



Homes &  
Communities  
Agency

Graham Duxbury  
12 Thorp Arch Park  
Thorp Arch  
Leeds  
LS23 7AN

31st August 2016

Dear Mr Duxbury

**Thorp Arch Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 – 2028**

Thank you for your letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> August 2016. It is understood that you are seeking, as part of the emerging Thorp Arch Neighbourhood Plan, to designate the land identified by your letter as 'Walton Road Sport Pitch (part)' as Local Green Space. Your letter also helpfully signposts the means of assessing the proposed designation.

Firstly, we would highlight that the land in question was recommended to be allocated for housing within the emerging Site Allocations Plan by the Leeds City Council Development Plans Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The Panel report and other supporting information can be found at:

<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=450&MIId=7506&Ver=4>.

An extract of the Council's proposed allocation boundary is attached.

As you will be aware, Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations Plan (also referred to as the Local Plan) and can identify sites to accommodate more development, but not less than set out in the Local Plan. In its current form, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is not in general conformity with the emerging Site Allocations Plan. Consequently, we would question whether it is appropriate for the land to be identified as Local Green Space.

We have also reviewed 'Appendix 4 Proposed Local Green Space' that was attached to your letter and the following evidence put forward as part of the merging neighbourhood Plan to demonstrate that the site is a local significance:

1. *'Community use for recreation and sports since the 1950s'*
2. *'Contains footpath'*

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3. 'Aspiration to establish one football pitch and the footpath on part of the space and create allotments'

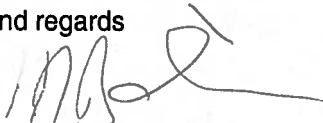
In response, we would comment that:

1. The land and the associated playing pitches were associated with and solely used by HMP Wealstun and not for public use. The use of the land by the prison ceased approximately six years ago after it was found to be surplus to requirements. The land no longer forms part of the prison estate having been recently transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency. In summary, the land was in private use from the 1950s to c. 2010, but was not in use by the general public/ community.
2. The land contains no Public Rights of Way. If any footpaths exist on the site, such access is unauthorised because the land is private and signs indicating so are placed around the site (such signs were in place during the ownership of the Ministry of Justice and during the current ownership by the Homes and Communities Agency).
3. Should the Site Allocations Plan be adopted in its current form and the site is allocated for housing, any subsequent application for housing will need to provide greenspace within the site and/ or provide/ improve greenspace off site. Such enhancements can be secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy and through discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan group, local Councillors, businesses and residents to understand the needs, desires and expectations of the local population.

In summary, we thank you again for making contact and informing us of your intentions. However, for the reasons outlined above, we are unable to support the allocation of the land as Local Green Space in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless, we do support the Neighbourhood Plan process and are keen to remain involved in the process. We are also keen to understand what new or improved greenspace could be provided as part of any future development of the site and would welcome any comments you might have on this matter.

We wish you well in the ongoing preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Kind regards



**MICHAEL BIRDSALL**

**SENIOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

**Council's proposed allocation boundary**

