

CHAPTER 12: REGENERATION

G/R/1 (Part One Policy) – Physical Regeneration

Objection: 98/23 Countryside Agency North West

Key Issue:

- **would the policy preclude rural regeneration proposals?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.1 This Part One policy, strategic in nature, has a number of elements. The first paragraph, supporting physical and economic regeneration, is Borough-wide in its application. It would not exclude rural regeneration. Neither would the second - while identifying priorities within the urban area. As to the third, it reasonably reflects the focus of regeneration on the urban areas of the Borough - supported by the objector and with which I agree - while referring to rural sites and areas. The UDP would need to be considered as a whole, including policies for rural areas.

Recommendation:

12.2 I recommend that:

- **No modification be made to the plan in response to this objection.**

R/2 – Langley Physical Regeneration Area, Middleton

Objections:	6/2	Mrs M Power	120/2	Mrs D Hill
	13/2	Mrs H Lees	121/2	A Kennedy
	15/2	Mr J Fisher	122/2	Mr A Iddon
	17/2	Mrs S Young	123/2	Mr P Davey
	20/2	Mr Barnes	124/2	Mrs M Davey
	31/2	E Sinacola	126/2	Mr A King
	33/2	Mrs I Copp	127/2	B Kershaw
	35/2	Mr E Nugent	128/2	Mr D Kershaw
	70/2	Mrs J Mort	129/2	Ms J Bolton
	72/1	Z Kepczyk	130/2	Mr F Brooks
	74/1	Mrs E Pye	131/2	Mr S Dennis
	80/1	Ms C Keaney	132/2	Mrs N Dennis
	106/2	Ms P Wood	133/2	Mrs A Lynch
	116/2	Mr P Crossley	134/2	Mr A Broxton
	117/2	Mr M Finnerty	135/2	Mrs J Broxton

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140/2	Mr R Pearson	250/2	Ms V Heywood
141/2	Mrs L Pearson	252/2	Mr D Hill
142/2	Mr R Pearson	253/2	Mrs G Hill
143/2	Mrs S Radcliffe	262/2	J Brokenbrow
144/1	Mr M Radcliffe	270/2	Mr S Worsley
145/1	Mr D Ball	271/2	Ms S Mills
146/1	Mrs M Cox	278/2	Mr R Portman
147/1	Mrs M Wardley	280/2	Ms S Portman
150/2	Mrs B Lashwood	313/1	Ms B Brooks
151/2	L Bothwell	314/2	Mr P Mildenhall
152/2	V Parr	315/2	Ms P Mildenhall
154/2	Mr N Turner	316/2	Mrs G Anderson
158/2	B Shenton & G Barnes	317/1	Ms B Finley
192/2	Mr J Stewardson	332/2	Ms M Duffin
193/2	Mrs M Stewardson	333/2	Mr K O'Leary
194/1	Simister & Prestwich Bridleway	334/2	Mr H Hill
196/2	Mr G Koyrdis	355/2	Mr N Kosylo
197/2	L Armstrong	379/2	E Rogers
201/1	Mrs B Sharman	380/2	Ms P Finnerty
202/1	Mr G Shaw	384/2	Mr M Wilkinson
203/1	Mr D Sharman	385/1	Mrs M Davies
209/2	Miss C Peel	390/2	R Fallon
214/2	Mrs B Aberdeen	391/2	Mr J Emsley
223/2	Ms J Radcliffe	392/1	Mr P Coster
226/2	Mr R Lowe	399/2	Miss S Lyons
228/1	H Rydings	406/2	Mrs J Evans
233/1	Mr CWoods	407/2	Ms B Foley
241/2	Mr S & Mrs D Longbottom	422/2	P Warne
242/1	Ms S Corns	423/2	Mr P Cowie
243/2	Mr A Tennant	424/2	Mrs V Cowie
244/2	M Wagner	426/1	K Shaw
245/2	J Wagner	427/2	Mrs N Bowden
249/2	Mr DCasewell	428/2	Mr J Bowden

Key Issue:

- are the highway implications of Policy R/2 c) acceptable?

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.3 These objections relate, generally, to the implications of a new road access from Heywood Old Road (HOR) and Langley Lane and the implications for road safety - many objectors on the latter referring to Windermere Road. I have dealt with the general land-use implications of the plan proposal for the Middleton West

Business Park (MWBP) at Chapter 8 of my Report. For the reasons set out there, I do not support it. In this part of the Report, I deal with the highway/traffic implications of the MWBP as a whole - as well as the new access road - this through the submitted objections. While I note the general view of the Council that the access road is not a requirement of the policy, its evidence has addressed its merits - albeit subject to a further Transport Assessment (TA).

- 12.4 Turning, then, to the objections under this policy - these are both strategic and local in nature. Dealing, **firstly**, with the former - the main access to the MWBP would be from HOR, about the junction with Blue Ball Lane. The Council has undertaken a preliminary Transport Assessment (TA). On the basis of that, not significantly contested by objectors, I consider that the likely level of MWBP traffic at HOR - seeking access to/from the M60 at Junction 19 - would not unacceptably add to the frequency of traffic problems there. Here, notwithstanding the existing community/sport/commercial facilities to the north of the access road at HOR, my site observations on 3 occasions persuade me that this section of HOR - providing a link from Heywood to the motorway - is operating within capacity and consistent with the Council's evidence. I am satisfied that HOR would be able to accommodate the additional traffic arising from the MWBP, including commercial vehicles passing to, and from, the motorway along the gradients to the south of Blue Ball Lane. That takes me, **secondly**, to the "local" implications of the proposal - and there are a number of matters here.
- 12.5 To begin, subject to my support for the principle of the MWBP (that is not forthcoming in this Report), the Council would initiate a further TA. That would be the correct approach. Nonetheless, objections before me need to be addressed. Notwithstanding the curvature of HOR to the north of the access, a traffic-controlled signal complex would be likely to ensure safe access and egress - including pedestrian crossing facilities. While I was told that the Council does not control all the land necessary to create the access, that is a matter for it to resolve in the light of the specific requirements for the junction - arising from a further TA and in the light of a planning application. Here, any reasonable local planning authority would impose planning conditions on a planning permission to ensure that highway safety was maintained. Other highway improvements that may be necessary would be likely to be on land within the highway. Conditions would also be able to be imposed that control construction traffic (including wheel washing) and the hours of construction time. Specific suggestions have been made in this respect by objectors. While they raise reasonable concerns, it is not my role in this Report to suggest conditions that should be imposed on any planning permission that may, or may not, be forthcoming - sufficient to say that any condition would need to meet the tests established by Circular 11/95. Further, while the level of traffic on HOR would increase as a result of the MWBP - the Council has demonstrated that noise and pollution would be within acceptable limits. I give limited weight to objector concern that the MWBP would be likely to result in structural damage to houses on HOR. The Council's evidence before

me indicates that any existing is due to ground features rather than traffic - a maintained highway minimizing vibration at adjacent structures.

- 12.6 The highway implications of the development of the MWBP for Simister village were discussed in detail at the Inquiry. This pleasant village is within the area of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, its boundary with Rochdale generally in the vicinity of the west side of HOR. Adopted highway access to Simister is from, primarily, Bury Old Road at Kirkhams. Nonetheless, the village at its eastern end has 2 largely unmade tracks giving access to HOR. Concern over "rat-running" was before me, likely to adversely affect the character of this village. While the potential clearly exists for MWBP traffic to access a destination in the Prestwich/Whitefield area, I saw the condition of the tracks to be far from satisfactory, offering an unattractive prospect. I accept the Council's view that there is no intention to improve these 2 tracks. Existing, and any future, traffic regulation measures would be available to both authorities to deal with any difficulty that may arise. I have no reason to doubt the Council's good intentions in this respect.
- 12.7 That, then, takes me to the traffic implications for Ellis Lane/Boardman Lane that, together, lead from HOR to Manchester Old Road (A576) - and generally comprising an attractive rural highway. The Council acknowledges that the MWBP development would be likely to result in a significant percentage increase in traffic. It argues convincingly, however, that - following the conclusions of a TA - management measures would be available. That prospect is reasonable. As to public transport, I have dealt with the sustainability implications of the MWBP at Chapter 8 of my Report, not repeated here.
- 12.8 Clearly, as I saw, the prospect of a substantial increase in private cars seeking to access the business park through the Langley estate would be likely to add to an acknowledged accident record there. The stated approach of the Council is, however, acceptably cautious - involving a control system restricting the type of vehicle movements, subject to a TA. That is capable of implementation.
- 12.9 My assessment of the issues raised by the objectors is that their highway/traffic concerns over the MWBP have not been sustained. As the Council acknowledges, however, the R/2 c) proposal is conditional upon the acceptance of the MWBP. That is not the case in this Report. While, therefore, R/2 c) is acceptable in highway/traffic terms, that does not outweigh the level of harm that would arise under EC/8. R/2 c) should be deleted from the plan with subsequent renumbering.

Recommendation:

12.10 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **Delete R/2 c), with subsequent renumbering.**

R/3 – Drake Street Physical Regeneration Area, Rochdale

Objections:	381/3	Government Office North West
	381/45	Government Office North West
	430/3	Somerfield Stores Ltd

Key Issues:

- **should the policy be modified to reflect national planning guidance?**
- **the reference in the policy to Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and the requirement for planning applications to be accompanied by documents.**

Inspector's Reasoning:

- 12.11 At Revised Deposit Draft, the Council changed the first bullet point to R/3 vi. to indicate that Class A1 Retail proposals within the town centre boundary would be acceptable. I agree. The objection (430/3) has been conditionally withdrawn.
- 12.12 Turning to the Government Office, both objector and Council argue the role of SPG and its place in the UDP. In my view, it forms one of a number of material considerations that the Council would need to take into account in coming to a decision on a planning application. Here, the Council appears to me to acknowledge in its evidence that there is no SPG for this area, not least when it would be available. I come to a similar view on “any approved strategy” - this at R/3 i). The Council tells me that it has approved a strategy for Drake Street. Is that to be taken as a form of SPG and is it the strategy referred to above? Has it been the subject of public consultation? I do not know. Further, it appears to me that “design and streetscape principles” [R/3 i) at the second paragraph of the policy] are already established elsewhere in the second paragraph to the policy. In both cases, the Council implication is that relegation to the reasoned justification would prejudice implementation of the policy. I have come to a different assessment. They represent an amplification of the Council's policy approach, potentially consistent with it, and appropriately located within the reasoned justification. I am not impressed by the Council's view that the timescale of the UDP did not allow design and development principles to be included. That is a matter for it.
- 12.13 It follows therefore, for largely similar reasons, that I should come to a similar conclusion on Objection 381/3. The requirement in R/3 d) - for an application to be accompanied by a “Design Statement” - does not represent, in itself, a specific land-use consideration against which a development proposal would be assessed. A developer cannot be compelled to submit one, not least as Policy BE/6: Shop Fronts addresses part of the matter raised. The presence of a Design Statement would be material, the decision-maker taking that into account in the assessment of any development proposal. That should be included within the reasoned justification as an amplification of the Council's intentions.

Recommendations:

12.14 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **At the end of the first line to the second paragraph of Policy R/3: delete the words “and requirements” and add a colon after the word “guidelines”.**
- **Delete R/3 d) and R/3 i) and renumber. Their intent should be included within the reasoned justification as an amplification of the Council's policy approach.**

R/4 – Areas of Opportunity (AsoO)

Objection: 381/46 Government Office North West

Key Issue:

- **should R/4 a) be deleted from the plan?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.15 Setting aside that I do not understand how “accord substantially” should be interpreted [R/4 a)] - and neither reasonably would any developer - I support this objection. As part of the policy statement, it indicates that decisions on planning applications would be delegated to non-statutory documents (“planning brief.... and/or any masterplan.....” not apparently prepared in accordance with statutory procedures. As the Government Office argues, this would conflict with national planning guidance in PPG 12. The Council's intent should be removed to a reworded reasoned justification that would amplify the Council's policy approach.

Recommendation:

12.16 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **Delete R/4 a), with consequent renumbering, and relocate its intent to a modified reasoned justification as an amplification of the Council's policy approach.**

R/4(a) – Eales Area of Opportunity, Littleborough

Objections: 81/1 Mr E Wroe
89/1 T Seed
381/47 Government Office North West
435/1 No 1 Interest Group Team, Design Statement Group

Key Issues:

- should this AoO be included as a “gateway” site to the countryside under RE/8?
- should development await a feasibility study of canal marina facilities, and what is the future for the railway arches?
- should housing be precluded from the AoO (high density housing adding to traffic problems) and, if provided, would the limited extent of housing intended by the policy be on previously-developed or greenfield land?
- would the policy add to existing parking problems in Littleborough?

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.17 Beginning, strategically, with “gateway” sites to the countryside under Policy RE/8, there are no specific objections before me on its principle - other than 89/2 on the traffic implications of the policy. It has, however, been raised under this policy at 435/1, recorded by the Council as a R/4(a) objection and I deal with it here. RE/8 relates to visitor facilities for countryside recreation at specific locations. The Supplementary Map following page 136 of the Revised Deposit Draft version of the plan establishes them. They are generally within the countryside albeit, for example, No 4 is close to the Rochdale Canal. The Littleborough section of the canal does provide - in my view - a gateway to the countryside along its length to, and from, Summit. The canal has a towpath, allowing walkers to leave it, or join it, to or from the countryside about. The same applies to boat-users along their passage. I see no convincing reason why this section of the canal should not be included within the Supplementary Map to RE/8. This would reflect the Council's countryside objectives.

12.18 Broadly, Ealees is close to the town centre - Durn [R/4(b)] to the north of the town. Prior to the re-opening of the canal and through the preparation of the UDP, considerable work has been undertaken by a number of agencies on the appropriate future development along it. In Littleborough, I am satisfied that the appropriate location for marina facilities is at Durn - here the dispute relating to the scale of them. The process needs to be moved on - not least to give a degree of “certainty” to potential developers. The mixed uses at Ealees are broadly acceptable and would not conflict with the significant canal-related facilities at Durn. The reasoned justification to R/4(a) also refers to a Council development brief (12.16), reasonable there. I am not minded to recommend a modification to the plan that would unnecessarily delay its implementation in the light of a broad consensus on the future of the canal. Now, to the “Arches” and its environs. This railway viaduct, listed I am told, is - as I saw - a major feature of the centre of Littleborough. Both Council and objector have a similar objective - its re-use as a physical feature that would contribute to regeneration. Here, differences relate to uses there - but the Council appears to me to have fairly acknowledged the need to reflect the quality of the “Arches” through R/4(a) ii). In addition, the

development control process would be likely to ensure acceptable, additional control.

12.19 On the basis of my site visit, I am satisfied that this AoO should reasonably be considered as previously-developed. A limited element of housing would thus be provided within the Defined Urban Area of the UDP and close to the centre of Littleborough and its services. While, therefore, the Council considers that housing would assist the regeneration of Ealees, its principle is - in my opinion - acceptable in its own right. The mixed uses envisaged are acceptable, taking into account the intention of R/4(b) to locate canal facilities at Durn. There are existing uses at the site and I am not persuaded that the provision of a limited housing element, and other intended uses, would result in any unacceptable increase in traffic. Nonetheless, a number of objectors draw my attention to traffic problems in Littleborough and I have dealt with another similar objection by Objector 89/1 at Policy RE/8. Any reasonable local planning authority, taking into account all the policies of the plan, would ensure that no unacceptable parking problems would arise as a result of R/4(a).

Recommendations:

12.20 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **The Supplementary Map to Policy RE/8 of the UDP should include the Littleborough section of the Rochdale Canal as a countryside gateway.**
- **At the first line to Policy R/4(a), after the word “This”, add “previously-developed”.**

R/4(b) – Durn Area Of Opportunity, Littleborough

Objections:	162/2	Mr N Hammond
	381/47	Government Office North west
	435/2	No 1 Interest Group Team

Key Issue:

- **should the AoO be extended to include approved Green Belt and is the intended mix of uses acceptable?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.21 Both Objector 162/2 and Council argued at the Hearing session the context against which to assess this objection. It was not in dispute that the Rochdale Canal has been re-opened along its length. Since then, through passages had been prevented by a canal closure. Further, Littleborough - from West Yorkshire - is

the first major settlement met after the Summit crossing, thereby offering the potential for canal related uses. In my opinion, the nub of the objection is the relevant scale and type of facility and their implications for the approved Green Belt.

12.22 Here, the objector's evidence argued for a major marina facility with upwards of 100 berths, potentially approaching 200 - establishing a boating facility that would bring boats back to the canal in large numbers. It was clear to me at the Hearing that this would require the development of approved Green Belt. The Council's approach was for a smaller marina (around 40 berths) and boatyard, maintaining Green Belt boundaries. I have no reason to doubt the substantial canal facilities referred to at Braunston by the objector, but these are at the junction of 2 long-established cruising canals and I was not told that it is the subject of Green Belt constraints. Passages on the Rochdale Canal are small compared to those there. While they would be likely to increase, it appears to me that the approach of the Council reflects the reality of what is likely to happen - growth on the Rochdale Canal from a somewhat modest beginning. That is reasonable - fairly representing a balance between accommodating growth on the canal and Green Belt purposes.

12.23 It was not in dispute at the Hearing that the level of marina facility supported by the objector would require a substantial incursion into approved Green Belt, carried forward from the adopted plan into the UDP. Properly, the Green Belt boundary is tightly drawn about this part of Littleborough, not least as it brings countryside towards the centre of Littleborough. The land that the objector wishes to see excluded from the Green Belt reflects the general intent of paragraph 1.5 of PPG 2 (Revised), albeit he considered that 2 of the purposes there would not be met. I accept his view that - technically - it would be possible to construct a marina facility to meet his aspirations. He has not (for the reasons set out above) established the exceptional circumstances sufficient for me to set aside the advice in national planning guidance that Green Belt boundaries defined in an adopted development plan should only be altered exceptionally (paragraph 2.6). The Council's policy is supported, including the uses therein. Taking into account the above, I see no reason why housing should not form part of the development of this AoO. As the Council acknowledges, further work will be necessary on a detailed scheme that may arise. Specific proposals would need to be assessed against other policies of the plan, including the need to maintain the vitality and viability of Littleborough centre. R/4(b) is consistent with the Council's regeneration approach, as it applies to Littleborough. The site should be considered as previously-developed.

Recommendation:

12.24 I recommend that:

- **No modification be made to the plan in response to this objection.**

R/4(d) – Birch Hill Hospital Area of Opportunity, Rochdale

Objection: 418/7 Littleborough Civic Trust

Key Issue:

- **should the intended industrial/commercial presence be strengthened with a planning brief to help secure a balanced scheme of regeneration?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.25 At its closure, Birch Hill Hospital represents a major opportunity for the development of a previously-developed site. The objector does not contest the principle of a mixed-use development. In my view, the permitted uses set out in the policy are acceptable and, reasonably, housing would represent a major use. The site does offer the potential for B1 uses, both as new-build and through the conversion of buildings. I see no convincing reason why the permitted uses and the principles for development would not result in a balanced development. Here, the objector has not argued for any specific presence by the industrial/commercial sector. Further work would be necessary to allow a detailed proposal to come forward. Amongst other matters, that would take into account commercial interest. That intention is not, however, stated in the reasoned justification. As elsewhere in my Report, R/4(d) ii.- at its last 10 words - should preferably be included within the reasoned justification.

Recommendation:

12.26 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **The following sentence be added to the end of paragraph 12.26. "Following the adoption through the plan of the permitted uses and principles for development, a planning brief will be prepared for the site."**
- **The Council is advised to modify the reasoned justification to reflect the last sentence of paragraph 12.25 above.**

R/4(e) – Riverside Area of Opportunity,

Objection: 285/2 Sainsburys Supermarket Ltd

Key Issue:

- **should the objection site form either, a new AoO or, part of an extended R/4(e) AoO?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.27 This objection site is to the south of Entwistle Road. The R/4(e) proposal is to the west of John Street. The objector has not disputed the evidence of the Council that the uses at the objection site are controlled, largely, by the Council - paragraph 12.12 to R/4 generally defining AsoO partly on the basis of land and buildings in different ownerships. Nonetheless, as I saw, a comprehensive approach to the future of this area would be likely to be justified - not least as I accept the Council view that buildings require investment and are not entirely suitable for existing uses. Against that, the Council tells me that there has been no decision to dispose of the land. In that event, the Council would - reasonably - consider acceptable uses on the site, including those suggested by the objector, and assessed against other policies of the plan. Further, it is far from certain whether the land would become available for development over the period of the UDP and it would be unwise of me, therefore, to recommend a modification to the plan that either extended the R/4(e) AoO or established a new one. Nonetheless, at R/4(e), Inquiry Change 52 would clarify development intent. Taking into account the objection, that is reasonable.

Recommendation:

12.28 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **Modify the plan in accordance with Inquiry Change 52.**

R/4(f) – Canal Basin Area of Opportunity, Rochdale

Objection: 255/3 Fortymas Developments Ltd

Key Issue:

- **is the requirement for an approved masterplan reasonable?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.29 I share the view of the Council that this AoO is an important part of the Council's regeneration strategy for the Rochdale Canal, in a location reasonably close to the town centre. The objector did not materially object to the permitted uses specified in the policy and I agree. In this location, the principle of a document that establishes the way in which development should take place is reasonable, generally. This, however, the Council intends to achieve through "any approved Strategy or Masterplan", included in the policy statement at R/4(f) i., and to be Supplementary Planning Guidance. The effect of this would be that decisions on development proposals would be on the, apparent, basis of a yet to be prepared document that would not have been the subject of testing through statutory development plan procedures. The Council's good intentions are, however, reflected in the last sentence of paragraph 12.29 that acceptably amplifies its approach. I shall recommend, therefore, the deletion of R/4(f) i.. This would not introduce either, unnecessary delay into the development process or, conflict with other policies of the plan - not least as the Council told me that a Masterplan had been prepared, but not yet available for detailed comment. Policy R/4(f) i. also requires a design statement to be submitted in support of proposals. Although not the subject of specific objection, that should also be part of the reasoned justification. Paragraph 12.29 of the plan would be an appropriate location for an expanded amplification of the Council's policy intentions. Nonetheless, I strongly advise the Council to progress, as quickly as possible, its intentions for this AoO. As to the objector's specific concerns, I note - for example - that highway improvements are imminent at the junction of Canal Street and Oldham Road.

Recommendation:

12.30 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines :

- **Delete R/4(f) i. and renumber.**
- **The Council is advised to include the intentions of R/4(f) i. within an expanded paragraph 12.29 as an amplification of the Council's policy intentions.**

R/4(g) – Assheton Way/Townley Street, Middleton Area of Opportunity

Objections:	341/5	Tesco Stores Ltd
	341/6	Tesco Stores Ltd

Key Issues:

- **is the AoO incorrectly numbered on the Proposals Map?**

- **should the policy statement requirement for a design brief, as well as R/4(g) iii., be deleted?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.31 At Revised Deposit Draft, the Council has corrected the numbering of the AoO from R/4(a) to R/4(g). The objection has been conditionally withdrawn.

12.32 I have taken into account the planning application subject of a planning permission; the objector has not materially disputed the relevance of the considerations in the last sentence of R/4(g) i.; while I note its view that a significant area of land within the AoO is not the subject of the permission. I consider that the principles established in the policy are justified without a requirement for a design brief - any reference to that being included within the reasoned justification. As to a requirement for a Transport Assessment/Travel Plan, relevant policies are included within Chapter 18 of the plan. While I am not, generally, in favour of policy duplication, I see no convincing reason - in the specific circumstances of this objection - why the future development of this major site adjoining the Middleton Town Centre should not include a requirement for them.

Recommendations:

12.33 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **At adoption, the Proposals Map should be modified in accordance with paragraph 12.31 above.**
- **Delete R/4(g) i. and substitute: "Proposals should demonstrate that they can be integrated with the town centre and, where relevant, the Conservation Area to the north - taking into account visual and pedestrian links, as well as compatibility with adjoining uses;"**
- **The reference at R/4(g) i. to a design brief should be included within the reasoned justification as an amplification of the Council's policy intention.**

R/4(h) – Sefton Street/Green Lane/Railway Street Area of Opportunity, Heywood

Objection: 69/4 Biwater PLC

Key Issue:

- **is a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of this site appropriate, and should the range of acceptable uses be extended?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

- 12.34 In my view, the extension of the East Lancashire Railway through Bury to Heywood represents a major regeneration opportunity for the Borough - consistent with a major thrust of the UDP. It would be likely to result in an "uplift" to Heywood, a Borough town having experienced decline. I saw that "Heywood Station" has been refurbished. While to the south-east of the town centre, there is an opportunity for both town and centre. That should not be minimized. Here, the objector does not appear to me to express concern on the principle of the "opportunity" offered by this site in a number of ownerships - rather the uses defined by the policy and the need for a comprehensive approach.
- 12.35 On the former, they are acceptable and I am not persuaded that B2 and B8 uses would rest comfortably at this "gateway" site to Heywood. A comprehensive approach to it is clearly necessary if the benefits to the town are to be realized. While I understand concern on "delay", any reasonable local planning authority (together with landowners) would move the process along as quickly as possible, not deterring investment and notwithstanding the site's location within a wider MEZ. On other matters, I have concluded at Chapter 8 that there is no need to recommend the allocation of additional employment land. The Council has properly identified AsoO, including this site, that would meet its regeneration objectives. It is to be supported.

Recommendation:

12.36 I recommend that:

- **No modification be made to the plan in response to this objection.**

R/4(i) – Trub Farm Area of Opportunity, Castleton

Objections:	254/201	Mr S Lomax
	439/203	Castleton (EC) Residents Association
	439/301	Castleton (EC) Residents Association
	463/201	Mrs M Metcalfe
	463/301	Mrs M Metcalfe
	472/201	Cllr P A Flynn
	485/201	Network Rail
	487/201	Mr J McKenniff
	489/201	Mr R Walker
	490/201	Mrs Garner
	491/201	Mr & Mrs A Macrae
	492/201	Ms G Mullins
	493/201	Mr E Harrison
	494/201	Mr J Timmin

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495/201	K Heath
496/201	Mr P Roach
497/201	W Dutton
498/201	R Charlson
499/201	Mr S Brown
500/201	E Jolly
501/201	D Wilde
502/201	Mr M Catlow
503/201	B McKenniff
504/201	A Taylor
505/201	Mr A Williams
506/201	Mr D Brown
507/201	S Taylor
508/201	D McKenniff
301/202	FKI Plc
311/210	Highways Agency

Key Issues:

- **its merits and extent.**
- **the acceptable uses within any defined AoO.**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.37 To begin, some general considerations on the principle of the definition of Trub Farm as an AoO - that for the reasons set out below I support, albeit on a smaller scale. The Council also supports an AoO - consistent with the intentions of the 2 main landowners. At Revised Deposit Draft, Trub Farm was added to the list of AsoO through R/4(i) - at Deposit Draft the site comprising an EC/2 Primary Employment Zone and a EC/9(e) Development Site in an Employment Zone (both deleted through Proposed Map Change 12/2). Here, I note that this part of Castleton does not fall within one of the 4 broad areas where priority is to be given to physical regeneration (Policy G/R/1). Similarly, paragraph 12.3 of the plan indicates that AsoO are those where a comprehensive approach to regeneration is necessary, reflecting 12.12 and its requirement for a comprehensive scheme for the whole area (Policy R/4). In the Council's view, there is an opportunity through the policy to contribute to the overall regeneration and image of Castleton village.

12.38 At the Hearing sessions I conducted on Trub Farm, together with my site observations, it was clear to me that little within the site defined in the UDP needed regeneration. Generally, the eastern part of the site is occupied by an employment use that is modern in appearance to the north, with an adjacent car park. There are production buildings to the south of varying vintage and design, in all a successful business I am told and resting comfortably - in my view - in the wider Castleton context. It seeks to relocate elsewhere in Rochdale. Elsewhere,

on this side of the canal, are a number of commercial buildings to the south. The remainder of the AoO (to the west of the canal) is open and largely undeveloped (albeit a bridge has been constructed across the canal) with no material planning permissions. It forms part of an area of countryside crossing the M62 from the south (approved Green Belt) that approaches the centre of Castleton (notwithstanding the raised embankment of the Rochdale to Manchester railway line) with other approved Green Belt to the west of the railway. Here, in this part of Castleton, the Rochdale Canal is - in my opinion - its dominating feature as well as within the intended AoO. Significantly, the west side of the canal is part of this area of countryside that narrows towards the main built-up area of Rochdale in the vicinity of Castleton, and provides an attractive setting for the latter.

- 12.39 The Council supported the overall development intentions of the 2 major landowners. **I do not** (my emphasis). This would establish, mainly, employment use on the west-side of the canal (clearly, in my view, part of open countryside) and a predominantly housing development on the east (primarily redevelopment of the existing employment use). That would result in substantial harm to the character and appearance of this part of Rochdale and Castleton - adding on the west-side of the canal a visually intrusive and discordant element in a sensitive location that contributes to the setting of Castleton. Further, the canal would be largely enclosed within a built corridor through the AoO. At this point, the canal approaches the main urban area of Rochdale after a countryside passage from the south. It would be unfortunate, to say the least, if the largely enclosed nature of the canal to the north of Castleton Bridge, was to be repeated to the south at this AoO. Both Council/potential developers and the objectors have their own "vision" of that which is necessary for this part the Borough. Here, I give much less weight to the development led approach of the Council/potential developers than that articulated by the objectors - notably the Castleton (EC) Residents Association (CRA). Both acknowledged the need for Castleton to be the subject of an "uplift". I am in no doubt that the "vision" of the CRA is the correct approach, this based on a clear view - that I support - that the regeneration of Castleton (as intended by this policy) should represent a balanced approach. It should help maintain the open nature of this part of Castleton while facilitating new development on the east-side of the canal following any existing employment relocation. That would itself have a regeneration benefit for Castleton, while largely retaining the character and appearance of this part of it.
- 12.40 Here, the Council's stated intention for this AoO would locate employment to the west of the canal. Castleton is close to Rochdale town centre, with bus and rail services about Castleton Bridge. Queensway, starting at Castleton centre, is - along its length - one of the major employment locations in the Borough where I saw a significant level of vacant employment units. To the south of Castleton, at the Stakehill Industrial Estate, is another major employment facility with vacant units. I share the view of the Council that vacant units are a not unusual feature of land supply. It has not persuaded me, however, that this is a convincing reason to

make an employment allocation within the proposed AoO at the expense of substantial countryside and character/appearance considerations - in order to meet an unproven employment need in Castleton. I do support an employment allocation at Cowm Top, Castleton (Chapter 8 of my Report) - albeit some uncertainty exists there as a result of a disputed Village Green designation. Having carefully considered the objections, I come to the view that there is no justified basis for the development of the west-side of the canal - not least for employment purposes - and having taken into account the planning history there. While, the regeneration strategy for the Rochdale Canal suggests a business focus on the west-side of the canal I have come to a different assessment - particularly as that did not appear to indicate the potential offered by the redevelopment of the existing employment use to the east of the canal. One other matter. The Council has stressed, through the UDP, the importance of "greenspace" to its residents - mainly through Chapter 14 of the plan - and to which I give considerable weight. It is somewhat surprising to me that the Council, though R/4(i), should seek to deny residents of Castleton the availability of a substantial area of "greenspace". I come to the view that the west side of the canal should be defined as such, albeit small in scale.

- 12.41 Turning, now, to other matters raised by objectors. On traffic/pollution, the Council's evidence was convincing. The Revised Deposit Draft intention for the AoO would be able to be accommodated by the existing highway network without any unacceptable increase in congestion or pollution - taking into account local highway improvement and the unsatisfactory exiting route for vehicles to Manchester Road at the existing employment site. My site observations, on a number of occasions, in Castleton did not lead me to a different view. It follows, therefore, that a smaller AoO would have the same acceptable result. It would be reasonable of me to conclude that the development control process, following the submission of a planning application, for land to the east of the canal would ensure that the living conditions of existing residents on Manchester Road would not be adversely affected.
- 12.42 Drawing all these matters together, I come to the following conclusions. **Firstly**, an AoO should be defined at Trub Farm under R/4(i) to support regeneration in Castleton, but the land to the west of the canal should not, generally, be developed - remaining part of an open area of countryside about Castleton, defined as greenspace and justified on that basis. **Secondly**, neither Council nor the objectors who supported the development framework persuaded me that the east-side of the canal would not be able to be the subject of an acceptable form of redevelopment following the relocation of the employment use, together with other available land there. The emphasis of that should be housing as shown on the development framework and delivery plan, this providing a sustainable development close to Castleton centre and bus and rail routes. **Thirdly**, I see no convincing reason why the east-side of the canal would not - in addition - be able to accommodate a combination of canal related and retail uses that would be able to strengthen Castleton centre. This would include the Local Centre and Linear

Commercial Area shown on 12/2. **Fourthly**, the land on the east-side of the canal between the M62 and the new bridge constructed over it would not be suitable for housing due to noise/disturbance implications, taking into account a major distribution unit there. This land has the reasonable potential to accommodate employment uses with a substantial landscape buffer between them and the motorway. It would be suitable for small-scale B1 employment units. It follows **fifthly**, therefore, that the development of open land to the west of the canal is not necessary to secure a successful regeneration scheme in this part of Castleton. Potential development on the east side of the canal would not, in my view, prejudice Rochdale Canal interests. While the Council argues that the land to the west of the canal has no public access (but I saw the varying line of the canal towpath), the delivery plan that it supports would have, in my view, only a limited benefit in increasing access and public open space. It is the visual contribution of the land there to the local environment and community to which I give substantial weight. **Sixthly**, the Council told me that a mixed-use development would result - consistent with national planning guidance. I take the view that a mixed-use development would also be possible on the east-side of the canal, and also consistent with national planning guidance. It would assist in the regeneration of the centre of Castleton and would not be likely to result in any increase in vandalism there, or in the vicinity - this the subject of some objector concern. **Seventhly**, housing development on the east-side of the canal would also improve the overall residential environment on Manchester Road - supported by the Council. **Finally**, the policy will need to be reworded to reflect my conclusions. Here, the Area of Opportunity should be restricted to the east side of the Rochdale Canal. Its west side should be designated as Greenspace through Policy UG/8. The major use on the east side should be housing, together with a Local Centre and Commercial Area at the north-east of the site reflecting G/S/1 and S/6. There should be B1 uses on the east side of the canal, between the motorway and the bridge constructed over it. Canal facilities [reflecting the general intent of R/4(i) b)] would be acceptable on this side of the canal.

- 12.43 A number of other matters remain. As to the Highways Agency (311/210), the Council's Pre-Inquiry Change 15 acceptably reflects its concern. Although, I shall be recommending a substantially reduced AoO - it is reasonable. The Council's Pre-Inquiry Change 14, this an addition to the reasoned justification at paragraph 12.44 to reflect the potential of the AoO for rail-freight access, has not been justified by the Council. It appears to relate to land at the north end of the site, to the west of the canal and adjacent to disused railway sidings, near a rail plant ("CORUS"). This Council provision has limited evidence that it would be likely to be implemented over the period of the UDP. While, increasing rail-freight facilities reflects national transport objectives - any proposal arising would need to be considered against other policies of the plan, as well as my clear view on the role of the west side of the canal. Pre-Inquiry Change 14 is not supported.

Recommendations:

12.44 I recommend that the plan be modified along the following lines:

- **Modify the plan in accordance with Pre-Inquiry Change 15.**
- **The policy and its reasoned justification should be further modified to reflect paragraphs 12.37 to 12.43 above, particularly 12.42 and 12.43.**

R/4(j) - Rooley Moor Road Area Of Opportunity, Rochdale

Objections:	308/9	Federal Mogul T & N Limited
	308/203	Federal Mogul T & N Limited
	473/201	Persimmon Homes

Key Issues:

- **should the site be designated as an AoO?**
- **the appropriate uses at the site.**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.45 The site, unallocated at Deposit Draft, was designated as an AoO at Revised Deposit Draft for a mixed use "urban village" type development - this through Map Change 12/3. I have no reason to disagree. This would include a significant housing provision. That effectively meets the Deposit Draft objection by Federal Mogul (308/9). That objector, at Revised Deposit Draft (308/203), supports the policy in general terms - but considers that it should indicate that employment and business use/recreational open space should be acceptable rather than required ("must be provided"). Taking into account the first paragraph of the policy statement, the Council's approach is reasonable. Here, I have carefully read the objector's suggested rewording of the policy, but it adds little to its merits.

12.46 As to 473/201, the site is - indeed - close to housing and reasonably described as a secondary employment location. Nonetheless, the objector has not submitted any convincing evidence that the intentions of the Council - including employment provision - would not be able to be acceptably accommodated on the site.

Recommendation:

12.47 I recommend that:

- **No modification be made to the plan in response to these objections.**

R/4 – Areas of Opportunity (Omissions)

Objections:	285/8	Sainsburys Supermarket Ltd
	4188	Littleborough Civic Trust
	442/12	Redrow Homes (Lancs) Ltd & Bellway Homes (NW) Ltd

Key Issues:

- **Entwistle Road and land about.**
- **should land at Greenvale and Rock Nook Mills be defined as an AoO?**
- **should land about Hollin Lane and Langley Lane be defines as an AoO?**

Inspector's Reasoning:

12.48 As to 285/8, I have dealt with the issues here earlier in this Chapter.

12.49 Then, to the Civic Trust on land at Greenvale and Rock Nook Mills. The reasonable intention of Policy R/4 is clear. This is to address sites in different ownership and with varying constraints and opportunities. A comprehensive scheme for the areas defined would be necessary. Here, the objector has not disputed the Council evidence that the Trust seeks the designation of the site as an AoO. The complex is, as I saw, attractive but is - as the Council's evidence indicates - in single ownership, not requiring a comprehensive approach to it under this policy to reflect varying interests. The complex is not listed. Nonetheless, sufficient control on any potential development would be established, in my view, by Policy EC/4 together with the design policies of the UDP at Chapter 19.

12.50 Turning to 442/12, my conclusion is no. The site would represent a significant urban extension, not justified taking into account my overall conclusion on employment land supply - or the other objector stated development potential of the site.

Recommendation:

12.51 I recommend that:

- **No modification be made to the plan in response to these specific objections**

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