

Dear prospective councillor,

**Re Stop the Garden City proposals ruining Sheepwash Nature Reserve and the wildlife corridor at Temple Way.**

I write to you as secretary of [The Friends Of Sheepwash Local nature Reserve](#), wildlife and environmental campaigner and on behalf of over 400 users of the site and residents of the Temple Way Estate who delivered a petition to Sandwell council in 2017 opposing elements of the so called “Dudley port Supplementary planning document”, and in respect of the Sandwell site allocations around hazardous waste and historic landfill sites.

There is a long history to the land to which I allude, and you will have to bear with me in explaining it, as without this background knowledge, one cannot make an informed opinion of how history is being blurred to conjure up and recycle a scheme from the days of the dubious Black Country Development Corporation, some 30 years previously.

Those behind this, including individuals it seems from within SMBC hope that people have forgotten with the passage of time, the fraud and lies that were told with regard to those proposals, but I have put much of it in the public domain with my blog **what lies beneath rattlechain lagoon**.

## [What Lies Beneath Rattlechain Lagoon? | For the victims of Industrial Pollution](#)

This website is a chronical of the struggle to prove that birds were being poisoned by white phosphorus, dumped by Oldbury firm Albright and Wilson, later Rhodia, and now Solvay, who still own the site.

**I am inviting you to answer questions as part of a blog post concerning this subject, and am keen, as I am sure residents and users of the site are to know what your views are?**

Adjacent to this hazardous waste site is another tip which also formed part of the former Rattlechain brickworks, though most of the land around this was agricultural, and never “brownfield”. This site was a fly tipping unsanctioned abomination by the reckless Duport group, who dumped putrescible waste as well as hazardous packaging waste into the void of the former brickworks marl pit. They also scattered waste around that pit, which is still there to this day buried beneath tonnes of foundry sand.

The advent of the Black Country Development Corporation saw dubious schemes to “reclaim” the area of the former brickworks and Severn Trent’s Tividale sewage works. It was an ill-conceived idea from the start, principally due to the adjacency to the then still used liquid landfill site.

A summary of this and the “misery” inflicted on house dwellers as a result of this work can be read below. Please bear the comments of residents living with this nightmare at the time in mind, the failures of SMBC and the development process to protect them and their property, and the manner in which a public quango appeared to be facilitating the dubious entity behind the scheme

without clear direction. The “safeguards” of the planning process were not there then, and they remain not there today, whatever anyone tries to tell me different.

### [“Misery” at Temple Way | What Lies Beneath Rattlechain Lagoon?](#)

The proximity of this hazardous waste lake containing tens of tonnes of white phosphorus is crucial to the understanding of the issue, and the abysmal planning situation that has unfolded in this area around that site, BEFORE and probably now impossible to remove this first.



This was the scene in the 1990's in Gladstone Drive, where foundry sand blighted people's homes after thousands of lorry loads of sand were allowed to be tipped on here. It would take the same amount of journeys to remove it off there, something which should not be allowed to happen. Foundry sand also blew across onto Sheepwash covering the pools, and has also substantially blocked drainage channels in Rose Lane tunnel requiring the council to use tax payer's money to put this right. But isn't right is it, that the polluter has not paid!

## [Blocked rights of way issues- Rose Lane area - a Freedom of Information request to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council - WhatDoTheyKnow](#)

The blocked rights of way in this area remain, and the wildlife corridor between Oldbury Ward and Great Bridge ward is in danger of being lost.

Our alternative vision for this area is that it becomes an extension of the nature reserve, and not another sprawling housing estate.

## **WHAT'S IN OUR BACKYARD? A DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY COVER UP.**

I have raised concerns about how information concerning historic landfill sites has been obfuscated by the powers that be, I believe principally to aid developers and frustrate objectors. Covering up such historic contamination makes it easier for such "growth" areas to be created, when the legacy of toxic waste and the risks associated with them can be contrived through poor environmental auditing of such sites. I do simply not believe the "environmental consultancy" industry is a legitimate entity to state what legacy such sites have. Their work is tailored to their clients, and they deliberately leave out relevant information to pull the wool over planners' eyes. This will only get worse if there is deemed pre consent on such sites as those in the Oldbury/Tipton area.

A good summary of this concern is expressed in a recent ENDS report article, to which I contributed concerning Rattlechain. I would add to this that although Rhodia/Solvay claim that only 0.1% of the waste at the lagoon contains white phosphorus, they negate to state that there are hundreds of tonnes of waste at the site dumped over 60+ years, and that the amount of P4 is likely to be tens of tonnes by their own estimations. When you consider that milligram quantities of this banned rat poison are enough to kill a person, this perhaps puts the concern into perspective, as well as their totally disingenuous percentages.

## [Why is it so hard to unearth what's in your backyard? – Eyes of the World \(dannyhalpin.com\)](#)

### **NO NEED FOR MORE HOUSING IN OUR AREA**

Put simply, "the need" for housing in the Black Country is one which is founded on an odious lie about rising population. Taking Sandwell as an example, one can see that from official figures on its creation in 1974 that this area according to the official guide from that year:

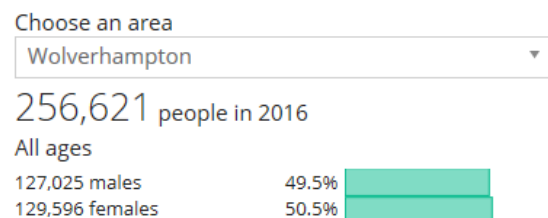
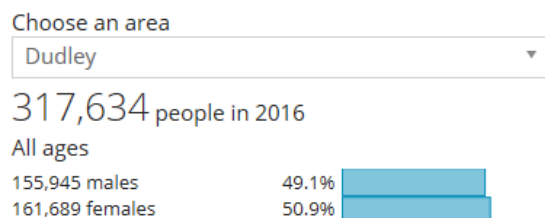
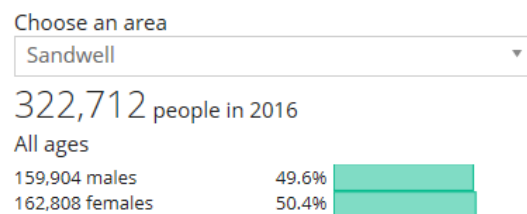
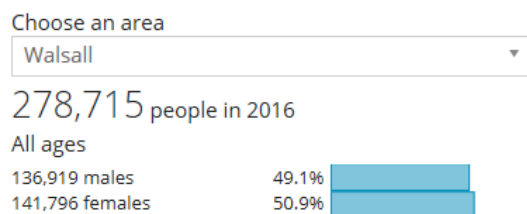
*"With an estimated population of **324,000** and a total area of 21,150 acres, the borough is urban in character and highly industrialised and includes the districts of Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich."*

A freedom of information request however revealed in 2014 that this figure had actually fallen to **316,700**.

<https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/306299/response/777408/attach/html/3/FOI%20Response%201%20727066864.doc.html>

Having looked into the official statistics for the other black country boroughs, they also show this statistic of population falls with the 1980/90's. With Brexit, to what extent has the BCCS taken this into account, and why should it want to create what could become unoccupied new house ghost towns that no one lives in?

Every mention of this theme of “need” running throughout the BCCS document and “the strategy” is challengeable, yet the authors of this paper do not appear to want it to be. Below are the latest figures from the estimations of The office of national statistics.



As seen by these statistics, Sandwell's population is the largest, yet as a borough it has 86 square kilometres (33 sq mi) according to the 2011 census. Wolverhampton by comparison has 26.8 square miles.

		Statistical Unit	Unit of Measure	England & Wales	England	West Midlands	Walsall	Dudley	Sandwell	Wolverhampton	Black Country
	Old Code										
	ONS Code			K04000001	E92000001	E12000005	E080000030	E080000027	E080000028	E080000031	n/a
Population	Usually Resident Population 2011	Persons	Number	56075912	53012456	5601847	269323	312925	308063	249470	1139781
	Usually Resident Population 2001	Persons	Number	52041916	49138831	5267308	253499	305155	282904	236582	1078140
	Popn Change 2001-2011	Persons	Proportion	0.071938	0.07307	0.059719	0.058755	0.02483	0.081668	0.051662	0.054081
	Males	Persons	Number	27573376	26069148	2763187	132319	153819	151592	123441	561171
	Females	Persons	Number	28502536	26943308	2838660	137004	159106	156471	126029	578610
	Area	Hectares	Number	15101354	13027843	1299832	10395.49	9795.66	8556.73	6943.95	35691.83
	Density	Persons per ha	Number	3.713304	4.069166	4.309671	25.90768	31.94527	36.00242	35.92624	31.93395

**36 people per hectare of land.** That compares nationally with **4 people per hectare in the West Midlands and nationally.**

One can see that this population density in Sandwell is grossly disproportionate to England and Wales- as are the other Black Country boroughs, yet how is it that we are expected to take more, or that there should even be “a call for sites”? Just what madness is the BCCS trying to create?

**THERE IS QUITE SIMPLY NO ROOM LEFT! At what point are planners going to accept this because currently it does not appear that they have set any maximum levels, except coming back every few years and wanting more and more land for unsustainable housing supply when the “demand” has been artificially created.**

There are currently some major housing developments within the Oldbury/West Bromwich/Tipton border. These include the former Beans foundry estate in Tipton, and the Hunt Brothers development in Oldbury. The Bilston “Urban village” is yet another. The need for yet another vast estate is not needed. I would like to see the evidence that such a site on the former Duport’s Tip is required. Perhaps if you agree with this development, against the wishes of local residents, you can offer some evidence to the contrary? At the very least, the BCCS should wait for the latest census figures from 2021 before committing to more house building schemes of such size and complexity.

As already stated, we believe that a better use for this land is for nature conservation as an extension to the nature reserve and its proximity to the canal corridor. It was never “brownfield” land, it was agricultural land as this picture from 1950 attests, and should be again.



Perhaps you could answer the following questions, where your statements will be communicated to a wider relevant audience on this subject. I will treat all candidates fairly, without editing or bias. If you could please reply to this by 30<sup>th</sup> April for the deadline that would be appreciated. May I wish you the best with your campaigns, and hope that you will support ours.

1 A petition of over 400 names was handed in to Sandwell council opposing the designation of building houses in this area, by local residents of the Temple Way estate and users of Sheepwash local nature reserve. Do you support the building of houses on the piece of land next to a still classified hazardous waste site and built on top of another historic landfill site, or do you back the local residents and campaigners against such a proposal and will speak up on their behalf to remove it from Sandwell’s site allocations in the Black Country Core strategy review?

2. Please read again the following post about events which occurred in the 1990’s , and in particular the letters of local residents to Sandwell Council planners concerning this site and how regulators failed them and the environment by allowing the blight to continue for years. As a local councillor,

what would you have said to council officers in respect of this situation at that time, and do you think it acceptable that such a scheme could occur again?

### [“Misery” at Temple Way | What Lies Beneath Rattlechain Lagoon?](#)

3 These land titles were registered in Jersey in 2003 for a mere £5,000, yet reportedly sold in 2018 to a company based in Hampton In Arden for £1.5 million. There are a number of such sites in our area registered in tax havens such as this which lie dormant for many years only to appear to magically reregister in the UK with the advent of tax payer funded cash schemes such as those operated by the WMCA to “clean up” abandoned sites where the polluter did not pay to clean them up. What are your thoughts on this? Should the polluter pay, or the tax payer?

4 Please read again the following post concerning the loss of data concerning the right to know “What’s in your backyard”. Do you think it right that local residents are being denied the right to such information, and as councillor will you campaign to make such data more accessible to the public via the council website? See for example Dudley’s planning website which lists historic landfill sites and maps them out.

### [Why is it so hard to unearth what’s in your backyard? – Eyes of the World \(dannyhalpin.com\)](#)

5 I would invite you to give a short statement about your credentials in respect of environmental and wildlife issues. Are these matters important to you and what would you do to protect sites like Sheepwash and surrounding wildlife corridor areas?

**Yours sincerely Ian Carroll ,**

**Secretary of The Friends of Sheepwash Local Nature Reserve and environmental campaigner.**