

Please help save Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail by

signing our petition to Parliamentary Ombudsman: <https://chnq.it/FPc7X4Nq>

also, our petition to Sheffield City Council: <https://chnq.it/6vXHqcGG4S>

Residents in Owlthorpe have not been informed that Sheffield (LPA) are proposing to build 150 New Homes on plot F destroying The Grassland Grazing Project, which is a major component of Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail, until we started this petition.

Proof of Sheffield (LPA) intentions are shown in extracts: from S H E F F I E L D C I T Y C O U N C I L South East Local Area Committee Meeting held 11 January 2023. PRESENT: Councillors Karen McGowan (Chair), Kurtis Crossland, Tony Downing, Bryan Lodge, Bob McCann, Kevin Oxley, Gail Smith, and Ann Woolhouse.

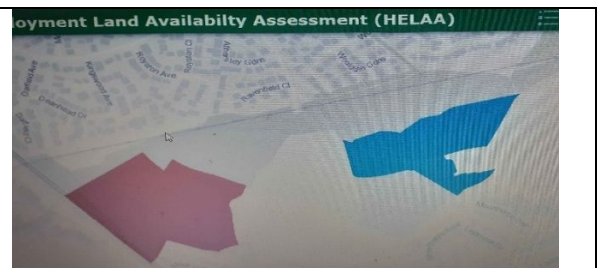
“7. DRAFT SHEFFIELD PLAN 7.1 The Committee received a presentation from Simon Vincent, Strategic Planning and Service Manager, Planning Service, on progress regarding the Draft Sheffield Plan. Mr Vincent reported on the aims and objectives of the Plan, which would replace the Sheffield Core Strategy (2009) and the Unitary Development Plan (1998), how the Plan would affect southeast Sheffield.

Questioner 2 (Michael Meredith) –you mentioned about plot F in Owlthorpe. When they were first brought out they were C, D, E and F, then F was dropped out, I believe it was dropped out because you couldn't get access to the road at the top, because it was thought it was too dangerous, where you going to get access to this site, is it going to come through site E or how you going to get access to it?

(Answer) – Access is still an issue that would need to be looked at but would expect it to come from the main road it would not be from site E so it is likely to come off the main road.

(Michael Meredith)- What about the Fire Brigade at the top, you've put the fire station there, I doubt if you could get it past? You mentioned you want to build 150 houses; the site is only the same size as site E which has 74 houses, what are you going to build high rise?

Plot E is **Blue**. Avant Homes have crammed 74 New Homes into this small plot.
Plot F is **Red**. This plot is about the same size as E but Sheffield (LPA) wants to cram 150 New Homes into our Grazing Plot. Used by Greaves Park Animal Farm to Graze Highland Cattle and other animals. Parents love to take their children to see the animals. Hands off our Grazing plot.



(Answer) – No it wouldn't be high rise in that location, but it might be a mix of houses of different sizes, so you might expect to see some smaller units.

(Michael Meredith) – Site E is matchbox size, they are horrendous.

(Answer) – New houses that will be build would have to comply with the new space standards, that the plan would introduce and that would be an improvement in terms of what has been built in the city by private developers, across Sheffield in the last 10 years.

(Michael Meredith) – Are you aware that you are proposing to build on the Owlthorpe grassland and grazing project, which is part of the Owlthorpe heritage and nature trail?

(Answer) – The site was part of a whole series of sites, which were considered for housing and unitary development plan. We did look at whether some of that land could be reallocated as part of the new plan. It was probably 10 years ago when it was consulted on, these were the first steps taken with the plan and has taken a long time to get to this stage. During that period national planning policy has changed quite a lot and so there is big emphasis on providing more housing and one of the decisions the council has had to make is whether to build on greenbelt land, which is designated as green belt or to allow some development to take place on greenfield sites which are not greenbelt. Owlthorpe F is not greenbelt, it is a greenfield site, but we have to show that we are maximising all opportunities to deliver new homes within the existing built-up areas of Sheffield to satisfy the **inspector**.

(Michael Meredith) – I suggested to O S Woodward's planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State, that Avant homes move their project to Norton Aerodrome. Sheffield City Council's barrister said that he thought it was a good idea. I explained that there was already funding from the government for Owlthorpe from Natural England for the Owlthorpe Heritage nature trail and also there is funding to redevelop the Norton Aerodrome. Sheffield City Council's barrister thought it was an extremely good idea. You are destroying grassland if you go ahead with this proposal. I made my objections directly to Simon Vincent. Our formal objection can be viewed on the front page of our website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org> together with our open Letter response to Clive Betts MP.

Simon Vincent and all councillors present at the meeting praised representatives of Owlthorpe Fields Action Group for having site C and D allocated as a wildlife sanctuary. But wait, what have they all overlooked? On March 16th 2012 Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail was opened with an official event by 795 children from three local primary schools assisted by Clive Betts MP for Sheffield South East and other Sheffield City Councillors. Our Oasis spreads all the way down from Moor Valley to Moss Way. The <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Interpritation.htm> shows the extent of work carried out under the guidance of Natural England, which proves that the whole site is a wildlife sanctuary, boasting many species. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/ecologicalserveys.html> The following lists give an indication of the biological diversity of species including Ancient Woodland Indicators that can be seen in Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail are as follows: Vertebrates 96 species in total, 78 Species of Birds, 16 Species of Mammals, 1 species each of Amphibian & reptile. Invertebrates 295 species in total including 95 species of Butterflies & Moths Flora 452 species in Total.

I have made formal complaints to the Planning Inspectorate and the Parliamentary Ombudsman evidence can be seen here: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/letters.htm> Clive Betts MP and Michael Johnson the Head of Planning, Sheffield City Council have been informed. Here is Michael Johnson's response: "Dear Mr Meredith, I am writing to thank you for sending the below correspondence and to confirm we will respond fully with any Parliamentary Ombudsman enquiry that is forthcoming. Kind regards Michael"

Facts Matter:

In 2012 our Oasis was government funded by Natural England. The grassland & Grazing projects objective is to manage our grasslands and safeguard the wildflower and wildlife for future generations to enjoy. The grazing project is part of a programme of strategic planting to link up the green corridors of Sheffield. In Summer, Parents love to bring their children to see the Highland cattle, alpaca's and other animals grazing. Animals are Supplied by Graves Park Animal Farm.

Facts Matter:

Residents of Owlthorpe believed that our Oasis is still covered by the agreement with Natural England. Under the freedom of information act I have received maps and payment structure. The map I have been using is from Natural England and shows the area that is covered by the agreement. The payment structure shows that Sheffield City Council started receiving payments in 2013, although the structure is still in place Sheffield City Council stopped taking payments in **2020???**

Facts Matter:

Published 26th Feb **2020**, by Lucy Ashton, Local Democracy Reporter. War of words breaks out over plans to build 500 homes on Sheffield wildlife haven. A war of words has broken out between councillors over plans to build up to 500 homes on a Sheffield wildlife haven. Beighton Liberal Democrat councillor Bob McCann is among those who oppose the development, saying it will damage the environment.

Facts Matter:

After the proposal was rejected. Sheffield City Council (LPA) decided to use deception to achieve their objectives. They split the site up into units C, D, E and F. Plot F was left out and plot C, D and E were put up for sale. A proposal to build 74 properties on plot E was rejected.

Facts Matter:

In deliberation **Cllr Jack Clarkson** explained that the site is a wildlife site and would be a massive loss of green space if developed, used by dog walkers etc. **Cllr Andrew Sanger** asked the question: Why were the sites not sold as one? It seems in deliberation that the council did not want an Ecology Impact Assessment. By selling them off separately they could avoid this type of assessment. **Cllr Peter Garbutt** said "All three sites should be taken as one site" and asked the question: Does there need to be an Environmental Impact Assessment if they are? He also had concerns about traffic problems. Labour **Cllr Chris Rosling-Josephs** explained that traffic in the area is horrendous, especially around Crystal Peaks but also in the surrounding area and that a full independent traffic assessment needs to be taken before the council considers any more developments in the area.

Facts Matter:

The planning Solicitor, Kate, explained procedure and vote was taken with many of the committee citing traffic impact as the reason for rejecting this application. **The result was 10 against with 2 abstentions**. After the vote was taken Colin Walker Interim Head said **"I think there is a significant risk if you throw Highways impact into this as a reason for refusal and that risk is that you effectively neutralise the site in residential terms."** Highways impact was removed from the legal document. I would like to know why Planning Inspector O S Woodward refused to review this document?

Facts Matter:

Simon Vincent explained that he is already in discussions with the Planning Inspector regarding plot F. Once the planning inspector has given the go ahead it is very hard to change hearts and minds. If we are to stop this project, we need to act fast. Once the go ahead is given Sheffield City Council can then put the land out to tender. Once a builder is found, at this time a public enquiry may be called for and a Planning Inspector appointed. As we saw with plot E the public enquiry is just a rubber-stamping exercise. The decision is already made between those that want to build. Public opinion is totally ignored.

Facts Matter:

I have been in dispute with the planning inspectorate about the building on plot E. I have followed advice from the Parliamentary Ombudsman's office and exhausted the planning inspectorates' complaints procedure. Staff at Parliamentary Ombudsman's office say I have presented a good case. Evidence can be seen Hear:

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/letters.htm>

Facts Matter:

I, like many others, have been suffering from long covid. I have found it difficult to walk without a walking stick. Gary from Owlthorpe Fields invited me to watch hedgerow maintenance. Garry supplied a chair for me to sit on. Thank you, Garry. As I watched I wondered why the hedgerow had become so neglected, especially as Sheffield City Council had been receiving government funds from Natural England?

Facts Matter: Dated: 2nd February 2023

"Natural England's commitment is that the public should be able to access green space or water, such as woodlands, wetlands, parks and rivers, within a 15-minute walk from their home." Sheffield Planners take note.

Facts Matter:

We voted for a committee type of council. Sheffield South East LAC was formed. The electorate thought that the public would have a better say on how Sheffield South East is run. The problem is that residents are not being informed about important decisions that are being made. We need to inform our Local Councillors how we feel about the destruction of our Grassland & Grazing project which is a major part of Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail.

Thank you for your support Michael Meredith