

In response to Matter 10 – Housing site allocations: Bacup, Stacksteads, Britannia and Weir

Issue – Are the proposed housing allocations in Bacup, Stacksteads, Britannia and Weir justified, effective, developable/deliverable and in line with national policy?

Re: H40 Land off Todmorden Road, Bacup

General a) Is the site suitable for housing? Are there any specific constraints?

We do not think that this site is suitable for housing due to the following reasons:-

#### 1 - HIGH RISK DEVELOPMENT AREA

The whole site is situated in a High-Risk Development Area (see Coal Authority Interactive Maps attached). The land is criss-crossed with past and probable shallow coal mine workings. There are at least four mine entrances on this site and an unknown number of mine shafts.

The land off Todmorden Road, Bacup H40 will need remediation and the usual method of drilling and grouting the land could have a negative and unpredictable effect on the hydrology of the land and neighbouring land. Our major concern is that if polluted mine water is released from this site due to development, it would contaminate Greave Clough Brook, which is a tributary of the River Irwell. Currently the River Irwell is treated for mine water pollution at a Coal Authority facility at Broad Clough, which is upstream from where Greave Clough Brook joins the River Irwell. The poor condition of the River Irwell in the recent past, has cost millions of pounds to treat up to date and it is a possibility that by the development of H40, it could put this at risk.

By allowing H40 to be developed, the Council has established the possibility that contaminated mine water could be released into Greave Clough Brook, or could seep underground into the brook – this would cause an environmental disaster for the River Irwell.

If this happens - who is going to pay for the clean-up?

#### 2 - FLOOD RISK (this also refers to Question ii - what effect would the proposed allocation have on drainage and surface water in the area? )

Apart from the risk of contaminating the river, development on H40 also risks increasing further flooding into Bacup. Preparing H40, by filling in mine voids, mine shafts and audits through drilling and grouting, alters the hydrology of the land in ways that cannot easily be predicted. The land engineering must reduce the capacity of the land to absorb and hold water and therefore send more water at a faster rate into the river system. We already have problems with flooding in Bacup and also further down the Valley through Rawtenstall onto Bury and Greater Manchester.

Todmorden has spent many millions of pounds building physical flood defences and

now in addition, they are going to plant 200,000 trees above the moors at Gorpley, which will help slow down the rush of rain.

Irrespective of the outcome of the current Local Plan, we think a policy change is required to enable more trees to be planted in Rossendale.

### 3 - ACCESS

The proposed H40 site, which is located at an even higher altitude than Moorside Crescent and Moor View - would affect more people, the steepness is a problem, in particular for people who are mobility impaired and also the elderly, (a growing proportion of the population) who would find difficulty in accessing the site, up the steep hills at any time, without motorised transport.

The slightest snow fall in winter causes congestion on Todmorden Road, when cars are abandoned because they cannot climb the steep hills, up to Moorside Crescent, and Moor View. During the winter months it could become treacherous with snow and ice on the roads. The elderly and mobility impaired would find it even more difficult in winter and also parents with small children, push chairs, trolleys, prams, carrying shopping etc., would also find it difficult accessing the proposed site, unless they have a 4 x 4. At the moment, on the eastern side of Moorside Crescent, which is a steep hill, there is no footpath. On Moor View the gradient from Moorside Crescent to the top of the cul-de-sac is 1:6. – this is the access point onto the land at H40.

The emphasis throughout planning documents, including the Landscape Assessment and also the Planning Inspector's question at Matter 10, with regards to H40 access – is that the access to the site is from Moorside Crescent. This is not the case – the access onto H40 is via Moor View, which is one of three cul-de-sacs off Moorside Crescent.

The Landscape Assessment took no account of the view as a resident, of the three cul-de-sacs. These residents would be most affected by the development and homes would be overlooked or in view of H40 houses. There is another access onto H40, which is a safer access point, approximately 300 yards further up Todmorden Road from Moorside Crescent and this other access is part of the H40 site.

### 4 - MINERAL SAFEGUARDING

The National Policy Framework states at section 206 that:- ' Local Planning Authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constraint potential future use for mineral working'.

The land at H40 is situated in a Mineral Safeguarding area but there is no specific plan to address the minerals in the land, unlike other areas in Rossendale (see Local Plan Policy HS4: Loveclough-section C) part g. and Policy HS5: Swinshaw Hall section C) part g. )

## 5 - HABITAT

The Local Plan has identified problems with new residential developments impacting on the birds.

*The Local Plan at section 184 states that: 'The Habitat Regulations Assessment for the Local Plan identified potential impacts of new residential development within Rossendale on 12 species of birds present in the South Pennine Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC). While not located in the SPA residents of the Borough, including those in new dwellings, contribute to the recreational impacts on the birds that live there. At a sub-regional level the Council will work with partners to develop a Visitor Management Plan for the South Pennines SPA/SAC area in order to minimise the recreational impacts of Rossendale residents. Many of the species of the birds present in the SPA/SAC also utilise upland areas of Rossendale for feeding and breeding. These can be impacted by recreational use and also predation by domestic cats. For large developments of 100 dwellings or over the Council will require an "Appropriate Assessment" to be undertaken in line with the Habitat Assessment Regulations and any appropriate action taken. This may include the creation of Sites of Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) to compensate for any damaged habitat'.*

The response by the Council identifying this problem of impacting on the bird's habitat, is to only take action, if 100 or more houses are being built, but this is an arbitrary number. It is wrong – if a threat to the birds is identified, it should be addressed.

If there is a problem with cats and dogs and recreational disturbances created by new residential developments in Rossendale, then action should be taken in Rossendale and developments should not be built where it impacts the birds in their habitat - saving the birds should be a priority.

Cats and Dogs are having a considerable impact on the birds and many are ground nesting species. Cats are a major problem because they hunt – most do not hunt for survival to feed but hunt automatically, through instinct.

The H40 site, along with other sites in Rossendale, is within the 7 km buffer zone and is situated adjacent to the Moorland fringe, which is a priority habitat.

If developed, the Council could not replace the land at H40 through SANGS to compensate damaged habitat because H40 is a unique piece of land and cannot be replaced, there is nowhere in the Valley that comes close to having the features this land has. It is situated over 300 metres above sea-level, surrounded by mature sycamore trees and described by the Landscape Assessment as an attractive, tranquil site.

These proposed 53 dwellings at H40 will introduce many cats and dogs to the area and the residents do not have to travel to disturb birds, because they will be living next to them, on the Moorland fringe.

We must address this threat now – we cannot keep building further out into the Moorlands and Green Fields without considering the consequences. There are many

birds already on the Red List – both the RSPB and BTO have documented this.

We could be seeing the extinction of some species of birds in this country if we don't act - at the top of the list is the Curlew. The threat to some species of birds is imminent – keeping their habitats in place is vital.

# Breeding waders

The UK's breeding waders are in decline, due to a combination of habitat loss, unfavourable habitat management and predation. BTO science seeks to deliver the impartial evidence required to develop and support realistic conservation strategies for these species, working in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders. Conservation strategies must ensure that sustainable populations of breeding waders are present in the countryside, and that these populations are resilient to future changes.

**BTO research is making a significant contribution towards understanding the causes of breeding wader declines, and identifying effective conservation solutions.**

## Waders in decline

The UK's upland, grassland and farmland habitats host important populations of breeding waders – for some species, such as Curlew and Oystercatcher, some of the largest populations in all of Europe. However, from their peak numbers in the early part of the 20th century, many of these species are now in trouble. Results from the [Breeding Bird Survey](#) and [Bird Atlas 2007-11](#) highlight the declining populations and range reductions of species such as Lapwing, Curlew, Redshank, Snipe and Oystercatcher across much of the UK. Analyses of these long-term monitoring data, together with species- and habitat-specific research have demonstrated several key drivers of declines:

- Loss and deterioration of breeding habitat as a result of climate change and recently-adopted agricultural practices, such as conversion of traditional meadows to intensive grassland monocultures;
- Reduced productivity (survival of eggs and chicks) because of losses due to agricultural activities, greater predator numbers and increased vulnerability of eggs and chicks to predation in degraded habitat.

BTO research is making a significant contribution towards understanding the causes of breeding wader declines, and identifying effective conservation solutions. Monitoring and scientific evidence will be central in informing policies

# The Coal Authority

Interactive Map

Bacup

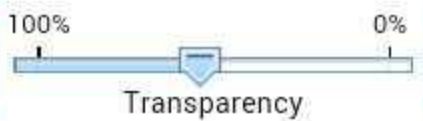


## Planning

Grey layers cannot be viewed at this scale  
Click on a layer name for layer information

- Mine Entry
- Abandoned Mines Catalogue
- Development High Risk Area
- Surface Coal Resource Areas
- Mine Entry Potential Zone of Influence
- Fissures and Breaklines
- Surface Mining (Past and Current)
- Past Shallow Coal Mine Workings
- Probable Shallow Coal Mine Workings
- Coal Outcrops
- NE Mining & Groundwater Constraints
- Coal Mining Reporting Area

Key



Help

Location: 387325, 423534



# The Coal Authority

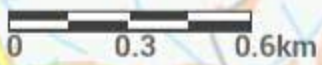
Interactive Map



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Location: 387072, 423076