

ROTHERHAM ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Response to: Core Strategy and Site Options

Rotherham Archaeological Society - (Registered Charity No. 504513)
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ROTHERHAM ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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Rotherham MBC – LDF Site Options 2011 Bassingthorpe Farm Urban Extension

Rotherham Archaeological Society comments are as follows:

The Society would like to register its objections to the removal of several sites from the Green Belt as proposed in the Bassingthorpe Farm Urban Extension proposals. Comments in relation to specific sites are outlined on pages 4 & 5.

Planning Policies:

PPG2 Green Belts – The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The 5 purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, which have been an essential element of planning policy for some four decades. The purposes of Green Belt policy and the related development control policies set out in 1955 remain valid today with remarkably little alteration. PPG2 also “confirms that Green Belts must be protected as far as can be seen ahead

The use of land in Green Belts

1.6 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses

1.7 The extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is however not itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt, or in its continued protection. For example, although Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection. The purposes of including land in Green Belts are of paramount importance to their continued protection, and should take precedence over the land use objectives.

The Green Belt sites in question link together and provide an important green lung that almost reaches Rotherham town centre and provides a rural aspect to what could easily have become a major area of urban sprawl. Fortunately, they were retained within the Green Belt when the Green Belt Local Plan was approved and this did not change when the Unitary Development Plan was finally adopted in 1999. It is even more important now that the area should retain its Green Belt status and be protected for its own sake, particularly for its landscapes, agriculture, natural resources and areas of ecological, historic, archaeological and recreational value.

The area includes Listed Buildings (Bassingthorpe Farm, Glossop Lodge and Barbot Hall are all Grade II listed) and historic parklands associated with Wentworth Woodhouse which are nationally important and whose integrity and setting should be protected.

There is an Ancient Woodland adjacent to the site generally to the west, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to the south, and both a Local Wildlife Site and a Candidate Local Wildlife Site within its boundaries. There are Tree Preservation Orders within the boundaries, as well as hedgerows, footpaths, a bridleway and allotment gardens. All would suffer adverse impacts if large scale development was allowed.

Extract from PPS7 states that the Governments objectives are:

- (vi) To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas through the promotion of:**
- thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities, ensuring people have decent places to live by improving the quality and sustainability of local environments and neighbourhoods;
 - sustainable economic growth and diversification;
 - good quality, sustainable development that respects and, where possible, enhances local distinctiveness and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside; and
 - continued protection of the open countryside for the benefit of all, with the highest level of protection for our most valued landscapes and environmental resources.

(ii) To promote more sustainable patterns of development:

- focusing most development in, or next to, existing towns and villages;
- preventing urban sprawl;
- discouraging the development of ‘greenfield’ land, and, where such land must be used, ensuring it is not used wastefully;
- promoting a range of uses to maximise the potential benefits of the countryside fringing urban areas; and
- providing appropriate leisure opportunities to enable urban and rural dwellers to enjoy the wider countryside.

Extract from PPS1 states:

(ii) Good quality, carefully-sited accessible development within existing towns and villages should be allowed where it benefits the local economy and/or community (e.g. affordable housing for identified local needs); maintains or enhances the local environment; and does not conflict with other planning policies.

(iv) New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled; the Government’s overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all.

(v) Priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed (‘brownfield’) sites in preference to the development of greenfield sites, except in cases where there are no brownfield sites available, or these brownfield sites perform so poorly in terms of sustainability considerations (for example, in their remoteness from settlements and services) in comparison with greenfield sites.

(vi) All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.

Development on these sites will create a new urban sprawl that would result in the coalescence between Rotherham and Greasbrough. The all important view from the town centre would be visually impaired. Rotherham would no longer benefit from the open views which can be seen from the town centre and many of the approach roads. This ‘local distinctiveness’ should be considered as special and Rotherham should try to enhance and protect this – not destroy it. Once this area has been developed there is no going back.

Development on such a large scale would have an adverse impact on the existing infrastructure and would not help to regenerate the town centre. Meadowhall and Parkgate Retail World are well established as areas for shopping with free parking and all the additional facilities. Rotherham town centre cannot compete in this way. The decisions to allow the growth of Parkgate Retail World in particular have already had an irreversible adverse effect on the role Rotherham town centre can play as a general large scale shopping destination.

The way forward for the regeneration of Rotherham town centre is for the Council to concentrate on protecting and enhancing its built heritage (Jesus College, Walker Memorial and Three Cranes immediately come to mind) whilst providing opportunities for specialist/niche retail opportunities. In addition much could be done to enhance areas around important buildings such as the Chapel on the Bridge and create more opportunities for people to live as well as work within the town centre. Part of this must include the wider open rural aspect that can be viewed from the town centre.

In respect of site LDF0764 which is a preferred site for employment, there are considerable areas of Rotherham that have previously been used for various types of employment that are now derelict and in need of regeneration.

One example is the Eastwood Industrial Estate off Fitzwilliam Road where buildings are empty and left in an appalling condition and must have an adverse impact on visitors arriving to the town from that direction. Not least they must also have a visual adverse impact on the residents opposite. Sites like these need to be improved and used first before even considering Green Belt land for new areas of industrial/commercial use. Even where industrial sites are still in use it is a fact that promised screening and landscaping have never materialised and the industrial estate at Hellaby is a case in point. The site should remain within the Green Belt.

Continued....

Rotherham Archaeological Society Comments on specific sites:

LDF0163 Name: LAND SOUTH OF GREASBROUGH LA, NORTHEAST OF CINDER BRIDGE RD
We agree that this site should be retained as Green Belt. It includes Glossop Lodge a Grade II listed building. It is also an important area for local wildlife and its removal from the Green Belt would virtually sever a major link to an important Green Belt area that extends nearly into the heart of Rotherham. It becomes even more important if **LDF0162** is removed from the Green Belt.

LDF0162 Name: LAND NORTH OF SCROOBY LANE GREASBROUGH
This site should definitely be retained as Green Belt. This agricultural site has a tenuous link to existing development but not significant enough to remove it from its current Green Belt status. It has an important use as an open area with close access via a bridleway and includes hedgerows and streams. **It would significantly narrow the width of the Green Belt link north and south of Scrooby Lane.** It would also make the larger area of Green Belt to the south of Scrooby Lane more vulnerable to development in the future. It would be particularly important to retain this area of land within the Green Belt if **LDF0160** and **LDF0161** were to be developed.

LDF0768 Name: LAND SOUTH OF GREASBROUGH ROAD
This site continues the important link into the Green Belt area that extends into the heart of Rotherham and **should be retained as Green Belt and NOT downgraded to Urban Greenspace/ Countryside notation.** It is important to continue this Green Belt Link to site **LDF0112** Barbot Hall so that Barbot Hall area does not become isolated and increasingly vulnerable to development pressures in the future.

LDF0112 Name: BARBOT HALL
This large site is remote from the urban area of Greasbrough and **should be retained as Green Belt and NOT downgraded to Urban Greenspace/ Countryside notation.** The site is on a hillside and any development would have an adverse impact on Barbot Hall (Listed Building Grade II) and the wider landscape.

LDF0766 Name: BASSINGTHORPE FARM LAND, WEST OF QUARRY LANE
This site should be retained as Green Belt (with KIOPS) and NOT downgraded to Urban Greenspace/ Countryside notation because of the Important SSSI site at Bradgate Brickworks. In addition it continues the Green Belt nearly into the centre of Rotherham.

LDF0767 Name: BASSINGTHORPE FARM LAND, NORTH OF HENLEY RISE AND CLOUGH BANK
This site should be retained as Green Belt (with KIOPS) and NOT downgraded to Urban Greenspace/ Countryside notation because of its juxtaposition with **LDF0766** and its importance to the community in respect of allotment gardens etc.

LDF0159 Name: LAND SOUTH OF MUNSBROUGH LANE
This site should be retained as Green Belt. Development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Grade II listed building at Bassingthorpe Farm, historic parklands and the wider countryside. Because of the topography of the site, development would have a severe adverse impact on views from Rotherham town centre.

LDF0160 Name: LAND NORTH OF BARBOT HILL RD

This site should be retained as Green Belt. This site is considered to be a preferred development site by RMBC and it could be considered an extension to the existing urban area. However, green space would have to be provided within the site. **If this site is to be developed then it is essential that LDF0162 is retained within the Green Belt. It is also essential that LDF0764 is not used for employment purposes.** There are too many areas within the borough where people have to live alongside industrial/commercial development with the consequent disruption and adverse visual impacts.

LDF0161 Name: LAND BETWEEN CARR HILL AND SCROOBY LANE

This site should be retained as Green Belt. This site is considered to be a preferred development site by RMBC and it could be considered an extension to the existing urban area. However, green space would have to be provided within the site. **If this site is to be developed then it is essential that LDF0162 is retained within the Green Belt. It is also essential that LDF0764 is not used for employment purposes.** There are too many areas within the borough where people have to live alongside industrial/commercial development with the consequent disruption and adverse visual impacts.

LDF0765 Name: BASSINGTHORPE FARM LAND, SOUTH OF BASSINGTHORPE LANE &

LDF0157 Name: BASSINGTHORPE FARM LAND, NORTH EAST OF HENLEY LANE

LDF0765 and **LDF0157** are linked because of important Local Wildlife sites and the green corridor that they share:

These sites include Local Wildlife Site (LWS) 116 (Clough Streamside - wet woodland) and near to LWS 67 (Bassingthorpe Spring and Hudson's Rough - Ancient woodland). LWS116 provides a natural green corridor. Development on this site would compromise the Local Wildlife sites and put even more pressure on them. Even if there were attempts to protect them and shield them from the development it would be an impossible task. There would be an increased risk of misuse and vandalism.

In particular development on site LDF0765 would have an adverse impact on the Grade II listed Building at Bassingthorpe Farm.

These two sites should retain their current UDP status as Green Belt (with KIOPS in the case of LDF0157) **particularly as:**

LDF0158 Name: **LAND NORTHWEST OF MUNSBROUGH LANE** is allocated as residential in the adopted UDP. The site includes a public bridleway that runs along the south eastern edge and lies adjacent to LWS 67 Bassingthorpe Spring. There is already a need to protect and increase local biodiversity on this site without putting this area under even more stress if **LDF0765** in particular is developed.

LDF0764 Name: **LAND SOUTH OF BARBOT HILL ROAD**

This site should be retained within the Green Belt. This is considered to be a preferred site for employment by RMBC probably because it lies adjacent to Carr Hill Waste Refuse site, Greasbrough, which has been restored and returned to agriculture. However, this is all the more reason why this site should be retained within the Green Belt. Industrial/commercial use of this site would be in conflict to proposals to develop the sites **LDF0159** and **LDF0160** for housing. It would have an adverse visual impact on the immediate surrounding area and the wider landscape.