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Dear resident,

The Council has proposed several green belt sites in the city will be allocated for housing in the local plan.

All Councils must agree a local plan for their area which will decide the sites where houses and jobs will be located in the next 15 years. Councils have to identify sites for a set number of homes to meet anticipated need, with the total of homes in all the local plans ensuring that the national target of an extra 300,000 plus homes per year can be built. If the Council does not pass a local plan, then there will be little restriction on developers building on any vacant sites. Just voting against a local plan does not stop development.

The previous original plan took a brownfield first approach with the majority of all housing on brownfield sites. This plan was agreed by all the 3 parties who run the Council jointly (Labour, Lib Dems, and Greens). The independent Planning Inspectorate who must approve the Plan have told the Council to find land for an additional 3527 houses which would have to be on green belt as all brownfield sites have been allocated. The Council is not run by one Party. It is run jointly by Labour, Lib Dems and Greens. Labour and the Greens supported the current proposal. The Lib Dems opposed it despite having initially given their approval to all the sites in this area. By opposing the plan, they would have allowed development on all the sites anyway.

The current proposals mean nearly half of all the new housing development on green belt land would be in Handsworth. While we all recognise, we need to be building more houses, this figure is far too high for just one area. We need a far more equal spread of housing development throughout the city to ensure one community does not lose all its green belt land while other parts of the city lose none of theirs. The reason that there are more homes proposed for this area is that the Council planners advised that they could only consider sites previously proposed for development or sites the council owns. This was not a requirement of the Planning Inspectorate but one the council set itself.

I am now working with a residents' campaign and their working group to challenge this proposal at the public consultation. This is the opportunity to ensure your voices are heard when it comes to this unfair allocation of land being developed and the strain it will have in infrastructure and services.

I am holding a **public meeting on the 13th June at the Handsworth Social Club from 18:30PM** for residents to discuss and ask questions about the sites and process. If you would like to attend, please contact my office via the details at the top of this letter and we can add you to the registration list. I recognise there will be a high demand, but I want to ensure as many people can attend as possible. I also understand this is short notice, but events are moving fast, and we wanted to hold a public meeting in good time before the end of the consultation.

I also have a mailing list to update residents on this issue and the work I am doing on it. If you would like to sign up, please just email my office and my team can add you to it.

Everyone can send in comments as part of the Consultation which will go to the Planning Inspectorate. They will then hold a public Inquiry later in the year. In the meantime, please let me have your views and ideas about better sites for inclusion in the Plan.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Betts
MP for Sheffield South East