

KIRKLEES LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
STAGE FOUR HEARINGS

HEARING STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY
SPEN VALLEY CIVIC SOCIETY



**Re: MATTER 38: BATLEY AND SPEN EMPLOYMENT,
HOUSING AND MIXED-USE ALLOCATIONS
- URBAN (NON-GREEN BELT SITES)**

**Site reference MX3349
Land adjacent to Westgate Cleckheaton**

Date of Submission: 21st January 2018

Issue: *Are the proposed employment, housing and mixed-use allocations in the urban areas of Batley and Spen sub-area justified; effective; developable; deliverable; and consistent with national policy?*

Response:

1. Spen Valley Civic Society (SVCS) has concerns about the develop-ability of site MX3349, without effective intervention by the Council to drive the proposal and work with developers to produce a site masterplan.
2. This is a very significant site. It is a large 6.9ha brownfield expanse in a key position close to Cleckheaton town centre. It is a mixture of slum clearance land, cleared former mill premises, derelict and semi-derelict workplaces, and a few functioning industrial buildings, most of which are old and in a poor state. It has a number of entry points from its Westgate frontage: Brick Street, Stone Street, Iron Street etc which indicate the area's industrial history. A few streets remain intact with small, well-constructed terraced housing.
3. MX3349 has been in this condition for longer than most local residents can remember. It should be a major driver for regeneration in Spen Valley, but instead is an example of ineffective planning. For instance, SVCS are currently opposing a planning application for an asbestos waste transfer and storage station on part of this allocation. Unless an agreed masterplan for allocation can be agreed between the Council and the different landowner/developers, the current mess is likely to continue; site development will proceed piecemeal, leading to an inappropriate and incompatible mixture of uses, or nothing will happen at all.
4. This site was allocated for housing in the first stage of the Local Plan (H811). Local residents would prefer housing to the dereliction that has blighted the area for so long. Permission was granted in 2012 for 217 dwellings (planning application ref 2010/91431), but two industrial users on the site refused to relocate. SVCS is concerned that the change from housing to mixed-use allocation may pose a risk to Cleckheaton town centre. Unlike Heckmondwike and Dewsbury, Cleckheaton has managed to flourish, with a small compact centre, very few vacant shops, and two proportionately-sized supermarkets. This has been achieved by local residents, politicians and voluntary organisations fighting for over 10 years to prevent a superstore being built on the edge of town. If retail development is allowed on site MX3349, it will once again threaten the town and undermine the sustainability of Cleckheaton's centre.