

Dear Paul,

Re. Draft Planning and Development Brief - Leeds Girls High School

I write on behalf of the Inner North West Area Committee to express our concerns and comments with regard to the Draft Planning and Development Brief.

The potential loss of the protected playing pitches (hockey pitch to the south of the swimming pool and the tennis courts on the main site) is of great concern to the Area Committee and local residents. The committee are not convinced that the creation of a new community park and public access to the swimming pool are sufficient benefits that outweigh the loss of these protected pitches. Furthermore, the provision of sports facilities with community access at the Alwoodley site are of little benefit to those who live in Headingley and Hyde Park. It is therefore felt to be imperative that we safeguard these valuable greenspaces for the local community. This is particularly the case given that a significant area adjacent to the sites is designated in the UDP as an area where priority will be given to the improvement of greenspace provision.

Whilst the retention of the main school building has been seen as a positive in the past, the Committee feels that, if a compromise had to be made, it would be better to allow more comprehensive re-development, but only if all of the protected playing pitch areas are safeguarded. This may allow the school to obtain a greater value from the site, without development taking place on the greenspaces.

In relation to the acquisition of the pool by a third party, possibly Leeds Metropolitan University, the Committee would like to re-affirm its position that we would wish to see good levels of community access, both in terms of hours of availability and also reasonable price.

It is concerning to read that the Brief states 'a reduction in the affordable housing requirement may be acceptable.' The Committee feels strongly that affordable housing will be a key component in the provision of residential uses and will aid diversification of the housing mix locally as well as providing access to the housing market for first time buyers.

The Committee welcomes the statement in the Brief about creating a mixed community by providing non-student housing. However, it is considered that the Brief should perhaps refer specifically to Policy H15 and the 'Area of Housing Mix', explaining why student accommodation would be inappropriate on this site.

I hope that the Planning Board will give serious consideration to the above issues before approving the final Brief.

Yours sincerely

Cllr James Monaghan
Chair, Inner North West Area Committee