



**CITY OF DURHAM  
PARISH COUNCIL**

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9<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Ms Ollivere,

**DM/21/02034/FPA: Proposed development of 57 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure, open space and highway improvements on land at former skid pan, north of Woodward Way, Aykley Heads, DH1 5ZH**

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee considered this application at its meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and resolved to object to this application.

Planning law requires that decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The primacy of the development plan is reaffirmed in paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The policies within the statutory development plan that are relevant to the consideration of this application are contained within the:

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (2021 - DCNP);

County Durham Plan (2020 - CDP).

The NPPF, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document (2019 - BfLSPD) are relevant material considerations.

It is disappointing to note that the applicant's planning statement makes no reference to the DCNP, which forms part of the development plan and therefore is the starting point for the determination of the application.

The Parish Council accepts that as the application site is allocated for housing within the CDP and therefore the principle of the proposed redevelopment of the site for housing is acceptable. However, the Parish Council has several concerns regarding the proposals and their lack of compliance with the policies of the development plan.

**Density**

CDP Policy 4 allocates the application site for housing with an estimated yield of 50 dwellings (ref H4 (4/DU/93)). Whilst the Parish Council supports the proposal to restrict the new development to the existing hardstanding areas, it is considered that the density of the development is too high. The Parish Council submits that the increased density, from 50 to 57 dwellings, is not appropriate for this sensitive location adjoining both the Green Belt and the area of high landscape value.

Policy 39 of the CDP is clear that development affecting areas of higher landscape value will only be permitted where it conserves and where appropriate enhances the special qualities of the landscape. Furthermore, CDP policy 29 requires new development to contribute positively to the character of an area, which includes landscape features. Paragraph 5.301 explains that lower densities may be more appropriate in response to the prevailing existing character of a site and that the density of development should be a product of a robust site assessment, which responds positively to the county's exceptional environmental quality.

The DCNP provides local detail for the City of Durham Parish. Policy S1 requires new development to harmonise with the surrounding area in terms of scale, layout and density.

The Parish Council submits that, as a result of the inappropriate density, the proposed development comprises over development. As a result, it would have a negative impact on the adjacent area of high landscape value, contrary to policies 29 and 39 of the CDP and policy S1 of the DCNP.

### **Sustainability**

The Parish Council has significant concerns that the proposal does not comprise sustainable development as required by the development plan and the NPPF. The submitted transport statement suggests that the proposed development could result in approximately 57 total people movements in the AM peak hour and 51 in the PM peak hour. The Parish Council considers these estimates are not accurate and in reality, would be much higher. The submitted application documents provide no details on how the occupants of the proposed development would access sustainable modes of transport. The focus appears to be on the private car.

Policy 21 of the CDP is clear that all development must deliver sustainable transport. That it must deliver, accommodate and facilitate investment in safe, sustainable modes of transport. Also, that it must provide appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for walking, cycling and bus access, so that new development clearly links to existing services and facilities. Furthermore, that appropriate provision for electric vehicle parking should be made within developments.

The submitted sustainability checklist for developers illustrates that the proposed development incorporates somewhat limited proposals to achieve reductions in CO2 emissions. For example, whilst the Parish Council acknowledges that ducting and cabling will

be provided to allow for future electric charging points, it is submitted that these should be provided as part of the development rather than putting the onus on future residents.

Both CDP policy 29 and the BfLSPD are clear that new development must achieve reductions in Co2 emissions.

These requirements are also reflected within the policies of the DCNP. Particularly in policy S1 which requires the responsible use of resources and increase in resilience to climate change. In addition, policy T1 requires new development to give the highest priority to walking, cycling and public transport by improving access and contributing to a modal shift towards sustainable transport.

The Parish Council considers that the proposal would not deliver sustainable development as a result of its reliance on the private car for residents to access employment, services and facilities. Furthermore, the new dwellings incorporate limited proposals to achieve meaningful reductions in CO2 emissions. As a result, the proposed development would be contrary to the provisions of the development plan, particularly CDP policies 21 and 29, DCNP policies S1 and T1, sections 2, 9 and 14 of the NPPF, as well as the BfLSPD.

### **Ecology**

The application site lies close to an ancient woodland, Hoopers Wood which is situated to the east and west. Part of the wood also comprises a local wildlife site. It is noted that the applicant has submitted an ecological appraisal which concludes that there will be limited impacts. The Parish Council disagrees with these findings. It is submitted that the impact not only of the construction activities but also from recreational pressure as a result of the new residents could be significant.

CDP policies 41 and 43 are clear that new development will not be permitted where it would result in significant harm to biodiversity where this cannot be avoided, mitigated or as a last resort compensated for. This is also reflected within policy G1 CDNP.

The Parish Council considers that the proposed development would result in harm to Hoopers Wood ancient woodland and local wildlife site and the applicant has not demonstrated that this harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or as a last resort compensated for. The development therefore conflicts with the requirements of CDP policies 41 and 41, policy G1 of the CDNP and section 15 of the NPPF.

For the reasons set out in this response, this application should be refused without delay.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Shanley**  
**Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council**