

Ecological Owlthorpe
Michael Meredith
22 Royston Avenue Owlthorpe
Sheffield S20 6SG
Mobile: 07869 223277
Email: ecologicalowlthorpe@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org>

Rural Payments Agency
Information Rights Team
Eden Bridge House
Carlisle CA3 8DX

Date: 15th March 2022

Dear Sirs,

In response to your reply to my letter dated 2nd March 2022. Ref: RFI 6137.

I have no objections to statements made with regard to third parties and request you continue with research. I look forward to your response.

Extract from page 7 of my complaint to Parliamentary Ombudsman:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/ParliamentaryOmbudsmanTwo.pdf>

I have written to Michael Johnson the Head of Planning, Sheffield City Council to inform him of my communication with the Ombudsman, hear is his reply: "Dear Mr Meredith, I am writing to thank you for sending the below correspondence and to confirm we will respond fully with any Ombudsman enquiry that is forthcoming. Kind regards Michael"

Reasons for request: Background information.

I have been requesting information under the freedom of information act 2000 with regard to stewardship agreements and payments made to Sheffield City Council. Our award-winning oasis was opened in 2012 by Clive Betts MP for Sheffield South East. The Land management was undertaken and monitored by Natural England by their Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme. As stated on interpretation boards:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Interpritation.htm> the interpretation boards show the extent of work carried out. Some 795 local school children and hundreds of members of the local community supported by Crystal Peaks shopping mall and Retail Park were all involved in the project. Our oasis is used on a regular basis for recreation and to educate school children.

The maps on all the interpretation boards show the boundaries of our Oasis. Also <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/ecologicalserveys.html> shows the extensive work undertaken by Derek Whiteley producing Owlthorpe Meadows Invertebrate Survey's – 2010 – 2011 and 2012. All local citizens want to know exactly what is covered by the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

In the Appeal Decision Inquiry Held on 12-15, 19, and 21 January 2021

Site visit made on 20 January 2021 by **O S Woodward** BA(Hons.) MA MRTPI an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State Decision date: 2 March 2021

Reference number: 89. "A contribution of £230,400.00 is secured towards off-site biodiversity."

Reference number: 95. "In the interest of visual amenity and ecology, a contribution of £22,935.91 is

secured towards the provision of tree planting on land adjoining the site. This is required in order to compensate for the loss of trees within the appeal site. The calculation has been made using the Helliwell method that assesses the value of the trees to be lost compared to the contribution required to adequately replace them. The land is owned and managed by the Council, and maintenance responsibilities is to be set out in the LEMP. It is necessary, reasonable and related to the development.”

At the site visit described in O S Woodards Appeal Decision, Howard Baxter (Sheffield (LPD) and members of Avant Homes team showed the Inspector a patch of land to the left of the trail saying they could do something to compensate for the disturbance of trees and vegetation on site E. They were pointing to phase 1 of the grazing project as described in: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO09OwlthorpeMeadowsInvertebrateSurvey2011.pdf> We believe this area is covered by the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme we also believe other areas are also covered by the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

Howard Baxter (Sheffield LPA) and O S Woodwards have their views which do not take into account: National Planning Policy Framework February 2019: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: 2. Achieving sustainable development: 8c “an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.

Extract from my report on the round table event regarding housing supply: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-20roundtableeventregardinghousingsupply.pdf> I suggested to the Inspector that Avant Homes should move their project to the disused Aerodrome at Norton, which is a Brownfield site by definition boasting many derelict buildings in need of redevelopment. I explained that the MOD may be responsible for removing asbestos from the site. Reported in Sheffield Star March 29th 2021 “Demolition finally gets underway at former air base.” Buildings have now been removed, so there is no reason why Avant Homes cannot remove their project to the Aerodrome at Norton. I thought this would be a win win situation for all concerned and would conform with the statement announced by the Secretary of State: **“Brownfield sites developed before Greenfield sites”**. When I requested that the Inspector should suggest this to the Secretary of State he suggested that “speaking to the Secretary of State is above his pay grade.” This is very concerning as the Inspector is supposed to be appointed by the Secretary of State. Guy Williams Barrister acting for Sheffield City Council thanked me for trying to obtain funding from two separate government funds. Evidence of this exchange can be viewed on You Tube. If the evidence has been taken down copies of the event have been taken and can be supplied. My first question to the Parliamentary Ombudsman is why did Inspector O S Woodwards dismiss my suggestion which is in line with government directive and statement by secretary of state for housing?

What I am looking for is the detailed payments from 2012 to present date and maps that show exactly what is covered. I realise that Sheffield City Council have their records but my request under the freedom of information act 2000 is for copies that you hold.

Thank you for your attention

Kind Regards

Michael Meredith