

From: Dianne Hurst (CLLR)
Sent: 11 July 2025 11:58
To: SheffieldPlan
Subject: Objection to proposed green belt releases
Attachments: objections to gren belt releases.docx

Please find my representation to Inspectors on behalf of my constituents.

Cllr Dianne Hurst
Member for Richmond Ward

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I do not expect you to respond to my email outside your working hours. Please be assured that I respect your working pattern and look forward to your response when you are next in work and able to reply

Pronoun: she/her

To Whom it may concern

Please accept the following as an objection to the additional site allocations for the local plan, in particular the proposals to release land from the green belt.

As a former chair and a longstanding member of Planning and Highways Committee I believe that the proposals to release land from the green belt for development are unfair, unsustainable and counter to the requests made by Inspectors to consider primarily the purpose and characteristics of the green belt in their choices.

The sites for green belt release are not distributed evenly across the city but located primarily in the North and South East of the city. These areas have borne the brunt of piecemeal development across recent decades. The Mosborough Townships in the Southeast were originally developed on land that had come across from N/E Derbyshire and subject to master planning exercises to ensure that sustainable communities were developed that had housing, employment, services, shops and schools as well as transportation links and areas of open space for recreation and to contain and maintain communities and counter sprawl. Similar rationalisation was used in redeveloping the brown field land in Kelham Island and has proved successful and popular.

Recently however piecemeal development has not had the advantage of such meticulous planning and as a result pressures are placed on roads, services such as doctors and schools. Small scale developments are recommended without the benefit of traffic impact assessments and CIL contributions do not address infrastructure pressures and loss of open space. Road junctions are acknowledged to be at capacity within the text of the Local Plan. Any accident, incident or road works that result in road closures or diversions causes huge delays, hold ups and frustration. This is despite having the benefit of good public transport including the tram. These green belt releases will compound this. The community already feels abandoned and devalued and has no faith or trust in the local authority, the green belt releases confirm this alienation. Even were the proposed land releases not well functioning green belt there is still a limit to the amount of development any neighbourhood can take.

As a Richmond Councillor, I know more about the value of the sites in S13, in particular sites SO3061 Handsworth Hall farm and sites SO3020 and SO2502 land between Bramley Lane, Handsworth and Beaver Hill Road Woodhouse to the community over the S35 releases, but feel sure that community groups, members and individuals there are making similar detailed representations about the releases in Stocksbridge and the Upper Don and Ecclesfield.

There has been substantial piecemeal development in the area over recent decades. Added to this pressure from the extensive developments at Waverly and Orgreave in neighbouring Rotherham have resulted in high volumes of traffic on local roads, impact on air quality and pressure on schools and health facilities.

Sites SO3020 and SO2502 are located between Bramley Lane, Handsworth and Beaver Hill Road, Woodhouse. Handsworth and Woodhouse are two distinct and characterful villages, but will be linked together by the proposed development under the local plan. The resulting urban sprawl will create a rat run for commuters attempting to avoid the main roads. The loss of valued open space will take in agricultural land, a field being developed as a community pond, allotments and community recreation grounds developed and planted over decades by the

local community forum. It runs right up to the Shirtcliffe Woods and is currently benefitting because of a central government funded species survival and biodiversity development plan. The land subject to greenbelt release is valued for recreation, wellbeing and mindfulness. I have had calls from residents about the presence of bats, and newts in gardens and porches when it rains and regular sightings of Muntjac Deer. I have heard about the value of the land as a dark sky site and those who simply benefit from recreation, exercise and dog walking there.

It is a valued and valuable green belt site and serves the exact purpose in preventing sprawl, protecting character and protecting the countryside as it should. This area of land is too valuable to lose.

The same value is attached to SO3061 Handsworth Hall farm on Finchwell Rd. This did have an historic landfill site and has areas of historic heritage industrial sites as well as allotments and the area is crisscrossed with footpaths and acts as an important buffer between housing and industry at Waverly and the Advanced Manufacturing Site, or Sheffield and Rotherham.

There has been some shoddy methodology in the identification of sites for release. I do not understand why this volume of land should need to be released. There are many small sites across the city where development has started in order to protect permissions and stalled, or been banked for land values to rise. But I have no recollection of an audit of outstanding small-scale sites or brownfield sites being conducted to identify the possibilities of available existing land. The housing strategy was only agreed after the draft of the local plan was produced. If we have no knowledge of the land available and of the housing need for the city, any plan is faulty in the extreme. The loss of green belt land compounds the initial lazy methodology and the unequal spread of sites is unsustainable and intensifies pressure in the existing communities.

There is brown field land remaining for development. It may be harder to develop or more expensive than greenfield sites, but it acts as a catalyst for regeneration. But we have no idea how much and where that land is and how far these sites will satisfy the requirement for a five-year land supply until a proper appraisal is conducted. Yet with the lack of a five-year land supply and in the absence of an adopted local plan, simply the mention of release of green belt sites makes them vulnerable to speculative applications, which will intensify; the local plan in development is given more weight the closer we get to adoption. We need proper assessment and no green belt release or plan adoption until this work is undertaken thoroughly and properly.

SCC adopted the idea of a 15-minute neighbourhood. Small sustainable communities where homes, jobs, facilities, services and recreation are all available within a 15-minute walk. This was why master planning was used when the Mosborough townships were developed and why Kelham has been successful.

Officers demand of communities and members that they offer up alternative sites to replace existing ones included in the plan. This was part of the briefing given by general counsel in preparation for the EGM at which the local plan site release was approved. I find this extraordinary that those with professional qualifications should make this demand of amateurs. However, I will offer this. I believe strongly that the collection of low-grade green field sites especially in the west of the city should be subject to a thorough master planning exercise to allow for the development of small-scale sustainable neighbourhoods and communities to be created there. Costs may be higher, but developers would welcome a chance to build because the developments would be popular and there would be a unique opportunity to create new communities fit for the future within the city boundary, even within the Peak Park. Starting from

scratch would allow a focus on the provision of transport, industry, business, facilities and services and provide more people the opportunity to live in a desirable part of the city. Real town planning.

By developing in this way, officers could also take the opportunity to secure valued local open space and green field sites by doing a land swap to secure them the most highly protected status of green belt. We are missing a chance as a city by acting in this moribund way, and I ask that you demand more by refusing to approve the local plan and the green belt release and send the document back for further quality work to be undertaken.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

Cllr Dianne Hurst

Elected Member for Richmond Ward

Leader of the Sheffield Community Councillors Group