

From: [Bentley, Cllr Jonathan](#)
To: [CDV Site Allocations Consultation](#); [Site Allocations Plan](#)
Cc: [Bentley, Cllr Susan](#); [Chapman, Cllr Judith](#)
Subject: PDE02736_Site 3376 Land off Weetwood Lane Leeds. Site Allocation Plan Reference HG2-49
Date: 16 November 2015 15:54:02

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to object to the proposal to allocate the above site as land suitable for housing in the Leeds Site Allocation Plan currently out for public consultation.

This proposal is unsound as it conflicts with National Planning Policy and proposes no sound justification to mitigate departure from such policy.

Please consider the following as reasons why this site should be removed from the site allocations plan.

The site is designated as statutory Green Belt in the current Development Plan. National Planning Policy framework(NPPF) states that Green Belt designation is intended to be permanent and only changed in exceptional circumstances. There has been no soundly based review of Green Belt boundaries in Weetwood to indicate that Green Belt status should be removed from this area of land. No exceptional circumstances to justify a change in the Green Belt status of the site have been put forward. On this basis, the Plan fails the test of soundness in relation to any justification for change of status. The NPPF sets a high bar in terms of justifying alterations to Green Belt boundaries and the case for the re-designation of this site for housing development has not been justified in planning terms.

The site performs the very function that Green Belt land was designated to do. It is an important open space in this area of the city, restricting urban sprawl and safeguarding an important gap in the built up area as part of the wider Meanwood Valley. The site forms part of a wider network of greenspace in this part of the city which would be harmed by its development for housing, including through impact and encroachment on the adjoining Meanwood Park. It is part of a long standing green corridor which links the inner city to the outskirts of Leeds providing an essential open air amenity to Leeds citizens. It cannot be considered as an infill site given its strong linkage to the wider open space network.

The site is in a Conservation Area, an Urban Green Corridor and has recognised wildlife value. These designations are intended to give the site maximum protection from development and properly reflect the importance of the site in the local area and its relationship to a wider open space network.

The site makes an important contribution to character of the Weetwood Conservation Area and its development for housing would have harmful impacts on that character. Indeed, the potential for such harm is acknowledged in the Site Allocations Plan.

The site is within the area covered by the Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement which highlights the importance of open space and the significant constraints on future development.

Up until the publication of the Site Allocations Plan Council Planning Officers have consistently assessed the site to be inappropriate for housing development. assessments the

site has been categorised as 'RED' i.e. unsuitable for housing development based on its Green Belt status and the potential for harm to the Conservation Area and green space value.

These assessments were accepted by the Council until it received a letter on 9th January 2015 from the site owners, Leeds Rugby Limited, offering to use the proceeds from the development of the site to contribute to the cost of improvements at Headingley Stadium. This is the only factor that has led to the Council overriding its Officers professional assessment and deciding to consider the re-designation of the site for housing. I submit that this is an unsound reason for changing an assessment on the suitability of Green Belt land for housing. I further submit that the Council has given undue and even improper weight to this offer considering that:

The improvements to the stadium are entirely unrelated to the development of the Weetwood site. This is acknowledged by the Council's own Officers in their report to the Development Plan Panel of the Council on 20th May 2015. On this basis, the offer should have no bearing on the Plan-making process and certainly not in respect of such a major decision involving a change to a statutory Green Belt boundary.

Once re-designated for housing in the Local Plan the principle of development is established regardless of any offer to use the proceeds for the redevelopment of the Headingley Stadium. As this is the only basis on which the site is now being proposed for housing designation, and Green Belt boundaries changed, the Plan-making process appears unsound.

There is no requirement in the plan for houses on this site to contribute to the City's overall housing target as established in the city's core strategy. There is no predicted shortage of housing land supply in this part of the city and certainly no case that statutory Green Belt boundaries need to be changed to address housing shortage. area The Council's own analysis of the North Leeds HMCA has confirmed this position.

The proposed capacity of the site for housing development, currently identified as 30 units, means that if this site is retained in Green Belt there will be no material impact on the overall soundness of the Plan in terms of housing land supply in this part of the city.

In summary I contend that this proposal is wholly inappropriate in planning terms. The basis for the proposed change in the Green Belt boundary and allocation of the site for housing development is unsound. The Plan fails the tests of soundness in terms of consistency with National Planning Policy and lack of justification. The site should remain in Green Belt and the proposed housing allocation should be deleted from the Plan.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Bentley
Councillor, Weetwood Ward
Leeds City Council

