

SCC Owned Sites Assessments - 3 Tenanted Farms, 3 Different Answers?

On three Sheffield City Council owned farms, the same test of availability produced three different results.

- One was ruled out in eleven words – Ryecroft Farm in Dore
- One was allocated despite being leased under the strongest agricultural tenancy in English law – Town End Farm in Grenoside
- **One was recorded by SCC as having no realistic prospect of becoming available, then allocated for 827 homes – Beaver Hill Road in Handsworth**

	1,419 homes allocated on the two farms found available	ZERO published evidence for the finding that ruled out Ryecroft Farm	2 contradictory findings recorded on the same Beaver Hill Road land within 3 Months !	11 words of reasoning that ended the assessment of Ryecroft Farm
	Ryecroft Farm	Town End Farm	Beaver Hill Road	
Reference	S03012 (HELAA)	NES37	GB49 (EXAM 113); SES30	
Owner	Sheffield City Council	Sheffield City Council	Sheffield City Council	
Site area	29.15 ha	29.80 ha	35.28 ha	
Occupation	Not stated	Secure Agricultural Holdings Act tenancy, granted by the Council in 1981	Leased, in active agricultural use	
Predicted Agricultural Land Classification	Grade 4 - not BMV	Grade 2 and 4 - mixed BMV	Grade 2 and 3a - BMV	
Finding on availability	Unavailable	Available and deliverable	Both. Unavailable in EXAM 113, available EXAM 130	
Reason given	"Landowner has confirmed the site is unavailable"	—	"site in existing active use for agricultural, with unrealistic prospect of becoming available"	
Outcome	Ruled out. Never compared against the sites that were allocated	Allocated for 592 homes	Allocated for 827 homes	

Sources: EXAM 130B, Table 1 and Appendix 1; EXAM 113, Appendix 4, site GB49; Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications, MM351 and MM411.

S13 Site Timeline

2024	April 2025	May 2025	Feb 2026
EXAM 113: no realistic prospect of the land becoming available	the same land proposed for allocation as SES30	councillors vote to consult on the proposal	MM411 allocates it for 827 homes

Three things the evidence does not show

- "The landowner has confirmed the site is unavailable" – This cannot be verified. No one, even a sitting MP, has been able to secure a copy of the lease. The leases for the other sites have been made readily available.
- **Ryecroft Farm is predicted to be Grade 4 agricultural land.** National policy demands that where farmland must be developed, "poorer quality land should be preferred" to land of higher quality. The poorer land was excluded; the better land was allocated with no explanation.
- The Council is landowner and planning authority: judge and jury when allocating its own tenanted farms.

References: EXAM 113, Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Additional Site Search, Action 22, Appendix 4, site GB49 (consulted on through EXAM 114, 14 January 2025). EXAM 130B, site assessments, Table 1 and Appendix 1, site S03012. EXAM 215, counsel's advice on the Town End Farm tenancy. Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications (February 2026), MM351 and MM411. Predicted best and most versatile land from Defra's Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map, April 2026, as mapped to the release sites by Sheffield Green Belt Alliance. Save S13 representation on the Proposed Main Modifications (May 2026), section 3.3. Save S13 Green Belt · saves13greenbelt.org.uk