

<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Local Plan consultation	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2017
<b>Report of:</b>	Planning Manager	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Regulatory Services
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Exception</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Special Urgency</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	<b>Attached:</b>	No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required: No	<b>Attached:</b>	No
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<b>1.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
1.1	To inform Cabinet of the response to the consultation about the draft Local Plan and to identify the next stages in Plan preparation.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The recent consultation on the draft Local Plan was the first opportunity for the public and external bodies to comment on possible site allocations and policies. This Report seeks to inform Cabinet about the level and nature of consultation as well as identifying which sites have attracted the most concern.

## 3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A clean and green Rossendale:** our priority is to keep Rossendale clean and green for all of Rossendale's residents and visitors, and to take available opportunities to recycle and use energy from renewable sources more efficiently.
- **A connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth:** our priority is to ensure that we are well connected to our residents, key partners and stakeholders. We want to make the most of every pound we spend and we are always looking for new and innovative ways to make the resources we do have, work harder for us.
- **A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale:** our priority is to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a healthy and vibrant place for people to live and visit.

## 4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- The infrastructure issues identified in the responses will need to be addressed.
- Some sites have generated a large amount of public opposition.
- There are some locations where the public and developers are in direct opposition.
- The perceived inadequacy of the consultation process received considerable criticism.

## 5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

### 5.1 Consultation

The consultation on the draft Local Plan ran from 24<sup>th</sup> July to 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017. As well as advertising on the Council website and in the Rossendale Free Press, through posters and within libraries and through social media, seven drop-in sessions were held in July and September across the Borough. Drop-in sessions were held in Rawtenstall, Edenfield, Haslingden, Whitworth, Bacup and Loveclough, followed by a final session at Futures Park.

- 5.2 A total of 1773 responses have been received to the consultation which has been split down into 3044 comments. 2,085 comments (68%) were received through the online questionnaire. The use of this approach has been successful in reducing the amount of handwritten comments. A small number of responses have been received after the deadline. A large number of the responses received include comments on various elements of the plan and/ or sites and as such the number of comments received will far exceed the number of responses received when the content of the responses are split down. The amount of responses and comments exceeds the numbers of the 2015 consultation on Site Allocations.
- 5.3 Organised responses have occurred in a number of areas with template responses being co-ordinated by residents groups in Edenfield, in the Townsend Fold area of Rawtenstall and by Grane Road Residents Association. Two individual petitions have been received for site HS2:54 (land between Newchurch Road and Bacup Road, Rawtenstall) and one against HS2:47-land at Swinshaw Hall, Goodshaw
- 5.4 The greatest numbers of objections were to Green Belt changes, especially in Edenfield and Whitworth. Given the extent of new development proposed in Edenfield, this is the proposal that has attracted the largest number of responses with just over 800 comments received. The landowners involved support the proposals while local residents strongly oppose the scale of development envisaged, citing the impact on the village and the inadequacy of infrastructure. Local residents have established a Forum covering the whole of Eden Ward and are investigating the options for preparing their own Neighbourhood Plan for the area. If pursued, this would become the Plan for this area but would need to be in alignment with the Local Plan. Residents of Whitworth have made around 130 comments about each of the two Green Belt allocations at Tonacliffe (while the landowner would like a larger area designated) while a range of other sites around Whitworth, especially Cowm Water treatment works, attract opposition with residents being concerned about lack of infrastructure.
- 5.5 A number of other sites attracted attention, especially at Snig Hole and Curven Edge in Helmshore and proposed locations along Bankside Lane in Bacup (all over 50 comments). A wide range of other locations attracted concern such as Rossendale golf club and boundary changes on Goodshaw Lane. Residents of Rising Bridge area oppose new employment sites and those living in Sharneyford object to a Gypsy and Traveller Transit site at Little Tooter quarry. Overall, however, it should be stressed that it is not just the number of responses received that is important but what level of weight that should be given to the planning issues raised.
- 5.6 Many residents raised the issue of why more use was not being made of brownfield land and redundant buildings. The Local Plan team has appraised a large number of these sites and assessed them for their availability, suitability and achievability as required by national guidance. This, together with other evidence base work, has brought out a large number of issues such as flood risk, contamination and access. These issues add significant costs to delivery of sites which in many cases make them unviable. Attempts are being made to address this, for example, through a multi-agency meeting with all the bodies involved in Flood Risk in Rossendale. The Brownfield Register which identifies land suitable for development is also currently being reviewed and will be published by the end of the year.
- 5.7 **Infrastructure Issues**  
A wide range of respondents raised the issue of inadequate infrastructure to cope with projected growth. The Forward Planning team is actively engaging with a range of infrastructure providers, including the LCC Education Department and United Utilities, about

the issues identified. Identifying sites in a draft Plan enables these bodies to give a more informed response to the capacity enhancements required. A Highways Capacity Study has also been commissioned from consultants Mott McDonald, which will examine 15 key junctions in the Borough, the ability to accommodate more traffic and potential mitigation measures. Both Lancashire County Council and Highways England are on the Steering Group for this piece of work. The Final Report is due to be published by the end of March 2018. All this infrastructure work will inform the next stages of plan preparation.

**5.8 Government consultation on Housing Numbers**

During the Local Plan consultation period the Government published its own consultation document “Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places”. This proposes a new methodology for calculating how many new houses should be built each year. The draft Local Plan is based on a figure of 265 houses per year over the 15 year life of the Plan which is derived from work undertaken in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The Government’s proposed standardised approach sees some authorities in the South East getting a significantly higher amount of new housing while most northern authorities receive less. The indicative figure for Rossendale is 212 pa over a 10 year period.

5.9 As stated, this is a consultation exercise and raises a number of questions including what happens beyond 10 years and whether the existing housing backlog should be carried forward. The draft Local Plan also under allocates for the amount of housing indicated in the SHMA. It is therefore currently too early to say whether the Government’s methodology will lead to a reduction in the amount of new housing that will require allocation. The Council has submitted a response raising a number of questions about how the methodology would work in practice.

**5.10 Next steps**

The Forward Planning Team is entering all the comments on the database. All comments received will be published on the Council’s website as soon as is possible. It is then the intention to assess the comments received on each potential allocation as well as the individual policies and to publish a response on each addressing the issues raised. It is not intended to respond to respondents individually. Discussions will continue with infrastructure providers and other key bodies and cognisance will be taken of latest government announcements. A draft Plan will be assembled over the Winter/Spring period for submission to members later in Spring. Going out with a formal Section 19 (Publication version of the Plan) 6 week consultation is scheduled for summer 2018. Interested parties will only be able to comment on matters of soundness, whether the Plan is legally compliant and Duty to Co-operate matters.

**COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**6. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

6.1 The Local Plan was previously forecast to total £431k for the five years 2014/19 with a current under funding of £9k, although this includes an allowance of £25k for the community infrastructure levy which may not be required. The additional need for a Highway Capacity Study will increase the final costs by c.£40k. Additional funding resources are therefore required ranging between c. £24k and £49k.

**7. MONITORING OFFICER**

7.1 Production of a Local Plan provides an important framework for managing future development in Rossendale.

**8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

8.1 There has been extensive public consultation on the draft Plan through public meeting and a variety of other media. This has involved the public but also a wide range of infrastructure bodies, government agencies and the development sector. There has also been internal consultation on the proposals.

8.2 The Local Plan will perform an essential role in guiding future development within Rossendale. Failure to adopt a Plan makes it much more difficult to manage where new development will be located and risks Government intervention.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 The draft Local Plan consultation has attracted a significant amount of comment which will now need to be processed and carefully considered. It is evident that there is public opposition to some proposals, especially in Edenfield and Whitworth, but that equally developers and landowners are keen to develop in many locations. Demonstrating adequate infrastructure provision will be particularly important if new development is to proceed. Changes in Government thinking will also need to be factored in. There are many challenges ahead for the Local Plan but progress is being made.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Draft Local Plan	One Stop Shop, Futures Park, Bacup