

SES29 · Handsworth Hall Farm

The site

SES29

Gross area

56.40 hectares

Proposed use

870 homes

Ownership

Norfolk Estates (Yorkshire Water parcels excluded)

Farmland

Almost all Grade 3a, best and most versatile

Former use

Sewage treatment works, in part



Allocation boundary showing predicted agricultural land classification

Community concerns

- **A former sewage treatment works sits inside the allocation.** Yorkshire Water owns a triangle of land, bounded by Norfolk Estates and Network Rail, formerly a sewage treatment facility and undisturbed for decades. Is plant still buried there? Disturbance risks the watercourses, and has not been assessed.
- **The whole site drains through a single culvert.** It sits at the lowest point of the site, on an established wetland in the Handsworth Beck drainage basin. Water from the whole site, plus surface drainage from the Medlock Estate, Handsworth Hill and Shining Bank, leaves through a single 900 mm culvert on Network Rail land, understood to feed Waverley's swales and the Rother.
- **The woodland is in active use by wildlife.** Aged trees with hollows and rot holes, species-rich hedgerow and historic drainage channels. Residents recorded a large mixed winter flock of greenfinch and linnet in 2026, nesting wren, jay and song thrush, and fox, rabbit, roe deer, hedgehog and hare signs, with badger foraging close by.
- **This land is the gap between Sheffield and Rotherham.** The Council scores it 2 against the Green Belt purpose of preventing towns merging, on the basis that the gap has been eroded and effectively no longer exists. But Rotherham assessed land inside its own boundary, east of the railway, not this farm. Develop SES29 and the two urban areas are merged and separated by the railway alone.

What the examination record shows

- **The Inspector asked whether the Council had contacted Yorkshire Water.** At the Stage 4 hearing on 13 October 2025 the Council answered that it was not aware of any problem. The Inspector made it a formal action, and said the boundary was “something that needs to be got right”.
- **The answer to that action changed the boundary, not the position.** EXAM 200 in January 2026 reports minor boundary changes that “have no impact on the capacity of the site”. EXAM 217 confirms two Yorkshire Water parcels removed and that the mapping software had “rounded off the site boundary incorrectly”.
- **A Freedom of Information reply confirms there has still been no direct contact.** The Council states there has been “no direct correspondence” with Yorkshire Water on water supply, sewerage, drainage or sewage processing for SES29 and SES30. All communication went through its consultants, and Yorkshire Water made no representations in the 2025 consultation.

OUR ASK Remove SES29 from the Plan before adoption. The Inspector's October 2025 action on Yorkshire Water has not been answered, and what remains of the former treatment works has not been assessed. **The access to this site has not been proven as suitable and safe.**