

**TITLE: ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT SCHEME  
URBAN POTENTIAL STUDY**

**TO/ON: THE CABINET / 29 MARCH 2006**

**BY: ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**PORTFOLIO CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION  
HOLDER:**

**STATUS: FOR PUBLICATION**

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report presents the Urban Potential Study. The report sets out the purpose of the document and its role as apart of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Evidence Base for developing new planning policy for Rossendale.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 For Cabinet to approve the Urban Potential Study for publication as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Evidence Base.

## **3. REPORT AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Introduction**

- 3.1 The Urban Potential Study was completed by Entec UK Ltd in September 2005. The purpose of this study is to form part of the Rossendale Evidence Base and inform the preparation of the Rossendale Borough Council Local Development Framework (LDF) which will replace the Local Plan adopted by the Council in 1995.
- 3.2 The requirement to prepare a Urban Potential Study comes from Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing' (PPG3) (DETR 2000 with 2005 amendments) which sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing through the planning system based upon the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach.

- 3.3 PPG 3 directs that priority should be given to re-using previously developed land within urban areas, bringing empty homes back into use and converting existing buildings in preference to development of greenfield sites. In adopting this approach, each Local Planning Authority is expected to contribute to the national target of 60% of additional housing being provided on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings by 2008.
- 3.4 To achieve the targets, PPG3 sets out the expectation that all Local Planning Authorities should undertake urban housing capacity studies and that these will form the basis for the sequential approach and the managed release of housing sites. Good practice guidance is provided by '*Tapping the Potential - Assessing Urban Housing Capacity: Towards Better Practice*' (DETR 2000).
- 3.5 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West (RPG13, approved in March 2003) also recommends in policy UR8 that planning authorities in the region should prepare their own urban potential studies. The North West Regional Assembly published guidance in June 2003 on how these studies should be prepared. This guidance is entitled "Exploring Urban Potential for Housing".
- 3.6 The Study has sought to identify all housing potential from within the urban area of Rossendale, within the built up area, as defined in the Local Plan. The objectives of the study are to:
- Provide a robust assessment of the capacity of Rossendale urban area to accommodate new dwellings to be the period 2019;
  - Provide a firm indication of the likely level of capacity which will come forward as 'windfall' sites;
  - Inform the preparation of the Borough Council's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and future Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
- 3.7 The approach adopted in undertaking this study is in accordance with the guidance outlined above. A more detailed description of the guidance used to prepare this study is outlined in Section 2 of the document. This study uses a base date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 which means that all housing figures are calculated from this date, so sites with planning permission before this date were not included in the study and conversely sites which were granted planning permission after this date were included. This identification of a base date ensures that 'double counting' of potential capacity sources does not take place.

### **Structure of the Urban Potential Study**

- **Section 2** provides a brief summary of the guidance and policy context which informed the approach to this work;
- **Section 3** describes the approach to assessing the unconstrained potential;
- **Section 4** sets out the discounting methodology;

- **Section 5** sets out the approach to housing market and economic viability assessment;
- **Section 6** identifies the constrained potential; and
- **Section 7** summarises the conclusions and recommendations arising from the study.

3.8 In accordance with the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to identification and release the ODPM guidance on Urban Potential Studies also recommends that Local Authorities undertake employment land reviews at the same time as their urban potential study.

3.9 Rossendale in partnership with Lancashire County Development Limited (LCDL) has commissioned King Sturge consultants to undertake an Employment Land Study. The study is well underway, however will not be available for this committee schedule due to delays in the programme timetable.

## **Methodology**

3.10 A total of 455 sites were identified in the study to which a range of criteria were applied which resulted in 90 sites being identified as suitable for residential development at a capacity of 824 dwellings.

3.11 Having identified sites where the principle of residential development may be appropriate the next stage is to test them against a range of detailed factors. All 455 sites have been subject to assessment through field survey work with the aim of appraising a site to identify its potential to come forward for residential development.

3.12 Five key factors were used to appraise individual sites. These factors were:

- Sustainable development considerations;
- Planning Policy;
- Local Character;
- Developability; and
- Economic Viability (informed by an assessment of market viability).

3.13 In line with the NWRA guidance, each factor was considered in turn and if a site was judged to fail against one factor it was not considered against the others.

3.14 Discussions were held with Officers from the Borough Council in order to take advantage of local knowledge of selected sites. Representatives from the following Departments were consulted on a range of sites which were considered to be representative of the total number:

- Development Control;
- Housing Market Renewal;

- Environmental Health;
  - Economic Development; and
  - Planning Policy.
- 3.15 The **sustainability** of sites was assessed primarily in terms of their proximity to public transport facilities (routes and nodes) and town / village centres. Sites where housing would be in conflict with established **planning policies** were discounted at this stage.
- 3.16 The impact on the **local character** of an area was considered by reference to a number of criteria including:
- Is housing compatible with existing or planned land uses in the area?
  - Is additional development likely to increase on-street parking?
  - Is there likely to be an impact on existing street patterns, or plot subdivisions of historical importance?
  - Is there likely to be an impact on townscape and quality of spaces?
  - Would housing development impact on important landscape features?
  - What is the relationship of the site to the areas landscape or open countryside? and
  - Impact on significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas?
- 3.17 Sites which were considered to impact adversely on the local character of that area were discounted. **Developability** was assessed by reference to a number of factors, notably:
- Land ownership where this was known, no searches were lodged with HMLR as part of this study;
  - Highway access;
  - Flood risk;
  - Contamination
  - Local Plan Policy;
  - Flood Risk from the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood Plain Maps;
  - Air Quality; and
  - Bad neighbour uses.

**'Plan, Monitor and Manage' and conforming with a transforming planning policy framework**

- 3.18 At present the release of the 90 identified sites identified with potential for residential development is limited as the Council has to conform to the adopted

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP) (March 2005) which sets a target of developing 1,920 homes (net of clearance) between 2001 – 2016.

- 3.19 On the 6th July 2005 Lancashire County Council issued a Statement of Non-Conformity which identified that the Local Plan was not in general conformity with the Adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016. This document details all policies that are considered not to conform with the Structure Plan including Policy H3 Land for Residential Development.
- 3.20 The Forward Planning team has developed a Housing Policy Position Statement which received approval at the Council's Executive Committee on 17th August 2005 and reiterates Policy 12 of the JLSP and presents it in the context of the Rossendale borough.
- 3.21 The Position Statement identifies that the Council is currently in a position of oversupply for housing; but provides a range of criteria including the need to ensure that residential development is only permitted where there is an identified local need (i.e. as identified in the Rossendale Housing Market Needs Assessment) or if the development positively contributes to the regeneration of the Rawtenstall Town Centre and Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia Area Action Plan areas.
- 3.22 In relation to the current planning policy framework the 90 sites identified in the Urban Potential Study will be released in accordance with the criterion set out in Policy 12 of the JLSP, the Housing Policy Position Statement and with the emerging RSS (submitted to GONW in January 2006). This approach will ensure that the Council can “clear” all extant permissions given for residential development whilst retaining scope for residential development that demonstrates that it meets local housing need and the ability to meet the objectives of regeneration set out in the Council’s two AAPs.
- 3.23 A new set of planning policies on housing provision are being prepared as apart of the Core Strategy. These policies have already been through an initial Issues and Options stage of consultation for a period of 6 weeks and are being prepared in conformity with the existing development plans and emerging RSS to ensure that the Council will be able to plan, monitor and manage its residential development more effectively.

#### **4. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

##### **4.1. FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

##### **4.2. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Information on the LDF can be viewed at [www.rossendale.gov.uk/fowardplanning](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/fowardplanning) including the ODPM's guide to the planning system, introduction documents to the LDF and general planning policy information.

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was submitted to Government Office North West (GONW) on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006 and will be published for consultation for 12 weeks from March 2006. The RSS is the regional planning policy document to which the Core Strategy must conform. This sets out a broad range of planning policy objectives including , housing and employment provision, transport and environment etc. Members can currently view this document at [www.nwra.gov.uk](http://www.nwra.gov.uk)

#### **4.3. HUMAN RESOURCES**

- 4.3.1. The Forward Planning team has interviewed for the vacant Planning Assistant position and has recruited a candidate who will be joining the team by April 2006.

#### **5. ANY OTHER RELEVANT CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **6. RISK**

- 6.1 Failure to adopt the Urban Potential Study will ensure that the Council will not have a key element of research to form the Evidence Base, this would result in the Council being restricted in developing robust policy making.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE REPORT**

N/A

#### **8. EQUALITIES ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REPORT**

N/A

#### **9. WARDS AFFECTED**

- 9.1 The Urban Potential Study study area covered the entire borough of Rossendale.

#### **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 Consultation involved statutory consultees and interviews with key agents, developers and the local authority.

#### **Background documents:**

- A) Town Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- B) Town Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Regulations
- C) Planning Policy Statement 12
- D) Planning Policy Statement 12 Companion Guide
- E) Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing

- F) Good Practice Guidance '*Tapping the Potential*' Assessing Urban Housing Capacity: Towards Better Practice (DETR 2000)
- G) Submission Regional Spatial Strategy January 2006 (consultation March 2006)
- H) Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016
- I) Rossendale Borough Profile

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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