

Representation on the Sheffield Plan Publication (Pre-Submission) Draft

Respondent details

Comment ID number: PDSP.246.001

What is your Name: Howard61

If you are making this representation as a member of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation:

N/A

If you or your organisation are making a representation on behalf of another person, organisation or group, please tell us who it is and its role:

N/A

Document

Which document to you wish to make a representation on:

Part 1: Vision, Spatial Strategy, Sub-Area Policies and Site Allocations

Which section of the document is your representation on:

Policy SA5: Southeast Sheffield

Which paragraph/site/map layer of the document is representation on:

N/A

Representation

Do you consider the Local Plan is legally compliant: Yes

Do you consider the Local Plan is sound: Yes

Do you consider the Local Plan complies with the duty to co-operate: Yes

Please give details of why you consider the Local Plan is not legally compliant or is unsound or fails to comply with the duty to co-operate:

Comments Supporting Local Greenspace Designation

I would like to express my support for Policy SA5 item f, i.e. the designation of Owlthorpe Fields as a Local Green Space. This is in line with paragraph 101, 102 and 103 of the NPPF (July 2021). Specifically, the evidence provided for the designation as Local Green Space by the community is fully in compliance with the requirements stated in NPPF paragraph 102:

With specific reference to the above, I would like to qualify my support for Green Space Designation as set out in the draft Local Plan by referencing individual criteria as listed in NPPF paragraph 102.

1. The land has to be reasonably close to the community it serves:

Of note is that there is no precise definition of this in the NPPF and rather it is generally left with local planning authorities to provide their own definition. However, of note is that Owlthorpe Fields lie between the residential communities of Owlthorpe (including those both sides of the tram track) and Edenthorpe and is close to those communities of Hackenthorpe, Waterthorpe and Mosborough, highlighting the large number of communities that benefit from the Fields as Green Space. Of importance in this respect, the area is certainly not isolated from the community and indeed is practically outside the front door of some of the local residents in Owlthorpe. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that the Fields are actively used by people beyond the immediate communities.

2. Be demonstrably special to a local community and holding a particular local significance: Specifically, the land must fulfil one or more of the following criteria, namely beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife:

(a) Beauty:

By way of their location and topography, the Fields certainly contribute to the local identity and character of the area. In this respect, over the past 20 years or so, the Fields have rewilded from formerly scrubland into a flourishing landscape with genuine character. All four seasons are visibly demonstrated via an abundance and diversity of trees and shrubs with seasonal changes in colours from vivid greens through autumnal golds to the almost sparsity in winter as nature seeks to rebuild stocks for the next seasonal rotation of hues.

Importantly, there is abundant opportunity for the Fields to form an integral part of a wildlife corridor extending between Waterthorpe and Beighton. Such corridors serve as travelling avenues for wildlife species between two previously fragmented habitat areas with the resulting collective functioning more as a larger habitat, offering more resources and thereby supporting more extensive and potentially diverse local wildlife. In the long term, what would otherwise be isolated areas can become harmonious regions supporting larger populations, thereby serving to address the demise of local specie numbers that are presently happening widely across the UK. This potential, along with the inherent natural beauty of the Fields, is readily apparent when the Fields are viewed from an elevated prominence merely ~200 m to the south, with the Fields' Local Green Space designation providing both a local habitat diversity and wildlife haven but also the important interconnectivity with similar sites that will aid further diversification of habitat and wildlife alike.

(b) Historic significance:

Although there are not known to be historic archaeological sites on the Fields themselves, the Fields are bordered by, and offer excellent views over, historic landmarks including the ancient woodlands of Ochre Dyke, the recently designated Hanging Lea Wood and that bordering properties in Owlthorpe to the south of the tram tracks. Furthermore, from a local elevated site referenced previously, the views are extensive and far reaching in all directions.

(c) Recreational value:

The Fields offer immense value to the local community by way of providing 'an abundance of nature on one's doorstep'. The Fields are actively used by young and old alike for light sporting activities (a kick pitch), exercise, dog-walking, families enabling parents to introduce their young children to nature and for those a little older amongst us for which access to such nature hotspots locally is so important as their ability to visit parks and open spaces more distant for some becomes increasingly difficult. In this respect, from a personal perspective, it is readily

apparent that the local open spaces including the National Parks (primarily relevant here being the Peak District) have become increasingly more accessible and hence visited. This is good in that nature has become more accessible to all, but this should not be at the expense of those local areas that when nurtured can also flourish and offer scenic and wildlife havens without the need for motorised transport to more distant places. In this respect also, such a scenario is more likely to encourage local communities to become more active in maintaining and better still enhancing further the beauty and diversity of local Green Space areas. This is exemplified in the case of Owlthorpe Fields by local residents being actively involved in hedge laying practices and tree pruning, in addition to harvesting an abundance of fruit from the local orchard.

In terms of value to the community, it is well recognised that the advent of Covid drew attention to local 'sanctuaries' as beneficial to people's mental health and well-being; simply put, allowing folk of all ages to get away from the stresses and strains of modern life.

(d) Tranquility:

With an ever-growing population and one that continues to spread out into the countryside, it has become increasingly difficult in urbanised areas to retain an aspect of tranquility. However, the Fields do in fact provide this attribute as away from the local roads, they are indeed quiet and at extremes of the day, are peaceful and offer the calm and space for quiet reflection, a characteristic that seems to be increasingly missing from the tempo of modern life.

(e) Richness of wildlife:

The thorough and detailed logging of flora and fauna by residents in the local community, and ultimately collated by the Owlthorpe Fields Action Group (OAG) and logged onto the Wildlife Database has demonstrated unequivocally the Fields as providing an ideal environment to foster an abundance of habitat and in turn an extensive array of bird species, invertebrates, flora etc. Such diversity is an increasingly rare commodity in Britain's seemingly rapidly shrinking open spaces. In this respect, the designation of the Fields in 2021 as a Local Wildlife Site adds further credence to the Fields being retained to provide this much valued and needed landscape and its associated diversity of flora and fauna. Examples of birds, some of which are included on the UK red list, are yellowhammer, fieldfare and woodcock whilst those amber listed include kestrel, song thrush and bullfinch. Strong indicator species on the Fields include the cuckoo flower, oxeye daisy and the southern marsh orchid.

3. The land needs to be 'local in character and not an extensive tract of land' As highlighted previously, the Fields are indeed local in character and are essentially self-contained with clearly defined edges being by way of Ochre Dyke and its associated ancient woodland to the north, Hanging Lea wood to the southeast, a neighbouring local wildlife site to the west and the present residential areas of Owlthorpe running to the southwest.

Please note: All evidence submitted for this application is available for scrutiny should it be required.

Howard Smith: February 7th, 2023

Please set out the modification(s) you consider necessary to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound, in respect of any legal compliance or soundness matters you have identified above:

Not completed by respondent

If your representation is seeking a modification to the plan, do you consider it necessary to participate in examination hearing session(s):

Not completed by respondent

If you wish to participate in the hearing session(s), please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

N/A