

From:
To: [Site Allocations Plan](#)
Subject: PDE00106_Leeds Site Allocations Plan
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I wish to contest the soundness of the plan that has been made available for comment. I only know a minority of these sites and wish to limit my comments to one: the playing fields off Weetwood Avenue (HG2-49 / 3376)). To my mind this proposal is inconsistent with National Planning Policy and would represent an unsound decision.

First, the site is designated as statutory Green Belt in the current Development Plan and that designation should only be set aside in exceptional circumstances. To date there has been no systematic review of Green Belt boundaries that would justify this change of allocation, and indeed no exceptional circumstances to warrant a change in the Green Belt status of the site. The importance of this Green Belt site lies in restricting urban sprawl and contributing to the wider network of green space in this part of the city and its consequent value to wildlife .

The Site Allocations Plan itself acknowledges the important contribution the site makes the Weetwood Conservation Area. Clearly this would be compromised by building houses on it. Moreover, council planning officers themselves have consistently assessed the site as being inappropriate for housing development throughout the Local Plan process.

Those assessments were accepted by the Council until it received a letter on 9th January 2015 from the owners of the site, Leeds Rugby Limited, offering to use some of the proceeds from developing the site as a contribution to the cost of improving Headingley Stadium. This appears to be the only factor that has led to the Council seeking to override its Officers' professional assessment and considering the re-designation of the site for housing. In fact the proposed improvements to the stadium have no relationship with the development of the Weetwood site; they are not within the same community. This is acknowledged by the Council's own Officers in their report to the Council of 20th May 2015 so it should have no bearing on such a major change in the plan-making process, overturning previous decisions. Moreover, even if the offer regarding the use of the proceeds from the site was to be considered relevant in planning terms, there is no evidence that such proceeds would in fact be used to improve the stadium.

There is no overriding need for the site to be designated for housing and to override Green Belt protections. The council officers have identified no shortage of housing land in this part of the city that would require change to statutory Green Belt boundaries. In any case the proposed 30 houses would make no significant contribution to Leeds' housing needs.

I therefore contend that proposal HG2-49 / 3376 is inappropriate in planning terms and allocation of the site for housing development is unsound. I recognise the need to address the shortage of housing in Leeds, but do not believe that allocating the playing fields off Weetwood Avenue for 30 houses represents a sound plan. For a minimal contribution to your target you will have sacrificed green space when you could have made greater attempts to use brownfield sites and to bring empty units back into use.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Long

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