinations. Durham will become a delay problem, not just by congestion and by extra entry and exit time but

also retrieving passengers who will no longer be able to return to their bus at the existing coach park. In these circumstances, some loss of tourist coach businesses is extremely likely.

Neither this planning application, nor DM/18/02369/FPA for the new County HQ, states whether it is proposed to move the coach drop off and pick up point, yet this is essential information that is needed to evaluate whether the proposed new arrangements will be successful.

This is an important issue - Visit County Durham estimates that in 2017 there were 3.8 million day visitors to Durham City making £107 million expenditure, which is 89% of all tourist expenditure in the City. In other words, whilst the aim rightly is to increase the number of overnight stays, the fact is that day visitors overwhelmingly provide the economic benefit at present. Deterring tourism coaches by removing their coach park from the city centre is a major negative consequence of the proposal.

Saved POLICY T1 **of the** City of Durham Development Plan 2004 states that:

*“The council will not grant planning permission for development that would generate traffic which would be detrimental to highway safety and/or have a significant affect on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring property.”*

Clearly, the proposal to cause tourist coaches to enter and leave the city centre twice would generate additional traffic and adversely affect the amenity of the residents of Providence Row, Claypath and Lower Gilesgate.

Saved POLICY T7 of the City of Durham Development Plan 2004 states that:

*“The council, in conjunction with Durham County Council, will investigate the provision of a park and ride system which seeks to:*

*3. Reduce traffic flows to and/or through the city centre.”*

The proposal to cause tourist coaches to enter and leave the city centre twice would directly conflict with the purpose of Policy T7 to reduce traffic flows to and/or through the city centre.

The Parish Council is aware that Policy T16 is “not saved because it has been implemented”. Policy T16 stated that “A new coach park is to be provided as part of the proposed enhancements to the Riverside Car park at the Sands as shown on the Proposals Map.” The current intention embedded in the planning application for a replacement coach park at Belmont is in effect to undo the implementation of Policy T16 and bring it back into statutory development plan requirements which the proposal contradicts.

### Conclusion

The City of Durham Parish Council recommends that application DM/18/02710/FPA be refused as being intended as a replacement for the existing coach park located in Durham

City, the loss of which is harmful to the very important tourist economy of the City and County and would generate traffic which would be detrimental to highway safety and/or have a significant affect on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring property contrary to City of Durham Development Plan 2004 Saved Policy T1; increase instead of reduce traffic flows to and/or through the city centre contrary to City of Durham Development Plan 2004 Saved Policy T1 part 3; and destroy the coach park provided as part of the proposed enhancements to the Riverside Car park at the Sands as shown on the Proposals Map in Policy T16 of the City of Durham Development Plan 2004.

Yours sincerely

*Roger Cornwell*

Chair, Planning Committee, City of Durham Parish Council