

Durham County Council
Planning Development
Strategic
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

City of Durham Council
City of Durham Council
c/o Room 103
Floor 1
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UF
23 July 2018

Dear Mr Pilkington,

DM/18/01650/FPA: Erection of Mathematical Sciences and Computer Science building for Durham University

I am writing on behalf of the City of Durham Council to ask that determination of the above planning application be paused, for the following reasons:

- The responses in the *Statement of Community Involvement* in several places cite the University Estate Masterplan 2017-2027. This document is also referred to extensively in the Planning Statement, which lists it under Other Material Considerations. However, this is not a public document. The application should not be determined until the full Masterplan (and not a summary) are added to the case file, and sufficient time is given for it to be commented on.
- It is not clear how many extra students the new building is designed to accommodate. (This information may be in the Masterplan: a further reason to publish it.) There will be 70 additional academic and support staff, so it must be a considerable number. These will need to be found places to live in the City. However, in May, the University announced that the building of two new colleges on Mount Oswald was being delayed by a year. This will increase pressure on family homes in the City. Construction of the new building should be delayed until the extra students can be accommodated in University-run colleges.
- Both the SCI and the Planning Statement say “Due to the site area and scale of the proposals a request for an EIA screening opinion was submitted to Durham County Council on 15th March 2017 (ref: SCR/18/00002).” Neither this request nor the resulting screening opinion are in the case file.
- The University Masterplan is being implemented as a coordinated and interlinked whole. However, it appears that EIA screening opinions are being sought for the individual components, and these are falling below a threshold that might trigger an Environmental Impact Assessment. The University Estate Masterplan 2017-2027 as a whole needs an EIA and further approval of its components should not be permitted until one is carried out.

Consequently we conclude that there is insufficient information in the case file to permit informed comment and informed decision-making to take place, and the determination of this application should be paused until this further information is available.

Yours sincerely

ROGER CORNWELL

Chair, Planning Committee