

Dear Inspectors,

Re. Sheffield Local Plan

Thank you for hearing my oral statement on Thursday 2nd October concerning the proposed additional site allocations and green belt deletions in the Sheffield Local Plan affecting my constituency of Penistone and Stocksbridge: NES36, NES37, NES38, NES39 (Grenoside and Ecclesfield); NWS30, NWS31 (Wharncliffe Side and Oughtibridge); and CH03, CH04, CH05 (Chapelton).

As I explained during the hearing, I was unable to address every site in my constituency in full. Enclosed with this letter is my complete oral statement as prepared prior to the 2nd October. My statement draws on information and views provided to me by constituents over several months of correspondence and conversation.

Since I spoke at the hearing, I have been informed that additional material relevant to specific sites was published on the Sheffield Local Plan website during the oral hearing stage. Constituents were given only a matter of days to read, understand, and respond to these new documents before they were required to address them in the hearings. In several instances, documents were released after the relevant sites had already been discussed, which my constituents informed me materially affected what they would have said in their representations.

While I welcome the opportunity for both oral and written comment on these publications, I am frustrated that these documents were not made available earlier. The timing of their release has increased constituents' concerns that the process has not been conducted in a fair and balanced manner.

I have also been informed that novel information was shared during the oral hearings concerning the contractual terms of the agricultural tenancy on site NES37. As my constituents told me, this disclosure has caused additional stress for affected constituents during an already difficult period.

I trust that you will give careful consideration to the matters above and to the full oral statement submitted with this letter. I am available to provide any further clarification, to answer questions, or to supply any additional information required.

I will follow the progress of the Local Plan with interest, and await the publication of your Preliminary Report early next year.

Yours faithfully,

Marie Tidball MP
Member of Parliament for Penistone and Stocksbridge

Marie Tidball MP's Oral Statement re. NES36, NES37, NES38, NES39, NWS30, NWS31, CH03, CH04, CH05; Sheffield Plan Inspectors' Hearings, 02 October 2025, 10:30 – 11:00

Video of Marie's speech is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wvz79eAONs&list=PLARaoiJAyWYf-6r2DrM5wOYHiNiTxWVsu&index=7>, 01:56:32 – 02:29:41 (accessed 11/12/2025)

Well, thank you very much, Inspector, for having me here today.

I am here because I have listened very carefully to my constituents both in public meetings that I have coordinated and a series of surgeries, advice surgeries with individual constituents, and a great deal of correspondence over the last few months. So, my evidence will be based on all of those different sources.

We have got a housing crisis across the authority. We know that there is a waiting list of around 26,400 people for social housing. I want my constituents to be able to stay near but go far. However, the extensive evidence that I have had from my constituents in the forms I have mentioned already of me, a number of the sites—and I will go through them in detail—does not satisfy the soundness test that you are looking at, and I have other concerns that some of the sites have not been positively prepared.

I do not want to repeat the content of the evidence and for the sake of clarity for my constituents the evidence that I gave on the basis of the contributions that they made has been made to you, and I will try not to be repetitious of the written evidence you have already received from me. However, I do just want to flag that overall one of the themes that did come out very strongly, which makes me rather concerned, is that some of the sites that I will be speaking to across my constituency have not been positively prepared, not least because the process of consultation in terms of accessibility, accessibility of documents, questions, opportunities to interact, was not felt to be satisfactory by my constituents.

There are other areas where they are not justified. Again, one of the things that came through very strongly is that there was not sufficient account taken of the reasonable alternatives based on proportionate evidence, and there are four elements to that.

First of all, that there was insufficient attempt to look at smaller green and grey belt sites across the city.

As has been presented to me by one of my constituents who is in the room today, they have not sufficiently saturated opportunities to utilize brownfield sites. I am very clear that the council wants to take a brownfield-first approach in this local plan, but I believe there is more work that could be done to enable a fairer share across the authority of green belt sites and that the density of some of the green belt sites proposed could be alleviated as a result of that.

Thirdly, I think there's an opportunity to do a strengthened element around empty properties and the availability of utilizing empty properties across the authority in the plan. I have made

it clear to my constituents and the council that that's something that I will be very keen to assist with where I can.

Fourthly, I think there is an opportunity, and I will speak to this a bit more both in my general points of overview but also around specific sites. There can be much more work done on density on existing site proposals, building along transport infrastructure routes that exist already, and the plan would be much more strengthened if there was an increased density in those areas. We all want to see people staying near, going far, and being closer to the transport infrastructure that's already in place. That would be a propitious way of achieving that.

Although I don't have a vote on this—I am not a councillor, I am a Member of Parliament—it is important to me that I reflect the views of my constituents. As I am contributing evidence today, I will be focusing on the sites across the Sheffield side of my constituency as affected by the local plan. Though I am aware you are looking at individual elements of that across a number of different days, I will be speaking across the piece on that.

For the purpose of my constituents, I will be speaking directly to their evidence on specific sites that are sound or otherwise, and trying where I can to discuss solutions for issues created by the allocated sites and how they can be made more effective. I have spoken to some of those already, but there are examples where some sites have been allocated to employment sites and they may be better suited to smaller density housing sites instead. I will also be speaking to soundness in terms of what remedies could be put in place. And I want to reassure my constituents that if they do not hear things today, it is because I am trying not to repeat what is already in my written evidence.

I will do some overall talking points just to give a real sense across the piece in terms of the green belt sites that have been allocated in my constituency and then I will go through where I can the individual sites.

1. A fairer distribution across the city

First of all I feel that there needs to be a fairer distribution across the city. Nine out of the fourteen green belt release sites are in the Penistone and Stocksbridge constituency comprising 41% of new housing and 60% of new employment land. They are clustered in the north and southeast. From what I can see there is currently insufficient justification for that disproportionate allocation. The distribution is not proportionate to current transport capacity. There are open space deficits and I know great concerns from my constituents that the community character of villages will be negatively affected. We need to see a wider spread across all community areas especially in the central urban area and along mass transit corridors. That would be more justified and effective.

It is fair to say that I really do believe we have got a housing crisis that is really important. But for some of these sites to ever be justified there needs to be a great deal of public transport infrastructure built in before and to enable that to be viable, and that is just not in that place at the moment. I want to see that as being the case, but it is not there yet.

2. Additional and better utilisation of brownfield sites

The second overview point is we need additional and better utilization of brownfield sites which I mentioned briefly in my opening. I am not convinced that the Sheffield City Council has demonstrated that they have given priority to previously developed land and small pockets of grey belt land that has not been previously developed before releasing the green belt sites. Sheffield has a deep bench of underused urban land and intensification opportunities that can deliver more homes with less land would be beneficial.

3. Grenoside sites are not suitable for housing

The message from my constituents, and this is my third general point, is that Grenoside sites are not suitable for housing and there are a number of overview reasons for this. Firstly, public transport. There are no rail or tram services within a reasonable walk or bus journey to these sites. There are limited direct buses and certainly there is no direct bus link between Grenoside and Chapeltown Station, and that hardwires car dependence for locals living there for everyday work. Particularly getting to school and health services is a challenge. Another issue that has been raised is highways and safety. Wheel Lane and Creswick Lane are narrow, steep, and already congested at school times. There is a lot of junction stress and rat running which would worsen with these changes before a good local public transport policy was put in place.

There has also been concern raised around separation and character. The fields maintain the physical and visual break between Grenoside, Ecclesfield, and between villages and the urban edge at Fox Hill and Parson Cross. Something that did not come through as strongly in the written evidence but from meetings I have had subsequent to submitting that is the mental health and well-being elements that would be affected for those pieces of land to be lost. This is linked to the point around open space deficit. These sites are used for daily recreation. Local deficits in accessible green space would deepen without major off-site provision.

There are also concerns around biodiversity. I believe in building housing, and I think good house building can involve good biodiversity corridors. But a real concern has been raised by my constituents particularly around Yew Lane field and surrounding habitats that require buffers that materially erode developable land, and net gain would likely be off-site undermining local nature recovery.

I was a councillor previously myself and a cabinet member which means I am very familiar with the impact of flooding issues, and this was something that was raised numerous times by my constituents. I know some of my constituents have spent in excess of thirty thousand pounds in remedying existing flooding and sewage issues to their own individual housing. I know that thankfully our government is putting in place investment into flood alleviation projects in Blackburn Brook and other neighbouring sites. My concern is that with additional density, without other alleviation measures being pre-planned, they would be saturated, and it would have a negative impact on the mitigatory measures which we are trying to undertake and have not yet been completed.

4. Focus future development in areas with transport links

My fourth general point is the focus on future development in areas with transport links. We need to restore the SL1 tram link bus to connect the Upper Don Valley to the Supertram network and the city core. One of the things that I am pushing very hard for is this because I also think it could open up an opportunity for a 'hopper' bus around the villages of Wharncliffe Side, Oughtibridge, and Grenoside to link down to that tram link. But we do not have that yet and that will take some time to be in place. For clarity, we also do not have anymore, as a result of the previous government's decisions, the SL1 tram bus link to be an alternative. So, there is no straightforward route to connect people into Sheffield and from those neighbouring villages into Sheffield. The extension to the Sheffield tram to Stocksbridge via Deepcar, Wharncliffe Side, and Oughtibridge sequencing stops with housing delivery so transport comes first, not last, would make a significant change, but at the moment the level of proposals across the piece will not be alleviated by that infrastructure. Congestion and issues with highways as well as air pollution and noise pollution have been a significant concern raised by constituents of mine across the sites that are in the green belt allocation.

Moving specifically to sites in individual sites, I will try and focus on the remedies and asks and soundness under each element that I speak to be as succinct as I can. And I know many of my constituents are giving a great deal of detail.

NES37 – Land between Creswick Ave and Yew Ln

So turning to NES37, the land between Creswick Avenue and Yew Lane. One of the big themes that came out of discussions, and I have mentioned this briefly is the access and highways. Primary access would rely on Wheel Lane and Creswick Lane which are steep, narrow and already stressed at school peaks. The internal water course and adjacent local wildlife site fragment the site and complicate internal connectivity. The cumulative impact would escalate rat running and junction stress on the A61 corridors and having been around those parts of my constituency on numerous occasions I can testify to that, and I know constituents have sent through a great deal of evidence of photos at the peak times to demonstrate this. So, the remedy and ask from my constituencies is do not allocate for housing at this time. If retained for non-housing uses, it requires an access strategy that avoids the LWS limits gradients and funds off-site safety work sequence before any occupation.

Speaking to soundness, as housing, my constituents have reflected very strongly, it is not justified or effective for housing at this time, and there are better connected alternatives on character setting and identity in relation to this particular site. The land is the functional gap between Grenoside and Ecclesfield and contributes to the setting of Ecclesfield conservation area. Development would visually coalesce settlements and erode village identity. The remedy and ask here is to keep the land open, designate and strengthen green separation with path upgrades and landscape planting. On soundness, allocation would fail according to the evidence that I have had and received from my constituents justified and consistency with national policy tests on character.

The open plan and green infrastructure, daily walking and informal recreation already occur here. The local area has open space shortfalls. The remedy or ask is if the allocation is removed, package green belt compensatory improvements need to be put in place, formalized routes, play nature areas and flood storage meadows.

Turning to biodiversity and habitats the potential impact as I have mentioned in my overview, but it is significant on Yew Lane's LWS and the local nature recovery network. The buffers need to be large enough to be meaningful and would shrink developable land materially as currently proposed. So, the remedy and ask from the extent of evidence from my constituencies is no housing, and if any works are to proceed adopt minimum buffers on-site, net gain first, and LNRS-aligned habitat creation. I would just add that having spoken to a number of constituents with acute localized knowledge, there may be ways to do smaller parcels of housing on this site, but there needs to be better local engagement. That would have to be very careful and configured in such a way so that it did not negatively impact the overall look of the locality but also impact the stream and the hedge which are of ancient significance.

On education provision, I am passionate about taking down barriers for opportunity for local people. One of the issues that did come through on this is the need for the age range of school as proposed, and actually that the focus should instead be on a post-16 age range because there is a great distance to travel to the next post-16 site. That would actually benefit more children and young people in their potential in the long-term future, especially given the population dips we are expecting in the area and current local schools having under-occupancy levels. The remedy and ask there are if retained for education contingency only, we do need to focus consultation with local constituents on the age range and need, particularly looking at the opportunity for post-16. As a fallback the land reverts to public open space if not used within the set window, but there should be no housing by default.

I want to speak to the burial ground provision here. I am aware of time, but this is one of the most significant sites which has brought up a huge amount of concern locally and I will try to be more circumspect on some of the others because there will be repetitious points that overlap. On the burial ground provision, the need in quantum here is uncertain and in terms of the actual site that strategically is seen to be problematic. The site topography and hydrology is questionable for burial. The remedy and ask here is only to proceed if a citywide burial strategy proves necessary, otherwise revert to green space. The ask is to explore two potential other sites but with close consultation with local people. Grenoside Crematorium and Skew Hill Lane is one that my constituents mentioned to me. The second is land potentially adjacent to Ecclesfield Cemetery on Priory Road, because this already adjoins existing burial sites in the locality and would be more sympathetic to the character and nature of those areas.

There needs to be a joint infrastructure plan with NES39. It is not proportionate if housing at NES37 and 39 is dropped. There is an ask to remove the condition with housing deletion if any non-housing remains. A limited ecology-led joint plan could cover drainage and paths.

On availability and deliverability, there is currently an agricultural tenancy, and multiple constraints point to long leading and delivery risk. Having been a councillor in the past, we need to be able to deliver housing effectively and quickly, and this is a site which will not do that in the short term for a number of the reasons that I have set out. So, the remedy and ask is to deallocate for housing and reassign numbers to transit sites with short buildouts. Other comments I have made already in my general overview are on flood runoff and risk to Ecclesfield, concerns around sewage and other utilities.

NES38 - Holme Lane Farm and land to the west of Grenoside Grange, Fox Hill Rd

I want to move to NES38 and I will be more succinct here. There are very similar issues around access and highways, also on ecology and character, and what I will make sure I do is that I submit my oral statement to you so that you have anything that I have not been able to cover in the time allocated here. Just to speak to this bit of land particularly, this site does help Grenoside separate Grenoside from Fox Hill and development risks coalescence and skyline impact. There is heritage and archaeology significance here which I just wanted to highlight rather than overlap the points that had been made previously. A precautionary approach is needed. Potential assets and landscape archaeology are sensitive to ground works. Again, this is something that came through very strongly from my constituents. There are concerns about impacts on adjoining hospital in terms of construction and disturbance, that traffic would be harmful to this. That is another reason that my constituents have given to avoid allocation. Given the time constraints there is a concern that timescales would slip and so this throws effectiveness into doubt.

NES39 – Land at Wheel Ln and Middleton Ln

Moving to NES39, and again I will just try and pick out areas that do not overlap with what I have said already. I am particularly concerned here around air quality and other issues. There are worries on the highways point particularly that access is likely to intensify hazards on Wheel Lane and Middleton with limited scope to fix that without existing widths and gradients being changed. The remedy and ask here is no housing and invest instead in walking safety improvements only. Again, this is an area of high landscape value. The site forms a separation towards Chapeltown and sits in the area of high landscape value. The remedy and ask here is to retain as landscape open land. On biodiversity for this site, speaking briefly to the Cinder Hill Brook LWS, housing would put pressure on the LWS and the riparian corridor here. There needs to be a joint infrastructure plan. There are concerns here about land contamination and further concerns about the deliverability of timescales for housing.

My constituents have also told me about how the land is heavily used for informal recreation, with a shortfall of other local opportunities for open green space acknowledged. Therefore, the land should be retained as landscape or open land; an option is to include formalised green routes and play areas.

NWS30 and NWS31 – Wharncliffe Side and Oughtibridge

I will now briefly move to the Wharncliffe Side and Oughtibridge sites. The local roads are manageable with design. Footpaths must be retained and enhanced. There needs to be step-free greenways through the site, safe crossings and a significant bus frequency uplift to safeguard a future tram train. I want to highlight the flood risk at Tinker Brook on-site. The answer would be an on-site watercourse and functional floodplain. The ask is eight-metre buffers either side of Tinker Brook and no build in the flood zone. On biodiversity, the adjacent Glen Howe Park LWS and ancient woodlands are sensitive.

On deliverability, the lead-in is more realistic if phasing ties to transport first, but it does need to be transport first and trigger bus uplift before occupations and stepwise completions thereafter.

In terms of the land at Forge Lane, there are overlapping points here about the urgent need for an SL1 tram bus link restoration, upgrade of walking and cycling infrastructure along the Upper Don Trail on the eastern side, and safeguarding for a future tram train stop. The adjacent LWS and river corridor need protection in relation to biodiversity. The landscape and character, including the Grade II Oughtibridge Forge, need to be considered as a heritage setting and asset in itself.

There are concerns here again about flood risk and sewage. The remedy and ask on this is that time sewer works before any high-occupancy phases are developed further, and there needs to be interconnected green spaces to support local shortfall, on-site parks, and a named package of compensatory improvements if any green belt changes interact with this setting. There would also need to be a neighbouring condition in relation to the sports ground.

On deliverability, the transport, sewage, and flooding infrastructure would need to be phased first before housing was pursued here in order to enable that to happen. More gentle density than there currently appears, potentially with typologies of townhouses and mansion blocks with car-lite parking, would reduce sprawl and be located as close as possible to any increased and improved transport links.

CH05 – Land east of Chapeltown Rd

Moving to CH05, the land east of Chapeltown Road. There are concerns about character separation and heritage. The edge condition needs careful transition to protect the village identity and any nearby heritage settings. Development only if shaped by design code with tapered heights and materials maintaining Chapeltown–Ecclesfield separation. Without transit-led design, car dependence looms. Rail adjacency needs noise and vibration mitigation measures. At present there is only one train an hour through this area, so to increase the density there would need to be significant rail transport phasing first to increase the regularity of that. The other remedy and ask here is bus priority on the A6135, development of safe direct walk-cycle spines to Chapeltown station, and a modest park-and-ride to reduce parking ratios, with transport phased before occupations. Deliverability here requires clear phasing: transport first, then housing.

CH03 – Land opposite Warren Ln

Moving to CH03, the land opposite Warren Lane. I was privileged to meet with a number of my constituents about this and there are overwhelming concerns about the use of this site for employment as currently planned. It would only be acceptable if screened and masked carefully. There are significant concerns about pollution levels already, which are over the acceptable levels because of their link to neighbouring roads infrastructure. This would be increased with this development, but also there are deep concerns about noise and light pollution. Having visited the sites, there is a real risk of over-reaching and overshadowing the

small linear village settlement on Warren Lane. There are also issues around transport access and concerns about hours management, acoustic treatments, and lighting strategy.

One of the other things that came through very clearly is the nature of the employment allocated for this site. There are concerns that there are nearby warehouse sites of a similar character which are underutilized. Local residents would like to see more innovative thinking around a mixed housing and employment site which created a buffer with the existing Warren Lane section and reduced density compared to what is currently proposed. Those would be high-skilled, well-paid jobs which give local people a reason to stay near and go far in their employment. But as currently set out, it does not meet what is needed given the hours management, acoustic treatments, and lighting strategy, as well as concerns about the effective capping of this site and risks around toxicity release with such a significant warehouse-based site being developed on Hesley Wood.

CH04 – Hesley Wood

On CH04 Hesley Wood, there is a great deal of sensitivity due to nearby ancient woodland and LWS. The remedy and ask here is a tightened footprint, strong landscape buffers, and height limits. There are worries about the site boundaries and consequential impact on green belt. Boundaries must follow ecology and landscape logic. Any deletion must be justified by clear evidence. If evidence is weak, which my constituents believe it is, redraw or retain. There are concerns around highways and transport. Access must avoid ancient woodland severance. The remedy and ask is a single controlled access point plus reliability measures and safe and active travel.

There are deep concerns here around contamination and mining of the former colliery spoil which requires a remediation plan. The remedy and ask is for conditions around ground risk and gas risk as well. On biodiversity, the answer here is to protect Hesley Tip LWS and ancient woodland and net gain on-site first. The remedy and ask is legally enforceable buffers and a management plan. In terms of viability and deliverability, any works would need to be staged and fund remediation and ensure that they firmly lock in habitat management as a first phase.

NES36 – Land south of M1 J35

There are also concerns here about landscape and character. It is an open setting with potential archaeological interest. The remedy and ask is for landscape mitigation and proportionate archaeology work. On highways and transport access, there are deep concerns about junction capacity and HGV routing which are key, and there would need to be HGV defined routes, active travel links for workers, and bus service uplift.

The point is worth emphasizing on biodiversity, LWS, and ancient woodland. The answer is nearby sensitive habitats which require buffers. The remedy and ask is minimum buffers and habitat creation to stitch into LNRs. On contamination, the ask is standard remediation, confirm land availability, phase any plots for effective delivery but with a strategy around contamination and habitat protection at the absolute forefront.

I want to end by saying I am very grateful for the ongoing engagement and dialogue with my constituents, many of whom are in this room, and I am grateful for the time that you have been able to give me this morning. Thank you.