

Petition Evidence & Statement of Community Support

On behalf of the Sheffield Green Belt Alliance

1. Purpose

This representation is submitted on behalf of the Sheffield Green Belt Alliance. Its purpose is to place before the examination evidence of the scale, breadth and seriousness of community concern about the proposed Green Belt allocations and the way the Local Plan process has developed.

The proposed Additional Site Allocations were introduced very late and were not part of the Plan as many residents understood it during earlier consultation. Despite this, residents engaged in good faith; submitting thousands of representations, attending hearings, and raising material concerns about whether these sites are appropriate, justified, deliverable and capable of meeting the housing numbers now relied upon. The Inspectors' post-hearing letter of January 2026 leaves the proposed allocations materially unchanged. Many residents feel their concerns have not been heard.

This petition evidence is not a substitute for earlier engagement. It is evidence that concern has continued, widened and hardened. It is directed in particular to MM10, MM87 and MM90–MM93 (housing strategy, land supply and trajectory), MM60, MM63, MM68, MM71, MM74 and MM80 (sub-area and boundary modifications), and the site-specific Main Modifications in Annex A.

2. Scale and Breadth of Community Concern

Residents have submitted thousands of representations through formal channels; the Alliance understands over 3,500 during the June consultation and approximately 2,500 during the December consultation. The petition figures below represent a continuation of that engagement, not a replacement for it.

[Save Sheffield's Green Belt Petition](#)

Signatures - All Platforms (as at 2 May 2026)

Platform	Signatures
Change.org	3,507
Online forms	2,504
Hard-copy petitions	1,834
Combined total	7,845

Wider Community Reach

Measure	Total
Combined Facebook group membership across SGBA groups	11,788
Combined site-specific Change.org petitions (excluding Sheffield Alliance petition)	19,172

Breakdown by Community Group

Site / Community Group	Change.org (02/05/26)	Facebook (01/05/26)
Chapelton Group	3,730	2,100
Ecclesfield	908	—
Grenoside	4,923	—
Ecclesfield & Grenoside Group	N/A	1,900
Chapelton, Ecclesfield & Grenoside Page	N/A	5,200
S12 Group	3,072	688
Handsworth Group	3,967	1,900
Lodge Moor & Redmires	2,572	N/A
Totals	19,172	11,788

These figures demonstrate concern that is geographically distributed across multiple communities, not confined to one area or group. It is recognised that some individuals may have signed more than one petition; duplicates have been identified within digital platforms where possible. This does not affect the overall conclusion: **there is substantial, continuing and widespread community concern about the proposed allocations.**

3. The Council's Own Admissions

As reported in the Alliance's open letter of [20 March 2026 to the Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council](#), the Leader of the Council, Cllr Tom Hunt, has acknowledged that the distribution of Green Belt release is "unfair", that "given more time the Plan might have looked different", and that the Council "may not have got it right".

At a [Local Area Committee meeting at Woodhouse Library on 17 June 2025](#), Michael Johnson, Head of Planning, was asked how the Green Belt release would improve quality of life for residents. His on-the-record response was that there would be "an impact on communities and sacrifices will be needed", and that he "sympathised with residents".

These statements come from those directly responsible for the Plan. They acknowledge unfairness, possible error and reliance on community sacrifice. The Alliance submits that this raises serious doubt as to whether the Plan satisfies paragraph 35(a) of the NPPF (requiring a positively prepared strategy consistent with

sustainable development) and paragraph 35(b), which requires the strategy to be justified and reasonable alternatives to have been adequately explored.

4. Process Complexity and Engagement Failures

Over 300 examination documents have been issued since publication of the Draft Plan, including revised housing supply calculations, new technical evidence and site-specific material. The Main Modifications consultation has been extended following further changes, producing modifications to the modifications. The material on which the public has been asked to comment no longer resembles the Plan consulted upon at Regulation 18 and 19, nor the version put to elected members. With no accessible summaries to aid navigation, this complexity has created a significant barrier to meaningful participation for residents without planning expertise.

It was against this backdrop that the Alliance launched the Save Sheffield's Green Belt petition. The Main Modifications consultation process was so technically complex and legalistic that it created a meaningful barrier to participation for many residents; including, the Alliance understands, some respondents with professional planning and legal backgrounds. The Alliance has actively encouraged and supported individuals to submit their own formal objections. However, it has also been clear that petition signatures would be submitted as evidence of community concern, and **for many residents this represents their primary means of engagement with this stage of the process, in place of a formal representation.** The petition was therefore designed not as a campaigning tool but as an accessible route into a process that the formal consultation structure had made inaccessible to many.

The Council has cited participation levels as evidence of successful consultation. That assessment does not reflect how engagement was actually achieved. Residents and tenants directly affected by site allocations were never notified. Requests for planning officers to attend community meetings (including those facilitated via the local Member of Parliament) were declined. High levels of engagement were driven by community groups and volunteers, not the Council.

That this standard was not inevitable is demonstrated by a recent Council housing policy consultation, which delivered a 12-week period, 66 in-person events, targeted outreach to under-represented groups, and accessible materials with assisted participation, all within the same broad timeframe as Local Plan preparation. The Local Plan, which identifies specific sites and directly affects identifiable communities, was not supported by anything comparable.

The petition was structured across multiple channels:

- a public online platform (change.org);
- a dedicated online form via a website with appropriate data consent;
- hard-copy forms for residents without digital access.

This structure was designed to fill the gap the Council left; ensuring that residents without digital access, or without the capacity to navigate a formal consultation, were not excluded entirely. It is a proportionate response to a process that placed unrealistic demands on residents while providing insufficient support.

5. Conclusion

The Sheffield Green Belt Alliance asks the Inspectors to give this petition evidence proper weight as evidence of continuing, widespread and serious community concern. Residents have engaged repeatedly and in good faith. Many are left with the clear impression that their concerns have not been meaningfully reflected in the Plan and that the allocations remain effectively untouched.

The petition records not only opposition to particular sites, but a wider loss of confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of the process. The Alliance asks the Inspectors to consider whether the proposed allocations can properly be found sound where such extensive and unresolved concerns remain.