

From: [Simon Barnett](#)
To: [Site Allocations Plan](#)
Subject: PDE02831_Land Off Weetwood Avenue (Site 3376)
Date: 16 November 2015 15:13:10

From:

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to the proposed changes to the Site Allocation Plan as they affect Land off Weetwood Avenue (Site 3376).

The proposed re-designation of this site for housing appears to fail all tests for such a re-designation. This site is protected by its Green Belt designation and this may only be changed in exceptional circumstances. Not only does the proposal go against the council's own long-held view of the site as unsuitable for housing, but it is not possible to see how the test of exceptional circumstances is met in this case.

- 1) The site is Green Belt, a designation designed to be permanent and only changeable in exceptional circumstances. No exceptional circumstances would appear to apply in this case and the re-designation ignores the council's previous position on the suitability of the land for housing.
- 2) The site provides an important open space which safeguards the character of the area, an objective emphasized by the local Neighbourhood Design Statements for Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park. These design statements recommend curbs on future development. The site also reinforces the character of the Weetwood Conservation Area and is a contiguous part of an Urban Green Corridor providing amenity to local residents and to the wider population of Leeds and beyond who use the Meanwood Valley Trail and related facilities.
- 3) There is no pressing need to re-designate the site for housing as there is no shortage of suitable land in North Leeds.
- 4) The proposed re-designation for 30 units would offer little overall benefit considering the loss of amenity and local character it would entail.
- 5) Most worryingly, from the perspective of the soundness of the Site Allocation Plan process, the proposed re-designation, reversing the council's long standing view of the site, appears merely to be a response to an offer by Leeds Rugby Limited which attempts to tie development work at Headingley Stadium to the re-designation of this site. This appears unsound for the following reasons:
 - a) Nothing appears to have been offered to explain how Leeds Rugby Limited's proposal constitutes exceptional circumstances, rather it appears that the guidelines of National Planning Policy Framework are being subverted to the whims of a developer wishing to remove an inconvenient Green Belt designation. Surely the guidelines and the high bar set for Green Belt re-designation is designed to avoid just such a poorly justified attempt to re-designate.
 - b) There is no proof nor guarantee the stadium improvements would go ahead

- even if the site is re-designated
- c) There is no proof that the funding of stadium improvements is actually contingent on the re-designation and development of the site.

The proposed re-designation seems the result of an unsound process and should not be allowed to proceed and will be opposed vigorously should it not be withdrawn.

Yours faithfully

Simon Barnett