

Appendix 1
Revised Interim Housing Position Statement
January 2007

1. Background

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 S38(6) requires that any planning application be determined with regard to the Development Plan for the area, so far as it is material, and any other material planning considerations be taken into account.
- 1.2 The current Development Plan for Rossendale comprises of the:
 - Regional Spatial Strategy
 - Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP) & Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and
 - Rossendale District Local Plan (Local Plan)
- 1.3 Regional Planning Guidance was adopted as the North West Region's strategic planning document and became the Regional Spatial Strategy on 28 September 2004.
- 1.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy is reflected in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2016 which was adopted 31 March 2005.
- 1.5 The Local Plan, adopted on 12th April 1995, was intended to be reviewed by 2001. It is now to be replaced by the Local Development Framework which will contain a portfolio of documents intended to replace the Adopted Local Plan. A Core Strategy and two Area Action Plans - one for Rawtenstall Town Centre and the other for the Housing Market Renewal Area of Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia are now being prepared.
- 1.6 The Local Plan is now out of date in respect of several policies which are deemed not to be "in general conformity" with the JLSP. During 2004, Rossendale published a consultative draft Interim Housing Policy to provide "supplementary guidance" to Policy H3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan, guiding consideration of planning applications for residential development in the transitional period pending the formulation of the new Local Development Framework. However, in light of representations received, and Local Plan Policy H3 being revoked following the issuing of a Statement of Non-Conformity by Lancashire County Council on the 6th July 2005, the proposed supplementary guidance did not proceed.
- 1.7 To take account of the issuing of the Statement of Non-Conformity, and the guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 published in 2000 which emphasises a Plan, Monitor and Manage approach, the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West, the Structure Plan (Policy 12), and recent planning appeal decisions which emphasised the need for local authorities to adhere to targets of dwelling provision

set in structure plans and regional planning guidance including:

- (i) Appeal Ref:AAP/B2355/A/641140578 Land at Homesfield House, Holcombe Road, Helmshore, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB44NB, and
- (ii) Appeal Ref:APP/M2372/A/04/1150257 Eclipse Mill, Eclipse Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn

The Borough Council issued an Interim Housing Position Statement in August 2005 to clarify residential development policy.

- 1.8 In light of the publishing of Planning Policy Statement 3 in November 2006, updated information relating to the housing land position, new evidence identifying affordable housing need in the Borough and experience gained in implementing the Interim Housing Position Statement, it is considered appropriate to issue a Revised Interim Housing Position Statement.
- 1.9 Additionally, although work on the LDF is in progress, in view of the number of residential planning applications coming forward, it would be inappropriate to wait for the emerging Local Development Documents to gain significant weight before addressing these issues. Consequently, this Revised Interim Housing Position Statement will be applied with immediate effect to applications received after the cabinet decision on the 25th January 2007, and will be out to consultation for 5 weeks following the decision of cabinet.
- 1.10 This revised Interim Housing Position Statement will normally outweigh equivalent development plan policies in deciding planning applications because of their consistency with the Government's national planning policies, Regional Planning Guidance and Structure Plan. In this way, it will enable the Council to implement a plan led approach towards the provision of housing in the Borough and the managed release of housing land in line with Government guidance in PPS3.

2. Justification

- 2.1 One of the main objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy is to focus on the North West Metropolitan Area (Liverpool/Merseyside corridor and Greater Manchester) and increase regeneration development in that area. This requires a reduction in development outside the corridor.
- 2.2 Local Authorities are also required to monitor and manage the availability of residential sites, minimising the amount of land needed for new housing. This is reflected in the overall number of new additional houses expected to be built in Lancashire in the period 1996-2016 at 53,800 (UR7). This net figure is made up from new build and re-use of vacant dwellings (excluding) replacement of cleared dwellings.
- 2.3 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2016 Policy 12 interprets this guidance into a district housing requirement for Rossendale of which 1,920 net new dwellings are required over the plan period 2001 to 2016.
- 2.4 In Rossendale residential planning consents have been issued in excess of the requirements of the Borough. As at 31 March 2006 there are extant planning permissions to allow for the construction of 1412 dwellings. In addition during the plan period 01/04/2001 – 31/3/2006, 972 dwellings had been completed (by new build or conversion). After taking account of 88 losses over the same period of time, the level of over supply will be 376 as at the base date of 31 March 2006.
- 2.5 Therefore even if no new residential planning permissions are given during the period to 2016, Rossendale still has outstanding residential planning permissions in excess of its requirements for the next 10 years.
- 2.6 Lancashire County Council's position supported by PPS3 and recent planning appeal decisions is that JLSP Policy 12 must be used to refuse further residential planning applications to prevent excessive residential development from having detrimental effects on the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the Borough and to ensure a plan, monitor manage approach.
- 2.7 A detrimental effect of the current overprovision is that planning permissions may not relate to local housing need, whereby the wrong housing types and tenures may be built in unsuitable locations. This could restrict and undermine the effectiveness of economic, social and environmental regeneration in other parts of the Borough, particularly in the emerging area action plan areas.
- 2.8 Another issue is that there is limited control in the rate at which new houses are built in Rossendale. In order to meet the requirements of housing provision in Rossendale a more consistent supply of new homes is required.

- 2.9 The JLSP sets an annual completion rate of 220 new dwellings up to 2006, reducing to 80 per annum thereafter. In the case of Rossendale the rate of residential completions has been inconsistent and does not reflect the objectives to plan, monitor and manage housing provision.
- 2.10 The Revised Interim Housing Position Statement seeks to achieve a balanced approach which takes into account the concerns regarding oversupply outlined above, but also regeneration priorities and the delivery of affordable housing. The threshold of 4 or less in criteria d) reflects the 'cut off' used in Rossendale's Housing Land Position Monitoring Report 2006 to define small sites, whilst the preference for conversion over new build reflects Policy 1 of the Structure Plan in respect of regeneration.

Revised Interim Housing Position Statement

Applications for residential development in Rossendale will be acceptable in the following circumstances:

- a) The replacement of existing dwellings, providing that the number of dwellings is not increased.**
- b) The proposal can be justified in relation to agricultural and forestry activities.**
- c) In relation to listed buildings and important buildings in conservation areas, the applicant can demonstrate the proposal is the only means to their conservation.**
- d) Conversion or change of use of buildings within the urban boundary of the main development location within the Borough (ie Rawtenstall including Bacup and Haslingden) where the number of units is 4 or less.**
- e) The conversion to 5 units or more, or for new build developments of 1 unit or more on previously developed land, where it can be demonstrated the proposal lies within and will deliver regeneration benefits within the Regeneration Priority Areas of Rawtenstall Town Centre or Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia (Elevate) Pathfinder.**

3. Application

- 3.1 The Revised Interim Housing Position Statement will apply to all new applications received after the 25th January 2007, whilst it is out to consultation for 5 weeks.
- 3.2 Proposals for conversion of 4 or less units meeting criteria d) of the position statement should seek to widen the supply of house types in line with the Housing Market Needs Assessment, improve amenity within the locality and meet the requirements of the Planning Obligations paper approved by cabinet at its meeting of 13 December 2006 (Minute No 13). When proposals are considered against criteria e) of the position statement, they will need to also be acceptable in terms of delivering regeneration benefits to the priority areas.
- 3.2 Any proposals granted having regard to policy 1 criteria e) which are for 15 units or more will also need to be considered against the Interim Affordable Housing Position Statement.