

WHALEY BRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

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High Peak Local Plan Preferred Options - Additional Consultation (December 2013) - WBTC Response to Questions

Q.13 Site C9 – South of Macclesfield Road

A. No – strongly disagree

There was universal public opposition to this site at all stages of the consultation process including at the members workshop. It was previously rejected for reasons of unsuitability or adverse impacts and no convincing reason has been given as to why this has changed.

WBTC oppose the inclusion of site C9 in the Local Plan and do not agree that it should be taken forward as a housing allocation for the following reasons:

1. Loss of Amenity

Due to the loss of leisure space and local footpaths. It is the setting for a major public right of way (Midshires Way) which is used by large numbers of visiting walkers and ramblers and it should remain in countryside and not pass through a built-up area. The visual amenity will be eroded. Trees and copses need to be preserved.

2. Landscape Impact Assessment

The description in the Landscape Impact Assessment is incorrect (P14). It is a wetland meadow and not just grassland and, as such, is very important to the hydrology of the area. The recommendations by Wardell should be enforced, i.e. the designation of Open Space, Tree Preservation Orders. The site adjoins the Peak District National Park to the south and west plus Taxal Woodlands and development would have a detrimental impact on the landscape as viewed from the hills to the north, east and west.

3. Adverse Wildlife Impact

The existing trees provide protection and habitats for wildlife. If trees were removed, this would cause the loss of wildlife corridors. Alterations to drainage patterns will change the water level of this upland wetland area and adversely affect the existing flora and fauna.

4. Detrimental Impact on Tourism

The Midshires Way traverses the site and is a popular walking route with tourists. The site lies at the “Gateway to the Goyt”, adjacent to the Peak District National Park which receives millions of visitors each year. The Midshires Way is used by long distance walkers and provides an attractive rural route and is a sustainable access to the Peak Park.

5. Detrimental Effect on Natural Drainage and Risk of Flooding

Whaley Bridge has a number of Flood Zones and the Environment Agency is currently working with the community to provide a Flash Flood Plan. C9 is an upland wetland and acts as a natural sponge in percolating and gradually holding back the rainfall to be gradually released into the waterways, specifically the River Goyt. It is wet and boggy throughout the year and drains from the Taxal Edge. Any development of this site would remove the natural retention of the water with consequential effects on the water levels in the River Goyt and onwards downstream through the centre of Whaley Bridge (through Clover Chemical Works, via Goyt Road, through the Memorial Park, adjacent to the Bowling Club and Primary school, via Wharf Road which is a flood risk zone, under Market Street (main shopping area), past Goyt Valley Medical Practice, the main town car park, and onwards through the industrial estate and Tesco store and round the petrol station (also a flood risk zone).

A detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required for this site, producing a Flood Management Plan (SuDS) tailored to the water catchment areas flowing into the River Goyt. Notice should be taken of the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Developments greater than 1 hectare need to produce a site specific Flood Risk Assessment.

The Flood and Water Management Act introduces a range of responsibilities for councils around Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). DCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in Derbyshire. Their role is to co-ordinate the management of flood risk from local water sources and work in partnership with the Environment Agency, HPBC, WBTC, water companies and emergency services.

Planners and developers will be under a legal obligation to consider SuDS for new developments. The automatic right for new developments to connect to surface water sewers will be removed. After these considerations, developers and planners will be required to submit an application outlining their proposed SuDS design to the SuDS Approval Body (DCC). If a SuDS design is approved by the SAB and the system serves more than one property, DCC as the SuDS Approval Body, will be required to adopt that drainage system. Under the requirements of the adoption, DCC will maintain the system and be responsible for its continued successful operation. Further specific guidance is expected from DEFRA. It is essential that compensation is in place for any damage caused by development.

Due to the nature of the land, drainage issues and flood risks, C9 should be removed from the HP Local Plan Preferred Options and not included in the final Local Plan document.

6. Unsuitable Access and Highways

Derbyshire County Council are on record as having reservations about the access. Additional traffic generated from developments at Chapel-en-le-Frith and Whaley Bridge will converge onto the A6 through Furness Vale. Object on the basis of the cumulative impact of traffic which will exacerbate already critical peak time congestion on roads through Whaley Bridge and along the A6. A thorough Traffic Impact Assessment should be conducted to consider the "bigger picture" and the effect on transport and highways in the area. The traffic situation on the A6 continues to increase. No thought is given to the basic infrastructure which is deteriorating. Additional traffic generated by the development of C9 will cause unacceptable congestion along Macclesfield Road and at Horwich End traffic lights.

There are no safe continuous walkways or pavements along Macclesfield Road and no access for wheelchairs or pushchairs. This is unsafe as a pedestrian route to the primary school, to access school buses and facilities in the town centre. There is a bottleneck where Macclesfield Road is constricted by parked cars, often reducing the carriageway to one lane for larger vehicles. The junction with Reddish Road is difficult, especially at the start and finish of the school day. The access to C9 and the effect on adjoining roads is unacceptable.

7. Lack of Local Infrastructure to Support Additional Development in Whaley Bridge

Insufficient medical provision, school places, public transport provision, car parks and parking.

Goyt Valley Medical Practice already has a higher number of registered patients than the recommended level. The local primary schools are full, with the Headteachers reporting that they have no capacity for expansion. This is inconsistent with the views from the LEA and needs to be clarified.

8. Inadequate Public Transport and Parking

Additional development will increase pressure on our transport system. Car parks are full all day, especially at the station and parking to visit the medical practice is difficult. On street parking is limited. Parking availability for town centre shopping and social activities is inadequate and new development will aggravate this problem. Public transport will be insufficient with trains and buses reaching capacity from additional passenger numbers generated by development in Chapel-en-le-Frith, before they reach Whaley Bridge. Public transport is sparse and there are no early morning buses along Macclesfield Road.

9. Archaeological Investigation Required

There is known evidence of a Roman Road in the vicinity of C9. This would need to be investigated prior to any development.

10. Overdevelopment

Whaley Bridge is not able to cope with additional large developments and their consequential effects on services, i.e. water, utilities, sewerage (See Point 5). The potential flood risk to existing flood zones downstream would affect the viability of brownfield sites in the centre of Whaley Bridge.

11. Public Open Space

We have received a request for the area (C9) to be designated as a Public Open Space as it is an area of natural beauty, in close proximity to the Peak District National Park, used by the community for recreation and dog-walking. It has been used for sport and recreation in the past (cricket).

Responses to other relevant questions in the consultation:

Q1. Amending Plan period to 2013.

A. Agree

Q2. Increasing housing target for High Peak to 360 new homes per year.

A. Disagree

HPBC has not justified why they have not chosen the technical model that showed the need for 270 homes or explained why they have not challenged the numbers being imposed by central government in the NPPF. (Technical paper by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners – 15/11/2013, Page 12)

Q13. Land south of Macclesfield Road, C9

A. Strongly disagree (See reasons above at beginning of this report)

Q15. Land at Shire Croft, Reservoir Road

A. No comments

Q.16 Greenbelt Boundary amendment, Furness Vale

A. Agree

Q.19 Land at New Mills Newtown

A. Agree

Strongly support the provision of additional parking for New Mills Newtown station.

Q23. 6.4 – Green Belt addition at Whaley Bridge

A. Agree

Q25 Wharf Road, Whaley Bridge

A. Agree

Q26 Land opposite Tescos, Whaley Bridge

A. Agree – site to be removed from the plan.

Q27. Land between Old Road and Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge

A. Strongly agree – site to be removed from the plan.

Q42. Parking Standards for dwelling houses (C3)

A. Comment: These should be increased to two parking spaces for a two bed property and to 2.5 spaces for a three bed property.

Q.43 Proposed changes to Whaley Bridge Town Centre boundary

A. Strongly disagree

WBTC is strongly opposed to any change to the current town centre boundary. It is the only area in the town centre with an associated car park. Development of retail outlets should be encouraged in this area to support tourism and the existing boundary should remain in place.

Notes:

1. The Town Council received a request for the time limit for responding to this consultation to be extended beyond 10 February 2014.
2. No further large scale developments should be permitted until there is sufficient local infrastructure in place to cope with consequential demands.