

Causey, Diane

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 28 July 2012 14:11
To: 'bwdav1@aol.com'
Subject: Re: Atherton South

I am afraid you are not correct in your assertions.

The Swingers Club as a planning application was from outside the Council and was publicised as it should have been.

As part of the inspection of our Local Plan, the inspector has insisted that we review all potential housing sites in the Borough as he says there are not enough housing sites in the Plan. Although the Council does not agree with his views, we are forced to do the review. We are therefore seeking the public's views through a consultation which has just commenced. Far from trying to do things that are not noticed we are asking for people to let us have their views.

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From: David Bowen
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Sent: Sat Jul 28 13:33:29 2012
Subject: Atherton South
Lord Smith

Can you please advise why the residents of Atherton have not been made aware of 2 major developments in our Atherton Community.

- 1) Swingers Club over Boots
- 2) South of Atherton Housing Development.

Once again Wigan Council are going behind every residents back in a hope that these things will go un noticed.

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Please advise at your earliest convenience.

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From: Smith, Peter, CLLR <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 28 July 2012 14:12
To: Stewart, Pam CLLR; Aldred, Karen CLLR; Aldred, Mark CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR
Subject: Fw: Atherton South

For information

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR
To: 'bwdav1@aol.com'
Sent: Sat Jul 28 14:10:42 2012
Subject: Re: Atherton South

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From: bwdav1@aol.com
Sent: 28 July 2012 17:08
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: Atherton South

Where has the consultation been advertised nobody knows nothing about it until the meeting today.

Sent from my HTC

----- Reply message -----

From: Leader@wigan.gov.uk
To: <bwdav1@aol.com>
Subject: Atherton South
Date: Sat, Jul 28, 2012 14:10

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This footnote also confirms that this email has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.

Causey, Diane

From: Loudon, Susan CLLR <S.Loudon@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 28 July 2012 19:02
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: Atherton South

Thanks

Susan

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR
To: Stewart, Pam CLLR; Aldred, Karen CLLR; Aldred, Mark CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR
Sent: Sat Jul 28 14:12:23 2012
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From: Brindley, Kathryn <K.Brinkley@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 July 2012 15:16
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Wigan Core Strategy: Consultations on options for future housing land

Dear Sir/Madam,

Wigan Core Strategy: Consultations on options for future housing land

As you may be aware, Wigan Council is currently in the process of preparing its Core Strategy, a key part of the Local Plan for the Borough, setting out what development is needed in the next 15 years, where it will go and how it can be achieved.

At the recent examination in public, the independent planning inspector concluded that there is not enough suitable housing land identified in our Draft Core Strategy and has formally suspended the examination. He has asked us to examine options on where extra land may be found and consult widely before we identify the best approach and present this back to him for consideration at the re-opened examination.

We are therefore contacting you as you have requested us to do so or have made comments on our Core Strategy in the past. The options for future housing land are:

- Land safeguarded for future development at Standish
- Land safeguarded for future development at Golborne and Lowton
- Land in the Green Belt around Wigan
- Land in the Green Belt at Leigh
- Combinations of the above.

We are also consulting on 3 other housing related matters which are:

- Including Astley in the east-west core of the borough, where most development is directed in the Core Strategy, with the effect that land safeguarded for future development at Coldalhurst Lane, Larkhill, Astley could be developed for housing.
- Clarifying our intentions on housing development as part of mixed development at East of Wigan Road, Landgate, Ashton.
- Identifying safeguarded land at South of Atherton as a broad location for new housing development.

These options are explained in the consultation document: 'Core Strategy: Options for addressing the shortfall of housing land, and other proposals' (July 2012). This and accompanying documents are available at www.wigan.gov.uk/ldfcorestrategy and in libraries, together with details of how to comment. **The consultation period runs from noon on 31 July to noon on 11 September 2012.**

We are also holding three drop-in sessions between 2pm and 8pm on the dates and at the locations listed below. You will be able to receive further information and talk to a planning officer.

- Tuesday 14 August 2012 - Chowbent Hall, Alderfold Street, Atherton, M46 9DS
- Monday 20 August 2012 - Standish Community Centre, Moody Street, Standish, WN6 0JY
- Wednesday 22 August 2012 - Compassion in Action, 9 Oaklands Road, Lowton, WA3 2LA

It must be stressed that this is an open consultation on options. In most cases only one option is needed, or a combination equivalent to one option. Any proposals subsequently brought forward would be subject to the statutory procedures required. In particular, those options in the Green Belt could only proceed if exceptional circumstances could be demonstrated. They are all simply options to be considered at this time.

If you require any other information on the consultation process or the Core Strategy, please contact the planning policy team, using one of the methods below:

- Letter: Planning Policy, Places Directorate, Wigan Council, PO Box 100, Wigan WN1 3DS.

- Phone: 01942 489223 or 489224
- E-mail: planningpolicy@wigan.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

David Kearsley
Principal Planning Officer

Causey, Diane

From: Aldred, Mark CLLR <M.Aldred@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 August 2012 06:29
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: Atherton South

Thanks Peter.

Another thing we could do with a chat about if you can fit us in for a chat between 21st to 24th August.

Thanks

Mark

Cllr Mark Aldred

Councillor for the people of Atherleigh.

Member of the TFGMC

Transport for Greater Manchester Committee

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR
To: Stewart, Pam CLLR; Aldred, Karen CLLR; Aldred, Mark CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR
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From: David Bowen <bwdav1@aol.com>
Sent: 03 October 2012 20:45
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR; Molyneux, David Trevor CLLR; Anderson, Kevin CLLR; Bretherton, Ged CLLR; Cunliffe, Keith CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR; Ready, Christopher, CLLR
Subject: South Of Atherton Development
Importance: High

Dear Council Members

Please find attached document in relation to the South Of Atherton Development.

The residents of Atherton are very concerned that the documentation from Turley & Associates was published on the date that the consultation came to an end and residents did not know what they were being consulted on.

The residents of Atherton feel that this development has come about as an after thought just like a rabbit out of a magicians hat.

Can you please advise whether you as our Council Members intend to support our groups submission that we handed in to Wigan Council.

I trust that you will provide us with a public update once you have read the attached document.

Regards

David Bowen

On behalf of Save Atherton South

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From: David Bowen <bwdav1@aol.com>
Sent: 03 October 2012 21:55
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR; Molyneux, David Trevor CLLR; Anderson, Kevin CLLR; Bretherton, Ged CLLR; Cunliffe, Keith CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR; Ready, Christopher, CLLR
Subject: South Of Atherton
Attachments: FINAL LETTER TO CABINET MEMBERS.pdf
Importance: High

Dear Council Members
The document appeared to detach itself.
I have now attached.

Regards
David Bowen
On behalf of Save Atherton South

To all Members of Cabinet

3rd October 2012

Dear Councillors

RE: Core Strategy Land at Atherton South

Please find below the submission which I am sure you are aware of by the Save Atherton South Campaign Group. We ask that you read this submission and visit the site prior to making a decision and to allow you to ascertain all the facts for yourself / yourselves in order to make an informed, balanced and proper decision as to whether or not to include the WIG 156 proposal as part of the Core Strategy.

1 – The Core Strategy consultation process is flawed

The Core Strategy was commenced in 2006 to plan for the perceived future housing need for the Borough and was submitted for Examination in August 2011. Subsequent to the Inspectors study of the submitted Wigan Core Strategy, doubts were raised as to its sustainability in as much as it was unsound and failed to demonstrate an adequate and realistically deliverable supply of housing land.

To cover this perceived shortfall, Wigan Council added more sites to their Core Strategy, including WIG 156 – land south of Atherton. The inclusion of WIG 156 and the process leading to its consideration as a credible site for proposed development is highly suspect in view of its history and the opinions of experts in the development field.

The land south of Atherton history is riddled with old mine workings and subsidence.

On the 19 July 2012 the Cabinet received a report which did not at all reference the Inspectors letter and the serious reservations he had about continuing with this Core Strategy. We are concerned that the Cabinet may not have taken an informed decision.

The changes proposed for the land to the South of Atherton will mean this site is delivering more housing than the KEY STRATEGIC SITE at North Leigh (43 hectares for residential) Atherton (47 hectares for residential). Yet the detail and information on this site is wholly inadequate. The infrastructure requirements are as significant as the site at North Leigh yet they are not detailed.

There is no detailed information on which to comment in a meaningful way or to engage the professional support of planners, contamination experts and others.

The Cabinet report also confirms that the land to the South of Atherton site is not being dealt with as part of the shortfall of 2,500 consultation. Indeed it is a site that Wigan has already counted towards supply, without it the shortfall would be nearer to 3,100.

Letter received by residents

We submit that the consultation process has been lacking in detail and clarity of the proposal in Atherton. The starting point for this assertion is the letter sent out by Wigan Council to some residents in August 2012 and to other residents 2 days prior to the drop-in sessions to which the letter refers. Your officers made a decision to only contact those properties directly bordering onto the proposed development and not any surrounding residences. Of these bordering properties it is assumed that all have had formal notification giving them a full period of time to respond. This has not happened.

To date there are residences that border this proposed development that have still to receive any form of notification, some on Millers Lane for example? Those that have received notification letters only did so within a few days of the organised drop-in session at Chowbent hall on Tuesday 14th August 2012. One resident only received her letter two days prior to the event. The only four houses on Fern Close to receive letters did so four days prior to the event. This was explained as due to “technical difficulties”. The local councillor in attendance admitted this was unacceptable. It was suggested that “word of mouth” from residents was expected to be used to ensure that people knew about the meeting. No advertisements were placed in the Atherton Forum notice board, this is not acceptable.

Many residents are not on the consultation database and they have not been part of the Core Strategy process. They did not need to be as the land to the South of Atherton was not part of Wigan’s Core Strategy. It is unacceptable to assume that everyone has access to the internet.

It is a fact that the original Core Strategy consultation did not identify this land as needed for development in the plan period.

On this basis many residents did not engage in the Core Strategy process, they have been prejudiced therefore from being excluded from the presentation and consideration of evidence by the inspector at all key stages. This is unfair.

Drop-in session and consultation

Further information was provided at the drop-in sessions. However this information was selective in nature and in parts fundamentally wrong.

In the literature handed out by the Council, Question 9 is misleading and incorrect as a matter of fact and law. “Without an up to date development plan, development will still come forward but in a less planned and co-ordinated way, with fewer opportunities to capture wider community benefits”.

We are informed that the land be designated as a broad location for new development, designated for housing and associated infrastructure, including transport and green infrastructure, open space, flood prevention, sustainable drainage, nature conservation with the potential for some of this green infrastructure to be provided on neighbouring land in the Green Belt to the South.

Members of the Group were informed that the Greenfield/Brownfield designation was irrelevant.

Members of the Group were informed not to worry about the lack of viability assessment for the site as this was the case for most of Wigan's sites.

Quality of consultation and process

Consultation is a two-way process in which parties should be duty-bound to be candid and honest with each other. Things should not be held back, otherwise it is meaningless.

Wigan has been found lacking in being open and up-front when it comes to relevant questions from the general public on this matter. The Council officers have given vague responses, misleading responses and, sometimes, no response at all. This either means that the Council doesn't know the answer, or that it wants to avoid giving a proper answer which is at odds with:

- Freedom of information.
- The process of properly conducted public consultation.

The consultation process in this instance has been 'necessitated' by the public getting wind of the proposal and the swell of opinion against it.

Clarity is urgently required on the stage we find ourselves in this process. We have requested clarification on why Atherton South is described as a proposal. At the drop-in session officers stated it is an option not a proposal. The information sent out does not say this. We have written letters asking what the difference is between an option and a proposal. We have yet to receive a reply. Can you look into this please?

The letter sent to members of the public now affected by Wigan MBC's oversight to meet its required housing supply is inadequate and lacks detailed information on the background, context LDF and Core Strategy and process. It does not provide key documents (unlike those sent to specific consultation bodies).

This is too short a period to understand and organise evidence against the proposal. That said, even if such documents were enclosed, members of the public cannot be expected in 6 weeks to read through all the twists and turns and formulate responses to a process which has been on going now since 2006. The implications for the Community now affected in Atherton are very different to those proposals originally consulted upon.

At no point have residents in Atherton been asked the questions asked in previous consultations and via the portal. For example objecting because it is not legally compliant, it is not sound. This is a serious flaw in the process.

We have direct evidence to demonstrate that key documents have changed during the consultation process which is unfair and misleading. For example there have been 3 versions of the questionnaire copies of which are attached. Emails objections have not been processed or more importantly replied to because they do not include full postal addresses.

2 – Pre determination

For the public consultation on the Wigan Local Development Framework Core Strategy Options for addressing the shortfall of housing land South of Atherton, the Council published twenty pre-determined 'key' questions for the public with answers.

The Council also gave out a form for the public to use to submit comments. It listed the options and proposals on which to comment with a pre-formatted box for people to give reasons for and against the pre-determined question: Do you think this option or proposal is the best way of helping to meet the shortfall of housing land in the borough to 2026?

Without consultation Wigan Council actually brought this site forward to count towards the housing figures on 30th January 2012 yet only 2 weeks before this in the schedule of proposed changes document the position was very different.

CP6 in the 13th January 2012 Changes to Policies document provided the following spatial distribution of housing breakdown, left hand column.

By 30th January 2012 they provided the following spatial distribution of housing breakdown, right hand column.

Highlighting some locations Within the east west core	October 2011 submission document	13 th Jan 2012	30 th Jan 2012	% of provision 13 th Jan 2012	% of provision 30 th Jan 2012
Wigan	24%	3,945	3,868	26%	23%
Leigh	19%	3,587	3,936	24%	24%
Atherton	5%	1,031	2,527	7%	15%
Hindley	23% (Abraham)	1,985	1,980	13%	12%
Platt bridge		624	622	4%	4%
Ashton in Mk	9% (includes Bryn)	614	612	4%	4%
Tyldesley	7% (Astley)	1,013	1,010	7%	6%
Golborne and Lowton	6%				
Standish / Aspull Shevington	4%				
Orell and Billinge	3%				
Sub total	85% of total provision	12,799	14,555	85% of total provision	88% of total provision

Residents in Atherton have been provided with no information about why Atherton has suddenly tripled its contribution to the housing supply. While other areas such as Hindley and Standish reduce significantly (10%) or provide nothing at all.

By the 6th February 2012 the Council submitted a document which includes the land of South of Atherton site and attached to this is a document by Acland Bracewell on behalf of Tarleton Estates.

If Wigan Council were changing their position and actually including this site as part of the housing supply, why were residents not informed at this stage and afforded the opportunity to submit responses to the case by Wigan Council?

The position taken by the Council has predetermined the outcome of our consultation. It appears that Wigan Council made their minds up that this site is included in the housing supply calculation. We have been prejudiced by this action on the part of Wigan Council. No doubt this is why our consultation is referenced as a *proposal* and not an option. Yet at the drop-in sessions officers were at pains to say this site was an option. That is not what the consultation letter and literature says.

This is a breach of the Human Rights Act 1998 Article 6 right to a fair hearing and raises serious concerns about the process carried out to date. The land owner was afforded the opportunity to submit a council key sites proforma in advance of the hearing. The residents of Atherton did not even know this was taking place, hearings we believe took place in January and February when this was discussed.

If this site was assumed not to be included would we not be saying that over 3,100 houses are needed? By saying 2,500 houses are required this assumes the Atherton South site is a done deal.

Why are Wigan Council consulting on options A, C and D or the combination as in the Cabinet report all sections confirm that they would not accord with the Core Strategy and we would not be able to adopt the Core Strategy. Again this supports the position that this consultation is a sham. Only Option B for the 2,640 homes is an option.

Para 2.22 of the Cabinet report, when referring to land at Land gate (300 homes), Coldhurst Astley (230 homes) Atherton (600 to 2026) over 800 thereafter, confirms that the consultation is not meaningful. *"All three locations have been assessed and the proposals for all three would be main changes to the core strategy as submitted to the secretary of state, but not to the extent that it would be inappropriate at this stage. However, these locations would not contribute to meeting the shortfall indentified. Instead without them the shortfall would be greater."*

So the shortfall of 2,500 homes is actually a shortfall of 3,100 homes and the whole consultation being carried out by Wigan Council is misleading and predetermined.

3 – Material/significant changes in evidence presented by Wigan Council

Broad location for development “

The sustainability appraisal 2011 we are informed considered the site as a mixed use site. At Para 1.4 Appendix 3 we are informed that “it was not included as a broad location because it was **not considered to be viable** for economic development as part of a mixed use proposal. However we are informed it is now needed for housing.

Atherton South was rejected as part of the sustainability appraisal August 2011. This suggests it was not in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The scale of this site will have a negative impact on the environmental, economic and social perspective. The 2009 appraisal gave a negative **XX as an assessment** for the Greenfield, “Impact would be permanent loss of Greenfield. Not easy to mitigate “

We can find no further information on this change of heart that the site is now viable when previously it was dismissed as it was not considered viable.

We reserve our position to comment further on any such evidence from the Council should it become available.

Previous position was no houses in this plan period and houses were not referenced in Policy SP4, but now projected to deliver 1,250 houses by 2028 with a total capacity of **1,422**. (Please note references to 1,500 in all Wigan consultation information). At the drop-in session one document said 1550. The first housing to be built in 2020/2021, 6 years after the commencement of North Leigh Park and four years after the commencement of South of Hindley. The density to be 30 dwellings per hectare.

As listed above the changes to SP4 and CP6 are significant and material changes to the Core Strategy for the community of Atherton. Previous position Atherton is providing 7% of housing, by January 2012 Atherton providing 15% of housing. Compared to Leigh 24% and Wigan 23%. So what happened between January 2012 and August 2012 to include the land South of Atherton into Policy SP4? Would Wigan Council have thought it reasonable to just bring this forward as they did in January 2012 as accelerated land supply?

The other two sites Coldhurst Lane and Land gate were already identified as either broad locations/options for development within the Core Strategy. The land at Atherton was not. Atherton was different; Atherton was not envisaged to be needed.

We are at a serious disadvantage as recognised in the Cabinet report Para 2.19. “Unlike those other locations however, it has not been consulted upon to date so it is now appropriate to consult”

Tyldesley and Astley are now to be part of the East West Core including land at Coldhurst lane. This is a major change to the Core Strategy.

The role of the East West Core is different. The approach to the distribution of housing in the Townships is different.

The use of safeguarded land not previously highlighted and the approach to safeguarded land is materially different.

The spatial strategy has fundamentally changed:

- The submitted plan will be significantly changed.
- WIG 155 and 156 are planned to be connected by road infrastructure and we believe this cumulative impact needs to be taken into account. Wigan's Infrastructure Assessment of July 2012 says that this site will be linked up to the East of Atherton site. So this will be one large housing site with an impact of merging adjoining towns. Why did the Council not give this one number?
- We consider the modifications proposed **WILL** result in a plan and spatial strategy substantially different to that consulted on since August 2011. That we find the inspectors serious reservations expressed in his letter dated 24 May 2012 are correct, that it is **NOT** appropriate to undertake the work necessary at this late stage in the process. Indeed it is our position that the change proposed is not one which can be made at this stage in the process. . Under the Localism Act section 112 the Council is required to request you to make modifications under s20 (7) (c), we are firmly of the opinion that to include WIG 156 does affect the spatial strategy. The key diagram and Policies SP4, CP6 and 7 have all significantly changed. Wigan MBC should be encouraged to withdraw the Core Strategy. By including WIG 156 this fundamentally affects the proposal on the East West Core for redevelopment and includes land previously not proposed for development within this plan period. It is our view that modifications proposed which remedy the shortfall of housing land would result in a plan substantially different from that originally submitted.
- Indeed, it is our submission that changes should not alter the Strategy or result in a substantially different plan. These are matters which go to the heart of the soundness of the plan. These proposals are not matters of clarification but rather are fundamental changes to the Spatial Plan which has been the subject of extensive consultation.
- CP7 has no reference to a road as proposed in WIG 156. Policy CP6 has no reference to WIG 156 as safeguarded land for development.

It is our understanding that most of the comments on CP6 Housing related to developer and landowner interests wanting the release of land in Standish. Not Atherton. The only reference to Atherton South appears in the Inspectors letter of the 14 March 2012 **The supply would rely on the development of a significant number of dwellings south of Atherton even though this is not identified as a broad location for development.** At best this is desperation on the part of Wigan MBC at worst it is predetermination without any form of public consultation.

Greenfield/brown field designation of sites has changed and is fundamentally different, seriously flawed

We have evidence from the public inquiry report into the 1977 Millers Lane Open cast Coal Inquiry .This raises questions for the inspector on the protected status of the land now described as WIG 156 . At paragraph 61 Wigan Council submitted evidence to the Inquiry that "the northern part of the site is "white" land ". White land is defined as "open land not designated for development or change of use, or on which development is not allowed" "Oxford dictionary definition ". Wigan Councils own evidence to the Inquiry being that the

land afforded a very pleasant rural countryside scene much enjoyed by local residents as an amenity and walking recreational facility within an industrial urban environment"

Then describing the proposed development. Wigan Council at Para 62 (f) "the site forms the only extensive natural amenity for the town of Atherton and would be completely lost for recreational and general amenity purposes"

The Council have suggested that the land to the South of Atherton is PDL (Previously Developed Land) because, whilst they accept that it has been remediated fully, that this was not achieved through the development management process. Wigan say it has however been restored through the derelict land reclamation procedures.

We submit that it has therefore been fully remediated and restored, to a large part, back to agricultural use. As such it can no longer be considered to be PDL and would be excluded from such by the fourth bullet point in Para 1.23 of the submission by JASP Planning. *The bullet referred to (Para. 1.23 bullet 4) reads: Land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time (to the extent that it can reasonably be considered a part of the natural surroundings).*

. The council's assessment is fundamentally wrong. (JASP Planning Consultancy Limited on behalf of A F Brideoake Will Trust; February 2012, Para. 1.24) and as a Group we support this view.

Residents have been misled we submit by the inconsistent and misleading consultations carried out by Wigan Council.

In 2009 the sustainability appraisal confirmed that the land was Greenfield. This document led us to believe this site was Greenfield and would therefore not be developed. Tarleton landowners say it is Greenfield land in their submission in 2012 in the Brownfield/Greenfield table.

Yet Wigan Council without any consultation have changed the status of the land to brown field in their recent consultation and updated sustainability appraisal. We are informed that Government office northwest and 4NW agree that all land in the plan which has been subject to extensive mining and industrial activity is brown field land. There is no evidence on the website to substantiate this point.

Indeed it is our submission that the conclusion is unsound and flawed. The land to the South of Atherton we submit has regenerated naturally the land to the rear of Hope Fold Avenue was not part of any derelict land programme. This land is agricultural land and has been for many years. Indeed it was previously classed as White land. How did it come to being Safeguarded land in the 2006 UDP? We ask that you ask this question of officers.

At the drop-in sessions we were informed that the land was classed as brown field due to the dismantling of the railway line.

Council officers argue the site will now provide that the development of this site will relieve development pressure on wider Greenfield land resources, with particular emphasis on those

sites located beyond the preferred spatial location. There are no other Greenfield land designations of this size within Atherton. This area is utilised by the population of Atherton for dog walking, health and recreation to alleviate the social and physical deprivation within the Township. This land is a Greenfield resource.

Much of the land has naturally regenerated and is agricultural land. However, the classification of agricultural land within the boundaries of the site is found to differ when comparing two appraisal documents prepared by Acland Bracewell Surveyors Limited acting on behalf of Tareyton Estates and a document produced by Wigan Council.

A site appraisal document produced by Acland Bracewell dated the 1st February 2012 under item 5 states, " It comprises poor quality agricultural land (Agricultural Land Classification Grade 3c and contains no national, regional or local designations.....". A further Acland Bracewell report of the 6th February 2012 again makes reference to Agricultural Land in two sections outlined as follows:

Item 1.1.4 of their appraisal of the 6th February 2012 states that, "The site comprises poor quality agricultural land (Agricultural Land Classification plan 3c) and is enclosed to the north, west and east by the built form of the urban area of Atherton and Tyldesley. The land is predominantly down to rough grazing, together with sports pitches and an element of woodland". This appraisal is further confirmed in item 2.2 of this document (Development Plan Designations and other Constraints). In this section under the assessment framework of High Quality Agricultural Land the appraisal states: "Land classified as Grade 3c - Not classified as best and most versatile. Open space survey shows large areas of rough grazing land"

In comparison, the report prepared by Wigan Council (Technical Report - Broad Site Options Assessment) dated July 2012 it is stated under item 9.6, "The existing uses of the land are Agricultural land which is moderate quality (Agricultural Land Classification 3b) predominantly down to rough grazing, together with the sports pitches and an element of woodland.

Therefore, under the circumstances and as part of the Council's consultation process it is suggested that in view of the anomaly evidenced above, respondents are unable to determine which designation is correct i.e. the submissions by Acland Bracewell or the Technical report prepared by Wigan Council. This anomaly suggests that the consultation is flawed. It is believed that the Council needs to qualify the situation in relation to whether or not the Agricultural Land is correctly appraised and designated as 3b (moderate quality) or 3c (Poor quality). It is important that respondents have the correct facts at their disposal in order to understand the implications of the Agricultural Land designation in relation to their submission and ultimately the outcome of the development proposal.

4 – No evidence of needed and realistically deliverable supply of housing land

It was somewhat of a surprise when this site was pulled, somewhat like the proverbial rabbit out of the magician's hat, at the prospect of further shortage of housing land as a result of the extended Core Strategy period. This site has not been the subject of specific identification and

rigorous assessment as the other sites have. (JASP Planning Consultancy Limited on behalf of A F Brideoake Will Trust; February 2012, Para. 1.21).

We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence that this site can be delivered. (Mosaic Town Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes; 17 February 2012, Para. 2.26).

The paper nominally produced by the Council 'The inclusion of South of Atherton on the housing supply' seems to be signed by Ackland Bracewell Surveyors and so we do not know whether it represents the Council's independent view. (Mosaic Town Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes; 17 February 2012, Para. 2.27).

We have significant concerns over the inclusion of South of Atherton within the housing trajectory. This site was only introduced to the examination when discussing the need for additional land for development due to an extension of two years to the plan period. (Emery Planning Partnership on behalf of Wainhomes Developments Limited; 17 February 2012, Para. 7.2).

Although we recognise the site is safeguarded land in the east west core, this inclusion of this site is such a fundamental change; particularly for the residents of Atherton. It was specifically considered by the Council as a broad location in the Sustainability Appraisal, and rejected. (Emery Planning Partnership on behalf of Wainhomes Developments Limited; 17 February 2012, Para. 7.3).

Peel Holdings has doubts over the deliverability of this potential broad location, especially about access and viability. Peel also has concerns that the development of south of Atherton is likely to displace house building activity from North Leigh and South of Hindley because of the relatively close proximity of these major regeneration proposals. (Barton Willmore on behalf of Peel Holdings subsequent to the Inspectors letter dated 21 March 2012; Para. 2.5).

It remains a source of both amazement and concern that the Council are able to provide a number of versions of the housing trajectory all of which manage to add up to precisely the correct figure depending upon whether the Core Strategy period as submitted is retained, or it is extended to cover the period up to 2028. Firstly, it suggests that the figures are being adjusted to suit the requirement, in which case the information cannot be relied upon. Secondly, it suggests a situation where there is absolutely no flexibility within the scope of the Core Strategy to ensure delivery of the appropriate quantum of housing over the plan period. (JASP Planning Consultancy Limited on behalf of A F Brideoake Will Trust; February 2012, Para. 1.8).

In view of the above, it is apparent that Wigan Council's Core Strategy process is serious flawed.

The current core strategy and the proposed amendments are too late in the day and we consider add to the unsound nature of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is not justified or effective in accordance with the NPPF. We ask that you read these documents.

We can find no evidence to substantiate points made by Council officers that housing in this location will help realise more sustainable and inclusive communities where the need for this

type of development has been identified. The need in this area is simply that of a lack of supply of housing. This site was not identified as having a need for the reasons outlined in Para 3.3. Policy CP6 provides that the borough's needs for housing will be met by this policy but the dramatic increase in allocation for Atherton based on evidence is non-existent. We are informed that 85% of housing is to be allocated in the East West Core, why is Atherton a small town receiving a disproportionate allocation? Why has the Hindley allocation gone down is there no longer a need for regeneration in Hindley? The land at Atherton we submit is Greenfield land so how are the Council meeting the 75% on brown field land target in policy CP6? We note that Persimmon Homes 09/06/2011 question the significant viability and deliverability issues of sites in the east west core and highlight the risk of 85% of development being in the East West Core. Redrow homes 29/04/2011 submission supports the East Lincs Road corridor so there is less reliance on the East West Core "due to uncertainty over deliverability/develop ability of many sites". AF Bredoak Will Trust 10/6/2011 add concerns about the East West Core, the lack of evidence and Borough wide Strategic market assessment, the reliance on the 2007/8 housing needs study is also referenced."Robust evidence is lacking".

This Core Strategy fails to identify an ADEQUATE/REALISTICALLY deliverable supply of housing land:

- The amendments proposed to SP3 and SP4 policies were the subject of a viability assessment in 2011. The proposal on land at Atherton South has not been subjected to an independent assessment of viability. We submit it does not meet the justified and effectiveness test set out in the NPPF.
- Wigan Council has presented no evidence to demonstrate that viability, land stability issues, accessibility issues can be viably resolved to enable the development of the land in this way. CP6 and CP7 have no evidence, information to justify this site to being a broad location.
- We have requested at the drop-in sessions confirmation and a copy of the viability assessment for the site. No detailed assessment is available. This was confirmed and the planning officer (Martin) confirmed that one would be submitted at a later date and that "they were on site" now doing assessments. This does not assist residents who are being consulted we are prepared to commission a land surveyor to consider the viability assessment but have nothing to consider. Martin indicated that as long as the assessments were available to the inspector that was all that was required.
- All documents in Appendices 9, 10 and 12 question deliverability and viability and the previously developed land definition ascribed by the Local Planning Authority as outlined above, so how can the Inspector add a this broad location for housing development?

Viability

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the need for careful attention to viability to ensure development plans are deliverable across the economic cycle. The recent High Court case from Bromley in South London confirms that plan allocations must be grounded in a genuine understanding of viability and a meaningful assessment of alternative

strategies. (R (Linden Homes) v London Borough of Bromley) 19 December 2011 EWHC 3430.

The judge in this case concluded that the Inspectors conclusion that “the plan allocation would be viable across the plan period as a whole, cut across Lindens Homes uncontested viability assessment to such an extent that the conclusion by the Inspector could only be **speculative. The judge quashed the associated area action plan. The case reinforces the point that LPAs need to show that planned infrastructure and the allocations it serves can be brought forward in a timely way and that reasonable alternative sites have been explored.**

The case confirms that a realistic assessment of economic feasibility is needed for Authorities to plan positively and for plan examiners to exercise their judgement safely.

In 2009 in the sustainability appraisal we are informed that “it was not included as a broad location because it was **not considered to be viable** for economic development as part of a mixed use proposal. However we are informed it is now needed for housing.”

The indicative land value produced by the initial viability assessment is considered to be at the lower end of deliverability ... the site is considered to have only “marginal viability “

Peel Holdings support our view in the current market conditions and state they “have doubts over the deliverability of this potential broad location, especially about access and viability”

It is the case that even where viability assessments are negative the Local Planning Authority should have already assessed different funding mechanisms to achieve the delivery of needs based targets. The LPA has nothing to consider on this part of the plan for Atherton South. No funding plan, private or public.

The Councils own viability assessment referenced on page 25 of the Core Strategy February 2011 proposed submission version concluded that apart from Garrett Hall, development is not currently viable at all broad locations identified or in the key strategic site.

We ask that you read the letter about the North Leigh Site and the level of detail presented to the Inspector. The land at Atherton has nothing to assess.

The principle applies to all the Wigan housing sites as in the drop-in session the planning officer Martin confirmed that all Wigan sites had no detailed viability assessments. Before going on to add that it was recognised that a significant number of proposed sites were not viable as things stood.

Constraints on the land

We ask that you question Council officers about how they conclude there are no constraints on the land in the absence of a viability assessment. The Ackland Bracewell document is inadequate and we submit not evidence upon which the Inspector can apply the test of deliverability of this site. At 2.2 it does list “other constraints” and lists the site as **Greenfield**, list the pipelines; the land has potential contamination (moderate to high) and Flood Zones 2 and 3.

We were informed at the drop-in session that a detailed assessment was being carried out as we speak and that this would be submitted to the Inspector in due course. This is totally unacceptable and the document should be available in the consultation period to allow those being consulted to assess.

There has been clearly mining activity on this land and we submit that the location of the mine shafts would require assessment as part of this proposal and definitely impact on the viability and deliverability of this site for residential development.

Only 47 hectares are developable on the site for residential development, with 33% available for development within the next 5 to 10 years and the remainder in years 10-15 **subject to highway improvements.**

Tree Preservation orders and public rights of way are constraints on the land together with the details below on habitats and wildlife.

Many residents have submitted letters outlining the constraints on this land which are have not been addressed by the Local Planning Authority. We have submitted plans showing the farms previously in this area and land boundaries.

The field immediately to the south of Hope Fold Avenue was the subject of a letter sent to the LDF Programming Officer for Wigan Council by Mr. J.P.M. Mills on 25 June 2012. No acknowledgement or response has yet been received.

Evidence of continued subsidence from old mine workings: 04 March 2006: This hole in field to the south of 25 Hope Fold Avenue, Atherton, appeared overnight



We have in our possession a report from the Coal Authority issued on the 31st August 2012 we need time to assess the contents. However on Page 1 of 4: *Information from the Coal Authority* it states “Underground coal mining – Past”.

The property (29 Hope Fold Avenue and neighbouring properties abutting WIG 156) is in the likely zone of influence from workings in 9 seams of coal at shallow to 540m depth, and last worked in 1963.

In view of the mining circumstances a prudent developer would seek technical advice before any works are undertaken.

Therefore if development proposals are being considered, technical advice relating to both the investigation of coal and former mines and their treatment should be obtained before beginning work on site.

All proposals should apply good engineering practice developed for mining areas.

No development should be undertaken that intersects, disturbs or interferes with any coal or mines of coal without the permission of the Coal Authority.

Developers should be aware that the investigation of coal seams/former mines of coal may have the potential to generate and/or displace underground gases and these risks both under and adjacent to the development should be fully considered in developing any proposals.

The need for effective measures to prevent gases entering into public properties either during investigation or after development also needs to be assessed and properly addressed.

This is necessary due to the public safety implications of any development in these circumstances.

Contamination

Due to the lack of work carried out to date we have no detailed contamination survey to comment on.

Flood zone

Wigan Council accepts that the site is constrained by Flood risk although they state it is not significantly constrained. Either way the site is constrained and received a negative X in the 2009 sustainability appraisal on Flood risk.

It is recognised that approximately 10.8% of the overall site is an identified flood risk although figures for the exact risk have varied since the report by Acland Bracewell Surveyors estimated 7% in February 2012.

Intermediate/high risk flooding – 1.83 ha; Flood Zone 3 – 4.62 ha (Wigan Council Consultation draft – May 2012). Total risk 6.45ha.

Wigan Council further identified 5% of the identified flood risk being in zone 2 and 3 (Options for addressing shortfalls – Technical report July 2012). This report highlighted that, “recent flooding and drought events should highlight to the Council the importance of managing flood risk and water resources”

This factor was highlighted back in December 2009 by the Environment Agency. It stated that Atherton lies in a sub area 2 and that: “It is recognised that flood risk is currently very high in

this sub area and is expected to rise due to increased urbanisation and climate change.” Their report also identified that mining had led to widespread subsidence and that sewer flooding has been an issue for Atherton. (Environment Agency, Mersey Estuary Catchment, Flood Management Plan summary report December 2009)

In conclusion, a proposed development of this scale on former mining land can only add to the risk of flooding on this land and the surrounding area. Over development will bring with it a high risk of flooding and sewer flooding.

The gas pipeline

This is a constraint on the land but no assessment has taken place. Indeed at the drop-in session one officer did not know of its existence.

Tree preservation orders and rights of way

Within the Councils own documents theses are reported but there are no details available on the website to confirm locations. From the plan at Appendix 15b footpaths can be seen which cross the site.

School playing fields

Email notification from the Principal Planning Officer (David Kearsley to Councillor Bradbury; dated 30 July 2012) stated that the playing field within WIG 156 has been excluded from the developable area of the site South of Atherton.

However, the email goes on to say that it is still included within the boundary of the site option as this is based on the land safeguarded for future development in the Unitary Development Plan.

5 – Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure

This was not a feature at the Chowbent Hall public consultation held 14 August 2012. When this was brought up by a resident, the planning officer he spoke to said that no plans for housing or infrastructure had been done yet.

The strategy, it seemed, was to pass WIG 156 and worry about the practical details later. That amounts to planning on a wing and a prayer.

Peel understands that the site has not been promoted in the past because its full development would require a link road east to west ... Such a road is likely to have major issues relating to deliverability and viability. (Representations by Barton Willmore on behalf of Peel Holdings at the examination by the Council; February 2012, Para. 5.1).

Deliverability of this site for housing development is dependent on highway improvements yet there are no details of such. New road junctions and some other highway improvements are suggested to be envisaged. No plans are in place to be consulted on.

It is our view that to be a broad location for housing development all land required should be included; any link road should be detailed. The detail for this road will determine and influence the delivery of housing units yet there is no reference at all to this point in the documents from Wigan Council. Indeed the only reference to any discussion on phasing seems to be to protect the development at North Leigh.

The Councils own sustainability appraisal concludes that there is *limited* bus access via Atherton Town Centre for northern periphery as well as via A571 for eastern periphery. Rail access some distance away to the north east. There is no information on existing peak time congestion. The comments confirm that *the site may require significant infrastructure investment to link satisfactorily to the network*.

On economy and employment the conclusion is a negative X not very attractive to employment development due to poor accessibility and the necessary investment to overcome this.

So what has changed and where is the investment detail required so we can properly respond to consultation? Where is the up to date capital strategy? Infrastructure plan and detailed assessment?

Furthermore we would submit that Policy CP7 Accessibility provides no details of the link road required for the development of this site and therefore the consultation and core strategy is not fit for purpose. This road will be a major development and yet it has no reference in the core strategy document. This makes the Core Strategy unsound. Wainhomes submission 21/03/2011 support the position we take that SP4 and the lack of any reference to infrastructure and this affects SP1 and how realistic and deliverable the development planned is.

Peel Holdings support our view and state they “have doubts over the deliverability of this potential broad location, especially about access and viability”.

Retail and town centre infrastructure

Facilities in Atherton have been downgraded. It cannot sustain further development on a big scale.

In recent years, Atherton has:

- lost its Town Hall;
- lost its swimming baths;
- Its roads have been narrowed with traffic calming structures installed;
- Vehicular access to the main street has been restricted during shopping hours;
- A confusing and frustrating one-way system for motorists installed;
- The Two Porches school for children with disabilities has been closed;
- The Council run day nursery (Formby Avenue) has been closed;
- The police station is no longer open for public use as such (telephone contact only);

- The fire station has been downgraded to one appliance;
- The high school has been closed down;
- The town is about to lose its public library.
- And the weekly market is no more

Market Street is a special area of conservation which is sadly dilapidated and does not serve the needs of its residents. Atherton has lost most of its vitality and viability. The housing developments in Atherton which have already taken place have not improved the local economic and social problems of unemployment and social deprivation

The Council's own Infrastructure Plan in 2011 recognised that Leisure and Cultural facilities such as restaurants, cinemas, theatres and performance venues are limited within the borough's Town Centres.

Economy/employment

WIG 156 will do little to alleviate the local unemployment situation. Past experience of big companies or developers coming into the area is that they employ their own dedicated workforce and hire only a 'token' number of local people for their short-term needs.

Wigan's employment policy should be to attract companies to settle in the area for the long-term to create a stable job base, not companies that come in for a relatively short time and move on leaving a pool of unemployed behind.

There is no evidence presented by the Council to substantiate the link between this site's infrastructure and the attraction of new business or to meet modern business needs. No assessments have taken place.

Social infrastructure

Education: Wigan Council closed the secondary school in the immediate vicinity of this site and in making this strategic decision undermined considerably the arguments being put forward for this site. There is no evidence upon which to comment on the website to support Wigan Council's view that there is sufficient educational capacity in the plan period for development of this site by way of primary and secondary schools within the immediate vicinity. Indeed the sustainability appraisal for the site identifies *there may be some element of pressure as a result*.

The report to the Wigan Planning Committee concerning the development of land at Gibfield Park on the northern edge of Atherton for 275 houses has highlighted an extra need of 40 primary school places and 44 secondary school places in the years 2014-15 within the existing school framework. (Application A/11/75372).

With the closure of the high school in Atherton, WIG 156 with its proposed development size would considerably further exacerbate the situation.

Health: Three surgeries are referenced within close proximity to the site. We can find no detailed assessment of current demands on these surgeries. We can find no details of proposals for additional primary and secondary health care facilities to accommodate this increase in demand. We are led to believe that currently health visitors are struggling to cope with demand in the area.

Leisure and culture: The sports centre is in much need of revamp and repair. The culture offer in the area is non-existent.

Loss of green infrastructure

Public use/health and well being: WIG 156 would impact upon existing pollution in the area – noise, air quality and natural amenity.

Parks and green spaces make a significant contribution to the quality of life. They offer the local community the opportunity to shape and influence the facility they provide – physically, mentally and creatively.

Wigan makes the valid point that parks and green spaces make a significant contribution to environmental impact where the ratio of population to green space area is concerned. The Borough acknowledges that it needs another 98 hectares prior to the WIG 156 development proposal to meet the target of 1 hectare of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 head of population as recommended by Natural England. (Parks and Green spaces Strategy).

Atherton and Hindsford are already designated in the top 30% of deprived areas in England and WIG 156 would deprive them even more, which is contrary to the requirements and spirit of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The land is used by communities served by the top 10% of most deprived areas within the Wigan Borough area, Hagfold, Shakerley and Higher Fold. The statistics for crime in Atherton are 10% above the national average.

We have seen no evidence to support the view that the challenges faced by our Borough and Town in relation to health inequalities will be addressed by the housing proposed to be delivered on this site.

This piece of countryside is used as recreational land by thousands of families from surrounding areas, this is free to use. The land should be referenced in the Greenheart policies not the housing policies. Wigan Council and the Health Authority should promote this area to children and families as part of the Greenheart campaign and as per Wigan's Biodiversity policy. The area facilitates and promotes good mental health and wellbeing and may reduce epidemiology and health inequalities in the Borough.

If this land is developed along with many other proposals for Atherton, there will be very little open green space left for the increasing population of Atherton. This will not be in accordance with Natural England's recommendations of 1 HA of designated local nature reserve per 1000 head of population. As per Wigan's Parks and Green spaces strategy, the Core Strategy part 2 suggests there is a shortfall and there is a need to identify more reserves to meet national standards.

The National Planning Policy Framework has a provision to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside whether designated or not. The Core Strategy should reflect this national sentiment.

Wildlife/habitats: There is an abundance of wildlife and biodiversity on the site which are of a high ecological value. The proposal has not acknowledged the presence of bats on the site which are known to inhabit the area. As all UK bats and their roosts are protected by law, bat surveys are required.

The screening provided by the Greater Manchester Ecological Unit July 2012 cannot be taken as evidence for the proposal on this site. As it states there is no detail on which to make an assessment to screen out certain matters and a further assessment may be required as further details come forward. The proposed road will mean the assessment would have a different screening result. However it does conclude that both pollution and recreation activities due to the housing element of the scheme could result in recreational pressure on the Manchester Mosses special areas of conservation.

Significant bird species known to have recently occurred on site includes the following:

Red List

Partridge, Lapwing, Cuckoo, Skylark, Song Thrush, Starling, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Linnet and Yellowhammer

Amber List

Kestrel, Swift, House Martin, Meadow Pipit, Dunnock, Whinchat, Mistle Thrush

These are a potential breeding species in the main, with those such as Starling, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Swift, House Martin and Kestrel probably nesting adjacent to the site while using it extensively for feeding.

This development is considered as possibly having a negative impact on the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation in terms of increased pollution and increased recreational pressure. (Wigan's own assessment). There will be a potential loss of Public Rights of Way on the site. Significant field boundary habitats will be lost. Hedgerows and trees will be lost. Ponds will be lost

In any development, there should be a permanent buffer zone of at least 30m either side of Hindsford Brook to maintain a wildlife corridor into the site.

We would also add that there will be increased recreational pressure on land to the south which includes significant ponds, brooks and the Lilford /Atherton woods SBI.

In the Council's own infrastructure delivery plan we are informed that Greenheart will be critical to the boroughs Green Infrastructure and adaption to climate change. We submit that building 1,422 houses in this location will not improve accessibility to areas of countryside and wildlife habitats while conserving and protecting habitats. We have submitted a list of wildlife recorded in the area.

6 – Soundness

In Feb 2011 we were informed that the proposed submission of the Core Strategy version Feb 2011 was the final consultation stage in the preparation of the LDF Core Strategy.

A consultation was carried out 10 February to 24 March 2011. It was described as the version *we want to adopt subject to any changes arising from consultation. It is the final chance to have your say. If you don't have your say at this stage you will not be able to participate in the independent examination that follows once we have submitted the Core Strategy.*

The document goes on to say that this final consultation stage all representations should be made on whether the draft core strategy complies with law and is sound.

To be sound it must be **justified** meaning the Core Strategy must be:

Founded on a robust and credible evidence base containing 2 elements

- That should contain evidence obtained through community and stakeholder involvement of the views of the **local community** and others who have a stake in the future of the area. The Atherton Community has not been so engaged.
- Evidence obtained through research and fact finding that the choices made for the plan are backed up by the background facts. Atherton South has been described by some as pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives promoted by ourselves and others.

To be sound it must be **effective** meaning the Core Strategy must be deliverable including:

- Identifying physical, social and green infrastructure needed to enable the amount, type and distribution of development for these options? Including costs, sources of funding, timescales for delivery and gaps in funding. Wigan Council has materially failed to meet this requirement.
- Ensuring there are no regulatory or national policy barriers to the delivery of the strategy.

The proposal does not accord with the NPPF as stated in 3.4 this is not a development in a suitable location affording a good range of community facilities and good access to employment, key services and infrastructure.

No detail of the infrastructure planning is available to comment on for this site. At the drop-in session officers could not provide details of the location of the proposed road.

We would agree with the sentiments within the submissions made by Taylor Wimpey into the Northleigh Park development. They submitted that that allocation is not founded on robust and credible evidence base involving research and fact finding and as such is not “justified” or “effective”. Without such evidence it should be deleted as a strategic site.

We would add that the North Leigh Park development has more evidence base than the Atherton South site; North Leigh feasibility and delivery report/Highways modelling/viability appraisal to name but a few.

It is worthy of note that page 3 “Recreation” of the Councils sustainability appraisal concludes that development would remove the potential for open recreational space unless built into the development, although this may restrict access/use. We consider this proposal contrary to the policy HR 1 Health and Recreation.

To be sound the Core Strategy must be **ensuring** for the partners who are essential to the delivery of the core strategy to sign up to it.

There is no evidence. No tripartite agreement.

Is the Strategy now consistent with other Core Strategies – where is the assessment?

To be sound the Core Strategy must be **flexible** and able to be monitored and consistent with National policy.

Failure to follow own policies

Wigan Council has failed to follow its own Statement of Community Involvement.

Wigan Council (1977): “The site forms part of the only extensive natural amenity for the town of Atherton and would be completely lost for recreational and general amenity purposes.”

The countryside in question is now designated WIG 156 and since 1977 it has improved, so what has changed the opinion of the Council? A glib answer was given to B.P. Neary at the public consultation at Chowbent Hall on 14 August 2012 by a planning officer: “That was in 1977.”

The development of this area we submit will not comply with Policy HR1 for health and recreation and neither WH52, wildlife and habitats and species.

Legal requirements

In the event that these amendments are accepted at this late stage we submit that the the Core Strategy will be unsound. The Core Strategy must be justified **founded on a robust and credible evidence base.**

1. Evidence obtained through community and stakeholder involvement of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area. This was referenced as the June 2009 consultation report. However now the net has widened and Wigan MBC have carried out a process and at the last minute needed to carry out additional consultation giving us a 6 week period to comment.

Evidence obtained through research and fact finding that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts, evidence based on need and demand.

There is an absence of Topic papers for the additional sites being consulted upon and we are therefore at a disadvantage. We have no evidence reviews to assess and be consulted upon.

2. The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

7 – Alternative sites

In the report to Cabinet in July 2012 the Council states these options are in addition to the work we are doing on assessing capacity of existing known and expected sites. When will this work be complete and can we see this work?

There are currently over 2700 empty properties in the Wigan area this information has been provided under a freedom of information request.

There are also numerous empty derelict properties ripe for renovation and conversion into living accommodation within the existing built-up area with main services installed.

There are also numerous plots of derelict land crying out for development into affordable housing within the existing built-up area that could easily be connected to existing main services.

There are Mill complexes that could be converted into affordable flats with main services already on site with abundant parking space for vehicles.

Developing these sites would benefit the local economy. It would employ local tradesmen and bring REAL jobs to people in the area.

Competing sites

The Inspector has concluded that the site at Atherton would compete with North Leigh Park and South of Hindley. Therefore only 600 of these homes could be built by 2026.

Peel Holdings in their submission in say that they have concerns that the development of South of Atherton is likely to displace house building activity from North Leigh and South of Hindley because of the relatively close proximity of these major regeneration proposals. In light of these concerns and given the scale of Atherton, Peel considers that **further substantial** evidence will be required to justify it as a broad location. They are concerned that it could harm regeneration elsewhere. Land South of Hindley, Peel Holding s have submitted a representation that a further 300 houses could come forward on this site if it was identified as a Strategic Site allocation.

8 – Loss of visual amenity

The 2009 sustainability appraisal recognises that the site received a negative X for amenity considerations. Visual amenity would be lost from the surrounding area. Increased vehicular access may also reduce amenity.

The site was also marked with a negative X despite having land in degraded form and development perhaps bringing some improvements in parts, it being likely to be detrimental overall.

9 – Summary

We respectfully request that the Cabinet agrees that for the reasons outlined above that there is no basis upon which to recommend modifications to the Core Strategy to rectify this situation.

We ask you to conclude that the modifications necessary would result in a plan substantially different to that submitted.

It is our view that the Council cannot by its recent consultations provide an evidence base or guarantees of delivery that they will meet the Inspectors request to demonstrate the deliverable supply of 16,500 dwellings between 2011-2026 establishing the additional supply of 2,500 and a 5 year supply of at least 6000 dwellings from 2013/14. This proposal is not deliverable, is not effective and not sound.

We ask that you read the serious reservations outlined by the inspector in his letter in July 2012. Our submission proves the case that there is nothing to merit support for the proposed WIG 156 development.

We would ask that you seriously consider the adequacy of the evidence base in relation to the identification of the Land as a broad area for development. It is an ill-conceived plan, seemingly from a series of knee- jerk reactions that have resulted in a cobbled up disproportionate Core Strategy for development in the Wigan Borough. The “pain “of it should be equally spread and not concentrated in certain areas. This proposal is based on inadequate evidence and is not sound.

We ask that Cabinet withdraws the Atherton South proposal from the Core strategy now before the matter proceeds to the Council meeting. We would request that the Cabinet member Mr Molyneux meets with our Group so we can explain our concerns in more detail. Wigan Council Planning department have our submission and all Appendices / documents upon which we rely to make the arguments outlined above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Save Atherton South Campaign Group

David Bowen 61 Lodge Lane, Atherton, Manchester M46 9BN
Heather Norton 29 Allenby Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 0BJ
Gerald Butler 43 Hope Fold Avenue, Atherton, Manchester M46
Trevor Higson 26 Ling Drive, Atherton, Manchester, M46 9BH
Bernard Neary 29 Hope Fold Avenue, Atherton, Manchester, M46 0BW
Liz Mole 22 Ramsey Close, Atherton, Manchester, M46 9EQ
Barbara Constantine Ling Drive, Atherton, Manchester M46 9BH

Causey, Diane

From: bwdav1@aol.com
Sent: 05 October 2012 08:00
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

Peter

Many thanks for responding.

One thing the residents have asked is why were the plans from Turley and Associates only published on the day the consultation finished.

In my view the consultation process was flawed due to this and I do hope this is taken into account.

Residents did not know what they were being consulted on.

Regards

David Bowen

Sent from my HTC

----- Reply message -----

From: Leader@wigan.gov.uk

To: <bwdav1@aol.com>

Cc: <D.Molyneux@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Anderson@wigan.gov.uk>, <G.Bretherton@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Cunliffe@wigan.gov.uk>, <S.Loudon@wigan.gov.uk>, <C.Ready@wigan.gov.uk>

Subject: South Of Atherton

Date: Thu, Oct 4, 2012 19:32

David,

Thanks for taking the trouble to send the views of Save Atherton South which arrived at the second attempt. I am sure that Cabinet members will consider these comments.

I need to remind you that the current process of reviewing areas to search for additional land for housing is not something that the Council wanted to do but was forced on us by the Planning Inspector who is currently reviewing the Local Development Framework. He stopped the inquiry into the LDF until this review has been carried out.

When we receive the information about the review including the comments from the public, Cabinet will have to consider this objectively. Clearly if we have publicly expressed our opinions in advance of receiving all the information, we would not have been seen to act objectively and any decisions we were to make would therefore be capable of being challenged. I hope you can appreciate that it is not possible for us to express our opinions on your submission.

Peter Smith

Sent from my iPad

On 3 Oct 2012, at 21:55, "David Bowen" <bwdav1@aol.com<<mailto:bwdav1@aol.com>>> wrote:

Dear Council Members

The document appeared to detach itself.

I have now attached.

Regards
David Bowen
On behalf of Save Atherton South
<FINAL LETTER TO CABINET MEMBERS.pdf>

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Causey, Diane

From: bwdav1@aol.com
Sent: 05 October 2012 09:53
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

I would be more than grateful if you could supply us with some answers so we can let our barrister know.
Regards
David

Sent from my HTC

----- Reply message -----

From: Leader@wigan.gov.uk
To: <bwdav1@aol.com>
Subject: South Of Atherton
Date: Fri, Oct 5, 2012 09:07

I will check this out.

Sent from my iPad

On 5 Oct 2012, at 08:01, "bwdav1@aol.com" <bwdav1@aol.com> wrote:

> Peter
>
> Many thanks for responding.
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> **From:** Leader@wigan.gov.uk
> **To:** <bwdav1@aol.com>
> **Cc:** <D.Molyneux@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Anderson@wigan.gov.uk>, <G.Bretherton@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Cunliffe@wigan.gov.uk>, <S.Loudon@wigan.gov.uk>, <C.Ready@wigan.gov.uk>
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> Peter Smith

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> Sent from my iPad

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> Regards

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> On behalf of Save Atherton South

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>

Causey, Diane

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 October 2012 19:32
To: David Bowen
Cc: Molyneux, David Trevor CLLR; Anderson, Kevin CLLR; Bretherton, Ged CLLR; Cunliffe, Keith CLLR; Loudon, Susan CLLR; Ready, Christopher, CLLR
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

David,

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David Bowen
On behalf of Save Atherton South
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Causey, Diane

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 05 October 2012 09:08
To: bwdav1@aol.com
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

I will check this out.

Sent from my iPad

On 5 Oct 2012, at 08:01, "bwdav1@aol.com" <bwdav1@aol.com> wrote:

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> Sent from my HTC
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> From: Leader@wigan.gov.uk
> To: <bwdav1@aol.com>
> Cc: <D.Molyneux@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Anderson@wigan.gov.uk>, <G.Bretherton@wigan.gov.uk>, <K.Cunliffe@wigan.gov.uk>, <S.Loudon@wigan.gov.uk>, <C.Ready@wigan.gov.uk>
> Subject: South Of Atherton
> Date: Thu, Oct 4, 2012 19:32
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Causey, Diane

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 October 2012 16:37
To: Normington, Stephen
Subject: FW: South Of Atherton

Steve,

Can you answer the point raised?

Leader

From: bwdav1@aol.com [<mailto:bwdav1@aol.com>]
Sent: 05 October 2012 08:00
To: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

Peter

Many thanks for responding.

One thing the residents have asked is why were the plans from Turley and Associates only published on the day the consultation finished.

In my view the consultation process was flawed due to this and I do hope this is taken into account.

Residents did not know what they were being consulted on.

Regards
David Bowen

Sent from my HTC

----- Reply message -----

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To: <bwdav1@aol.com>
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Subject: South Of Atherton
Date: Thu, Oct 4, 2012 19:32

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Peter Smith

Sent from my iPad

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On behalf of Save Atherton South

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Causey, Diane

From: Causey, Diane
Sent: 23 January 2013 10:27
To: Causey, Diane
Subject: FW: South Of Atherton

From: Smith, Peter, CLLR
Sent: 10 October 2012 20:27
To: Normington, Stephen
Subject: Re: South Of Atherton

Steve,
Can you help draft the response to Mr Bowen?
Leader

Sent from my iPad

On 10 Oct 2012, at 19:51, "bwdav1@aol.com" <bwdav1@aol.com> wrote:

Good Evening Lord Smith
Thank you for taking the time to respond.
The consultation clearly is flawed as there is no way residents could comment on the consultation without knowing further detail.
Some of them may have even been in agreement with the plans.
In my view the consultation should be reopened given the fact we were lied to as Steve Winnard advised us at Chowbent Hall that there were no plans drawn up and I quote his words "we are not that far on"
Some of the plans in Turleys document are dated June and July 2012.
This means we were clearly lied to as the plans were further on than you made out.
I have personally written to the Planning Inspector advising him of this and have received a letter of acknowledgement today.
Once again residents of Atherton have got the short straw again.
I am therefore asking that you withdraw Wig 156 from the Core Strategy or reopen the consultation and explain to the residents of Atherton exactly what the plans are.

I await your further comments
Regards
David Bowen ATA VDA

----- Reply message -----

From: S.Normington@wigan.gov.uk
To: <bwdav1@aol.com>
Cc: <Leader@wigan.gov.uk>
Subject: South Of Atherton
Date: Wed, Oct 10, 2012 18:35

Dear Mr Bowen,

Thank you for your e-mail dated 5 October 2012 addressed to the Leader of the Council, Lord Peter Smith, regarding the above site and in particular why were the plans from Turley and Associates were only published on the day the consultation finished. The Leader has asked me to respond to you on this matter on his behalf and I do hope that you find the comments below helpful.

The Council's consultation exercise only shows the boundary/areas of land where potential housing development could be considered. We did not show any detail of how the site could be developed as at this stage as we are only testing the community's views of the 'principle' of the site being developed for housing. Moreover, the Council has not developed and plans to show how the site could be developed in any proposed detail.

The proposals from Turley's were submitted in response to this consultation exercise on behalf of Lilford Estates. This formed part of their representation in support of the proposal and was not compiled by, or endorsed, by the Council.

I am sure that you will appreciate that Lilford Estates do have the opportunity to submit any supporting information that they see fit as part of their response to the consultation exercise but this does not imply that the Council either produced or supports their scheme. This was only received by the council just before the close of the consultations. In the same way that residents have sought to show that the proposal is inappropriate, the principal landowner has sought to show that it is.

The submitted information by Turley's does not form part of the Council's consultation exercise but, like all other representations received, it will form part of the evidence to be considered by the council, the planning inspector and other parties to the process.

I hope that the above is helpful in identifying the nature of Turley's scheme which, in my opinion, does not cause the consultation exercise to be flawed as it does not constitute part of the consultation exercise but was submitted in response to it.

Kind regards,

Steve Normington

Director Economy

Places Directorate

Wigan Council

PO Box 100

Wigan

WN1 3DS

e-mail: s.normington@wigan.gov.uk

01942 489101 (internal ext. 89101)

www.wigan.gov.uk

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