

Kerry Trueman

Via email:
programmeofficer@telford.gov.uk

Your Ref

Our Ref CRTR-POL-2025-44112 MIQ

Wednesday 21 January 2026

Dear Kerry Trueman,

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan Examination – Hearing Statement (Matters, Issues & Questions)

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats.

By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process, and as such we welcome the opportunity to input into planning policy related matters to ensure that our waterways are protected, safeguarded and enhanced within an appropriate policy framework.

Please find attached the Canal & River Trust's Hearing Statement for Matter 6 – Development Management Policies, Issue 9, Question 153. This is provided to assist the Inspectors and the LPA in understanding land stability risks relevant to the Trust in the Plan area. We consider this is sufficient information without the need to appear at hearings.

If you have any queries about our statement or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Forbes MRTPI
Area Planner



<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design>

Attachment:

1. Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Examination Hearing Statement – Matter 6, Issue 9, Question 153 (Canal & River Trust)

Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Examination Hearing Statement- Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 6 – Development Management Policies

Issue 9 – Whether the policies for minerals and land (ML) are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy

Policy ML4 – Land stability: Question 153 – Is clarification necessary that land stability issues can occur near the canal network and reservoirs (and that the Canal and River Trust can provide advice on this) for the Plan to be sound?

Respondent: Canal & River Trust

Name: Richard Forbes

Date: Wednesday 21 January 2026

We previously made representations on the Publication version of the draft Local Plan, which included comments on the issue of land stability¹.

Answer to Question

No, the Trust does not consider that additional clarification is necessary for the Plan to be found sound in relation to land stability issues near the canal network and reservoirs.

Land stability issues are already addressed within the Plan, notably through Policy ML4, as well as Policy DD1, which supports development that *“demonstrates that sufficient investigation has been undertaken to ascertain the type and extent of any land contamination and land instability issues”*.

The wording of Policy ML4 recognises that land stability issues can arise not only within Mining Consideration Areas, but also in other locations where development may be affected by poor ground conditions or slope stability concerns. This reflects the Trust’s previous comments that policy wording should encompass *“all land stability matters arising from development proposals”*. The NPPF² and Planning Practice Guidance confirm that land stability considerations apply in a range of circumstances and are not limited solely to mining-related areas.

Given this existing policy framework, further clarification within the Plan is not considered essential. However, the Trust acknowledges that additional explanatory text may assist the reader and improve overall understanding of the breadth of land stability matters that can arise, particularly where development occurs close to reservoirs, embankments or similar structures.

Various manmade structures, such as reservoirs, cuttings and embankments, may be susceptible to slope stability issues or poor ground conditions. These risks can be exacerbated by development works undertaken without appropriate design and mitigation. Not all these structures relate exclusively Trust assets; for example, historic railway embankments within the Plan area may also be vulnerable to land stability risks.

In addition, we note that as a statutory consultee, the Trust:

- routinely advises Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) where development proposals have the potential to affect waterway infrastructure; and
- offers pre-app advice to LPAs and developers.

To assist the Inspectors and the LPA, we set out further context below regarding land stability matters relevant to the Trust.

¹ Comment ID 1553 addressed Policy ML4 specifically.

² Paras 187 e) & f), 196 & 197

Statutory Role

The Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways) is a statutory consultee under the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). Planning application consultations are triggered in notified areas, extending some distance from reservoirs and feeder channels, based on the type of infrastructure and whether proposals are householder, minor, or major development.

British Waterways was designated as a statutory consultee in 1997. At that time, the Department of the Environment advised LPAs that development involving the digging of foundations, imposing loadings on the side of waterways, or the creation of breach risk could affect waterway infrastructure and should therefore be referred for consultation.

The Trust has produced case studies and guidance to support understanding of these issues³, and developers and LPAs are encouraged to make use of the Trust's pre-application advice service⁴.

Local Context

The Trust's existing infrastructure within the Plan area is limited to **Trench Pool Reservoir** and associated feeder channels. Risks to these assets are mitigated, in part, through our statutory consultee role within the planning process.

Trench Pool Reservoir was constructed over 200 years ago, to supply water to the Shrewsbury Canal via the Trench Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal, both of which are now disused and unnavigable. The reservoir was constructed using engineering techniques in use at that time.

Except for a small section in the southeastern corner, the reservoir is contained by an earth-fill embankment. Trench Pool is also hydrologically linked to Middle Pool, a nearby reservoir that is not owned, operated or maintained by the Trust.

Reservoirs are managed under the requirements of the Reservoirs Act 1975 to ensure their safe operation and ongoing maintenance. Due to existing development downslope of the embankment, Trench Pool has been classified with a consequence of failure rating of 5, reflecting the most severe potential outcomes should the embankment fail or overtopping occur. Reservoir flood mapping indicates reservoir floodwaters extending across a wide area⁵.

This context is relevant, as development in proximity to reservoirs and embankments has the potential to affect land stability, flood risk and the safe operation of waterway infrastructure

Clarification

Although the Trust does not consider additional clarification to be necessary for the Plan to be found sound, the Inspectors and the LPA may wish to include further explanatory text to enhance clarity for readers. This could include:

- clarification within the Chapter 14 introduction (paragraphs 14.1–14.5) that the chapter addresses not only minerals development, but also wider matters such as land stability and land contamination; and

³ <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design/our-statutory-consultee-role/what-were-interested-in/case-studies>

⁴ <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design/our-statutory-consultee-role/what-were-interested-in/pre-application-advice>

⁵ Currently available at <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map>



- acknowledgment that land stability risks, which would need to be addressed, may arise in a range of circumstances where new development affects the stability of an area, including where works are located close to reservoirs, embankments or other infrastructure.
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