

Madame Chair, I wish to urge the Committee to reject this application in line with the recommendation in the report.

As members may be aware, this application has been the subject of considerable concern across the Neville's Cross ward. The report on page 9 refers to 257 letters of objection received as public responses.

This is a huge number in relation to a planning application. And I would note that we are not dealing with form letters here. As I am sure the officers will confirm, the overwhelming majority were individually composed letters setting out the real concerns that the public especially in my area have about this proposal.

As part of my own consultation exercise with my constituents, I distributed a survey across the ward and of around 1400 put through letter boxes, around 200 forms were returned representing about 240 individual views.

Out of those 240 just 3 were in favour of a business park development at Mount Oswald and one of those only if it was restricted to the 10% limit set out in the Local Plan.

A detailed report on the feedback from the survey was deposited with the planning office and can be viewed at my Neville's Cross Councillor web site.

Madame Chair my constituents are aghast at this application. The ward has already had massive development over recent years and this would tear the heart out of what open space remains.

The traffic impact alone should stop the application dead. There are already traffic queues regularly south of the Cock of the North roundabout. The A167 is virtually at capacity at certain times of the day now and to add several thousand additional journeys per day is simply unacceptable to me and to the ward.

Indeed, it just takes one small thing to go wrong on the road and much of Durham's traffic seizes up as many people found out during the rush hour on Monday evening this week.

The issue of traffic is severe and the inadequacy of the application in dealing with it both locally and more widely in respect of the major route network is reflected quite rightly in the Highways Agency direction to refuse this application.

Madame Chair, the Local Plan allows for a prestige business/science park on up to 10% of the Mount Oswald site, but this application is for no such thing. Apart from the gross overdevelopment of 40% not 10%, this is purely speculative.

There is no credible evidence presented by Banks that there are companies out there of the prestige quality required wishing to come to Mount Oswald.

Indeed, if business development land is wanted, there are still many hectares available, undeveloped and in a better location than this.

Finally, I want to deal with the executive housing part of the application. As I said earlier, we already have enough additional housing in the area. The housing stock in Neville's Cross ward will have increased by over 50% in the

past 20 years by the time that currently approved developments are concluded – and much of the recent new build is standing unoccupied.

There is simply no case for developing housing on green land in this area against the wishes of the Local Plan especially when it will deface a significant piece of the open space in the area.

And why should the people of Durham lose a genuinely publicly accessible golf course facility for 30 million pound houses and a business park for which there is no need?

In short Madame Chair this application is about money and not about quality planning.

The officers have presented an overwhelming case for turning this application down, I urge members to do just that tonight.