

Mount Oswald Survey

The *Focus* survey was distributed to 1400 homes in the Neville's Cross City Council ward in early October 2007.

Around 200 forms were returned over the following six weeks, together with about 10 direct communications by e-mail.

Summary

The survey showed overwhelming opposition to the planning application submitted by Banks Ltd, for the development of the Mount Oswald estate with a substantial area of Business Park, an area for executive housing, and open parkland.

Only two respondents appeared to support the application. A third who supported a possible Business park wanted the current 10% planning guideline adhered to.

The overwhelming majority of responses (85%) wanted the status quo to remain. Of the rest almost all wanted all or most the area to be maintained as green open space for public use and access.

There is a strong demand for publicly accessible parkland (53%) and public recreational facilities (45%) in the area.

There is minority recognition (13%) that Mount Oswald house, with further investment, could be developed better as a hotel and conference centre.

There is little demand for further housing or for shops.

Survey Detail

Paper survey sheets received (returned by "Mr & Mrs" or equivalent counted double): 234

I am happy to see the Golf Course redeveloped in some way	23	9.8%
I want to see the Golf Course remain as it is	199	85.0%
Neither question answered	12	5.1%

Assuming re-development at some time in the future, what range of activities would you like to see there?		
Business Park	3	1.3%
Hotel and Conference facilities	31	13.3%
Housing	13	5.6%
Publicly accessible parkland	125	53.4%
Publicly accessible recreation facilities	105	44.9%
Shopping (e.g. convenience store)	16	6.9%
Other	10	4.3%
None at all – please leave it alone	133	56.9%

If housing was included, what types?		
General, mixed	36	15.4%
Executive	39	16.7%
Affordable	28	12.0%

Other activities mentioned:

- Nature reserve/wildlife park (7)
- Community centre (4)
- Children's play area (3)
- 9 hole golf course (2)
- Ice rink (2)
- Pitch and putt(2)
- Adventure playground,
- Clinic (incl. dental)
- Facilities for teenagers
- Family park
- Golf course
- Leisure Centre with Pool (commercial)
- Mountain bike trail
- Park with water feature
- Pets' corner
- Picnic area
- Recreational areas for children and young people
- School
- Sports facilities – tennis, bowls, cricket, football, badminton
- Walks

Of those not answering the first questions, all wanted the area to remain as green open space, with publicly accessible parkland being very important. One indicated interest in hotel and conference facilities, one in housing and one in shopping.

Of those indicating that they would not mind seeing Mount Oswald developed:

- Three supported any kind of Business Park (one stating that the current 10% guidelines should be adhered to).
- Seven supported hotel and conference facilities.
- Seven supported housing.
- 13 supported publicly accessible parkland.
- 13 supported public recreation facilities.
- Three supported shopping.

In the free comment box, a number of issues were raised repeatedly:

- Traffic: Over 50 respondents mentioned existing traffic congestion in the locality as a reason to oppose development of the area.
- Durham and the Neville's Cross area in particular is becoming over-developed [references to the Banks development at Sheraton Park and the Roundhaven development at the Cock of The North.
- Green open spaces need to be preserved.
- Public access to green spaces needs to be increased.
- There is plenty of other business park space allocated in the Durham City area [Belmont, Bowburn].

Comments on possible future development included several observations:

- The 10% limit to development of the Mount Oswald estate should be maintained.
- Mount Oswald House does have potential but it needs investment to bring its facilities up to standard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nigel Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

Councillor Nigel Martin

December 2007