

# ROSSENDALE LOCAL PLAN

## STRATEGY TOPIC PAPER



August 2018

Rossendale  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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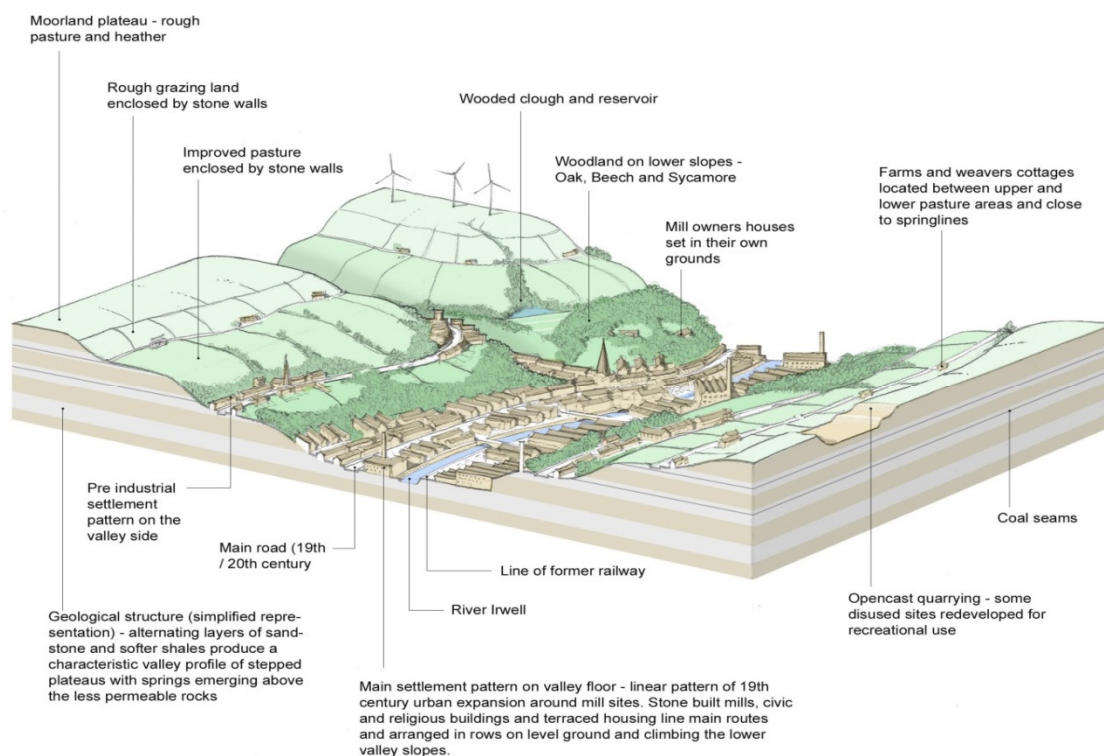
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# 1. Introduction

## Context

Rossendale is a small District of moorland and hills incised by valleys which contain most of the settlements. The character of the area is very much defined by the topography from the local stone historically used in the buildings, to the routes used by the transport corridors. There is no dominant main settlement with instead three main towns; Rawtenstall, Bacup and Haslingden supplemented by Whitworth.

The population of the District is growing and is expected to expand from the current figure of approximately 69 000 to around 73 000 in 2034. As with many areas an increasing percentage of the population are over 65. Over 50% of the working age population commute to employment outside the Borough, largely in Greater Manchester. Those that do work locally have significantly lower salaries.



Well over 40% of the housing stock is terraced property with a significant under-representation of semi-detached dwellings. Much of the industrial stock dates from the industrial revolution and there is lack of large, flat sites for modern business.

Rossendale's main link with other parts of the country is the A56 (T) in the west of the Borough. There is no link to the national rail network though the East Lancashire Railway

from Rawtenstall is a very successful heritage operation. The road network through much of the Borough is highly constrained by the topography and historic development which results, for example, in one main East-West road through the valley. Bacup is relatively isolated due to the character of this road link.

The hill and valley landscape means that the area is susceptible to both river and surface water flooding. The upland landscape includes large areas of peat, much of which is degraded. The area around Haslingden and Helmshore is part of the West Pennine SSSI which is one of the largest such designations nationally. In the recent past the area has been an attractive area for wind energy development but this has effectively stopped since the Written Ministerial Statement on the subject in 2015.

In planning terms there has been historic under-delivery of housing compared to rates set out in the Core Strategy. Delivery of new employment land has also been slow. In contrast there has been significant retail activity, especially in Rawtenstall, and regeneration schemes in Rawtenstall and Bacup in particular.

There are various policy constraints to growth. Green Belt covers 23% of the land area, particularly in the south a west of the Borough.

## **Key issues for the Local Plan**

### *Housing*

The national Standard Methodology for Housing indicates that the Borough needs to provide 212 houses per year. Given previous under-delivery it is important that deliverable sites are brought forward but in such a way as to make efficient use of land. Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that brownfield land and higher densities should be promoted but much of the land being promoted by developers and landowners is greenfield. The aging of the population exposes the need for adaptable and specialist housing.

### *Employment*

The Employment Land Study indicates that businesses wish to be located close to the A56 corridor. However there is a shortage of available, flat land with good access. Existing businesses are frequently located on constrained sites. The net outflow of commuters is a concern.

### *Environmental, landscape and design issues*

The relationship between urban area and countryside is a key feature of the Borough. Avoiding urban sprawl up the hillsides is important to maintaining the integrity of the landscape setting but space for development within existing urban areas is limited. Environmental corridors permeating the urban areas are important for wildlife but can be

vulnerable to development. The moorland fringe and upland areas are important for endangered breeding birds.

### *Infrastructure*

Pressure on parts of the existing infrastructure is high, in particular the road network, education and health. Improvements will be required during the Plan period to facilitate growth.

### *Proximity to Greater Manchester*

The Regional Centre and its satellite town such as Bury and Rochdale have a strong influence on the area with respect to housing and employment markets as well as performing an important cultural and educational role. This influence is expected to increase.

### *Green Belt*

Green Belt has successfully limited urban sprawl in the parts of the Borough where it is located. However the presence of Green Belt it can be seen as limiting new development opportunities in the more attractive and viable parts of the Borough.

### *Regeneration*

There is continued need to support the regeneration of the main town centres as well as encourage diversification, particularly in the active sport sector.

## **2. Evidence Base**

Paragraph 31 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the following:

*“The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant signals”*

The following evidence base documents form the basis of the background information for the Local Plan. The content within these Studies has strongly influenced the production of the Plan.

In some cases the Evidence Base Studies provide contradictory evidence. For example, the Employment Land Study identifies a number of high quality employment sites in the Green Belt that are not supported by that Study. In such circumstances the Council has to assess the overall planning balance in coming to a conclusion as to whether a site should come forward for development

- [SHLAA](#)- Strategic Housing Land Area Assessment
- [SHMA](#)-Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment
- [Employment Land Study](#)
- [SFRA](#) –Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- [Viability work](#)
- [Retail , Leisure and Tourism Study](#)
- [Green Belt Review](#)
- [Ecological Corridors](#)
- [Highway Capacity Study](#)
- [Employment Site Access](#)
- [Landscape Study](#)
- [Landscape Study for Wind Turbines](#)
- [Conservation Areas Appraisal](#)
- [Heritage Assessment](#) – Assessment of Housing and employment sites for heritage impacts
- [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#)

### **Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment**

- [Sustainability Assessment](#)

The Local Plan has been independently appraised by Lepus Consultants for its performance against a range of Sustainability objectives. This looked at site allocations, individual policies and overall performance. Four different Strategic Option approaches were assessed (see Table on the following page). The consultants considered that Option D was most appropriate. This largely reflects the approach taken in the Local Plan though the numbers used are different. All options have some impacts but it is the weight of the impacts within each sector of sustainability that has to be weighed. The Analysis produced through the SA process was helpful in analysing the quantum of impact of different proposals.

- [Habitats Regulation Assessment](#)

The Habitats Regulation Assessment work was undertaken by Lepus Consultants. An “Appropriate Assessment” was undertaken following concerns raised by Natural England at the Regulation 18 consultation in 2017. These related to impacts of development, especially in the Whitworth area, on the Breeding Bird Assemblage of the South Pennine Special Protection Area. Rossendale is not within the SPA but parts of the Borough are within a 7km buffer zone of it which is classed as the distance people may travel to enjoy recreational opportunities. The HRA recommends that in order to mitigate the impact a Visitor Management Plan should be produced jointly with other South Pennine Authorities. A “Duty to Co-operate” group is examining this. In addition, Breeding birds from the South Pennine SPA use Rossendale as a foraging area. The Study thus recommended consideration be given to taking two proposed sites in Whitworth out of the Plan as these infringed on the “Moorland Fringe” character area used by these birds. These sites were thus taken out of the Plan. In addition “Appropriate Assessment” will need to be undertaken for sites of over 100 houses.



	Spatial Option A	Spatial Option B	Spatial Option C	Spatial Option D
Quanta	3,000 dwellings 10ha employment	7,000 dwellings 24ha employment	2,000 dwellings 6ha employment	5,000 dwellings 9ha employment
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on land within urban boundaries, approximately 58ha, including 23ha in Rawtenstall, 23ha in Bacup and 9.5ha in Whitworth</li> <li>- &lt; 20% brownfield sites</li> <li>- 5ha Green Belt sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excess of OAN and employment target</li> <li>- &lt; 10% brownfield sites</li> <li>- High level of development at Edenfield</li> <li>- 25ha of greenfield sites in villages</li> <li>- approx. 11ha Green Belt release</li> <li>- Pattern of development focusses on land availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on urban areas</li> <li>- 35% brownfield sites</li> <li>- Increase density to 40-45 dwellings per ha in key locations</li> <li>- Does not meet OAN or employment targets</li> <li>- Maximises use of vacant mills for housing</li> <li>- More development in deprived locations</li> <li>- Development linked to existing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mix of development across Borough</li> <li>- Increase density to 40-45 dwellings per ha in key locations</li> <li>- 14ha Bacup</li> <li>- 10ha Rawtenstall</li> <li>- &lt; 20% brownfield sites</li> </ul>
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduces urban sprawl by focusing development near urban boundaries</li> <li>- Opportunities for brownfield development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High availability of housing</li> <li>- No issues with housing deliverability</li> <li>- Maximises growth opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on brownfield development</li> <li>- Better related and maximises the use of current services</li> <li>- Limited disturbance to landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combines strategies</li> <li>- Optimal use of brownfield land, including working with owners of sites</li> <li>- Retains key existing employment sites</li> <li>- Delivery of sufficient housing</li> </ul>
Issues and Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Release of Green Belt</li> <li>- Lack of availability at Haslingden</li> <li>- Potential infrastructure issues (road capacity)</li> <li>- Landscape impacts in terms of urban fringe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large release of Green Belt</li> <li>- Development related to opportunity over need</li> <li>- High environmental and landscape impacts</li> <li>- Development poorly related to services</li> <li>- Potential infrastructure issues (road capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brownfield and high densities unlikely to deliver required housing numbers</li> <li>- Loss of open space in urban areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of availability at Haslingden</li> <li>- Development of brownfield challenging</li> <li>- Flood risk in some areas</li> <li>- Potential infrastructure issues (road capacity)</li> </ul>

## **The National context**

- [National Planning Policy Guidance](#)

A new version of new NPPF was published in July 2018. The Council has sought to reflect the approach set out by the government in producing a positively prepared Plan that makes effective use of land; takes into account market demand and delivers the number of homes and jobs that Rossendale required. The importance of high quality design and environmental protection is also reflected in the Local Plan.

- [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

This document provides detailed guidance on how specific planning issues should be addressed in Plan preparation which the Council has sought to pay cognisance to.

## **Regional and sub-regional**

Rossendale is part of a much bigger regional and northern context. It is part of Lancashire but sits on the northern border of Greater Manchester and touches on West Yorkshire. The Borough does not have a self-contained job or housing market though following discussion with neighbouring authorities it was agreed that the Borough boundary formed the most relevant geography for consideration of housing issues. Nevertheless functional and transport linkages mean that in many aspects the Borough is outward looking. The physical geography is also part of the much broader South Pennine Landscape Character type.

- [Northern Powerhouse](#)

The “Northern Powerhouse” is a pan-northern government initiative to maximise the economic potential of the north of England, working closely with partners such as Local Enterprise Partnerships. It identifies key growth sectors and the importance of enhancing connectivity between key centres. Supporting the latter, Transport for the North has been established as an entity to identify, manage and plan transport investment across the north of England.

While relationships with Lancashire, particularly Burnley and to a lesser degree Hyndburn and Blackburn with Darwen, are important, Greater Manchester to the south is a key influence on Rossendale. There are strong cross-border housing links between the south west of the Borough and the Ramsbottom area of Bury and between Whitworth and Rochdale. Over 50% of the Rossendale workforce is employed outside the Borough with the majority travelling to jobs in Greater Manchester. There are strong cross-border transport links that facilitate this, especially the A56/M66 but this is facing increased congestion which the Local Plan, working with partners, seeks to address. Implementation of a commuter rail link will need support from partners in Greater Manchester to proceed. The cross-border relationships are also environmental; Rossendale is the only Lancashire Authority whose river catchment (the River Irwell) drains almost exclusively outside the county.

The production of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will impact on Rossendale, in particular the proposal for the regionally significant Northern Gateway development in



Bury/Rochdale which is likely to attract Rossendale residents to its employment opportunities and have impacts on the M66.

### 3. Key components of the Strategy

Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that the Local Plan should “set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development”. The main place that the Plan does this is within the Spatial Strategy (policy and text) as well as the main Strategic policies.

The overall thrust of the Plan is to facilitate housing and economic growth in sustainable locations while maintaining the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, work and visit. The first paragraph of the Spatial Strategy states this in the following paragraph

*“The Council will focus growth and investment in Key Service Centres, on major sites and on well located brownfield sites whilst protecting the landscape and current built character and rural areas”.*

#### **Service Centres**

Rawtenstall is identified as the Borough’s primary centre within the Development Hierarchy. This reflects the fact that it is the largest settlement in the Borough; is a key nodal point on the road network and is identified as the principle centre in the retail hierarchy. Bacup, Haslingden and Whitworth are Key Service Centres again reflecting their role as the main settlements within their immediate catchment area and their accessibility by bus.

Supporting the Key Service Centres are the Local Service Centres such as Stacksteads, Helmshore and Crawshawbooth. Some of these are urban and others are rural but each is important in the role they play in their local areas. Background work which informed the development of the Hierarchy is attached in the Appendix.

The purpose of focussing development in or adjacent to Service Centres is to provide residents with the opportunities to access a range of services as easily as possible, especially for those without access to a car.

#### **How development is distributed**

Housing is distributed between the Key Service Settlements as follows:

Settlement	Housing numbers	% of Total Allocated Housing
Rawtenstall	407	14.1
Bacup	689	23.0
Haslingden	122	4.2

Whitworth	213	7.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1431</b>	<b>48.7</b>

The remainder of the housing provision is split between the Local Service Centres with Edenfield having the greatest amount with 15.8% of the total allocation. This is primarily due to the strategic location west of Market St which is considered to be of broader Borough-wide significance. 9.5% of the housing target is currently unallocated.

The distribution of development indicates the challenges of allocating new housing land because of the limited availability of land in already densely built up urban areas. In Rawtenstall in particular it is extremely difficult to gain access to land on the periphery of the settlement without unacceptable access issues or having an adverse impact on Moorland Fringe landscape. Higher densities help to mitigate this slightly.

The high levels of housing allocations in Bacup reflect a number of factors including the availability of land. While levels of viability are not as high as in the western parts of the Borough the construction of a range of housing types will help to diversify the stock away from the predominant character of terraced properties and contribute to the wider regeneration of the area.

New Employment allocations are more equally distributed between the Key Service Centres with the exception of Whitworth where none are proposed. 85% of new employment allocations are in the Key Service Centres. The significant concentration in Haslingden reflects the desire of employers to be close to the A56.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>New Employment (ha)</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Rawtenstall	11.8	25
Bacup	7.1	18.5
Haslingden	5.26	41.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24.16</b>	<b>85</b>

It is recognised that on a settlement by settlement basis the Housing and Employment allocations do not appear to balance. However this has to be offset against the existing supply of housing and employment within the settlement as well as the importance of balancing housing and employment across the Borough as a whole. The Lichfields SHMA Study indicates that a balance approach to housing and employment provision would equate to a need of around 220 houses per year which is close to the Standard Methodology figure of 212 houses pa.

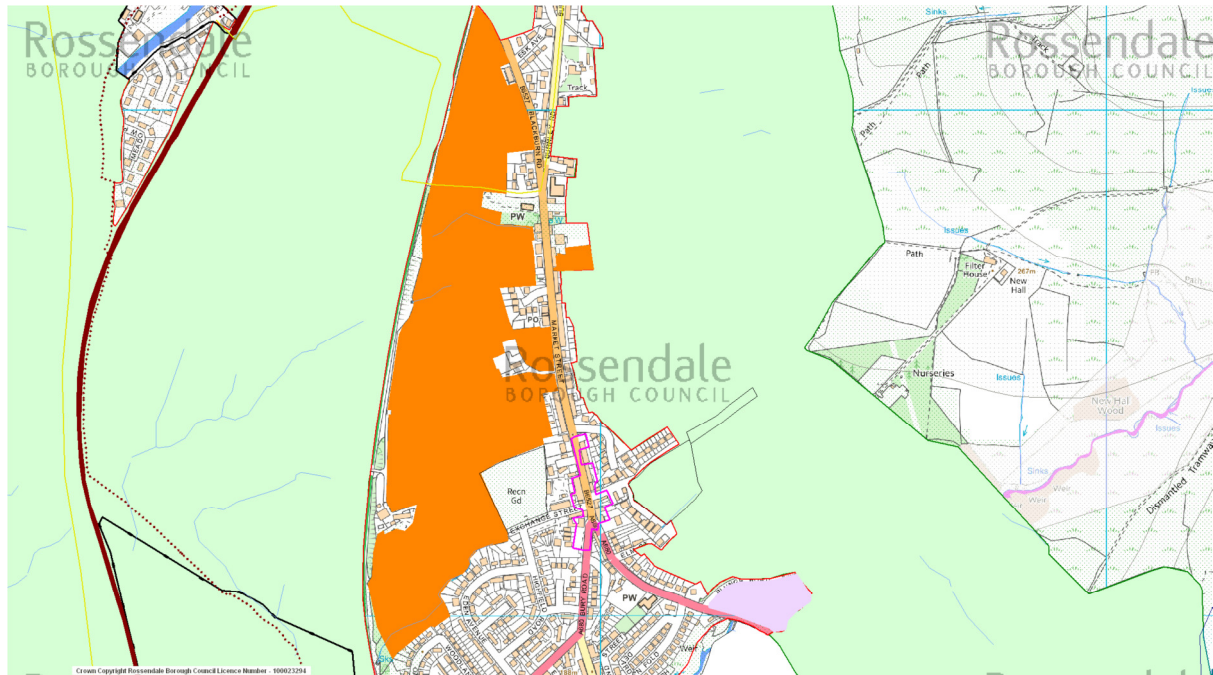
## **Major Sites**

The Local Plan Strategy identifies four major sites that are of strategic importance to the future of the Borough, one for Housing and three for employment. Masterplanning is

proposed for each of the sites, to ensure the most efficient use of land and promote a high quality of development that respects its surroundings.

### **Edenfield (Policies SS, HS2 and HS3)**

The land at Edenfield comprises 15.25ha of Green Belt, Green field land situated between Market Street, Edenfield and the A56.



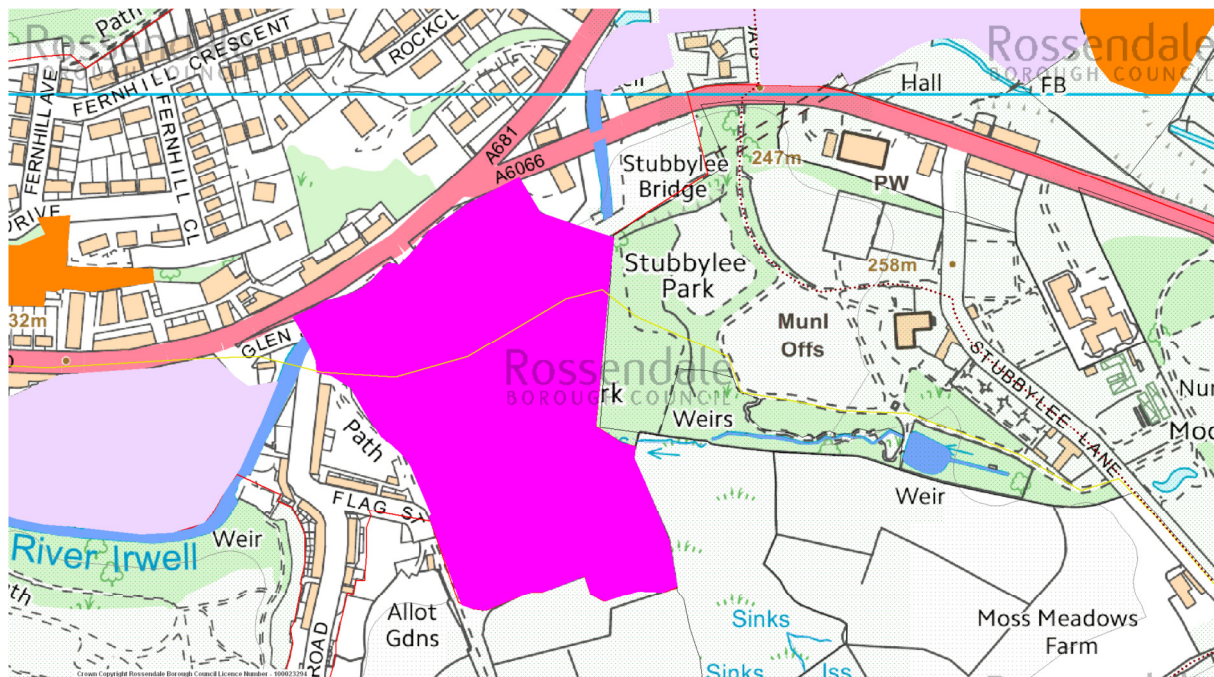
The proposed site at Edenfield is by a significant margin the largest proposed housing allocation within the Local Plan (400 dwellings) and a strategic Green Belt release. This comprises just over 12.5% of the total housing figure for the Borough. The site was selected for a range of reasons:

- The proposed housing is deliverable with willing developers and would make a significant contribution to overall housing numbers
- The land is in an area of high viability for housing and proven market demand. This facilitates building but also provides the opportunity for developer contributions to be secured for affordable housing, appropriate infrastructure and a high standard of design and layout.
- Edenfield is close to the M66 and on the X41 bus route so has good accessibility
- It is Local Service Centre
- The Green Belt Review did not consider that the land performed strongly in Green Belt terms

It is recognised that there is strong local opposition to the site and the allocation is not supported by Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum. Only the southern part of the site is supported by the Landscape Study. Infrastructure issues with the road network will

require further detailed analysis as part of the Masterplanning process. Extensions to Edenfield Primary School (or a new school) will be required to accommodate additional pupil numbers. The scale of the housing provision will be significant for the size of the settlement. However it is considered that, looking at the planning balance, the overall benefits for the Borough outweigh the local impacts and that “Exceptional circumstances” exist for the release of this land for housing. The site will help contribute to addressing past housing under delivery; contribute to a balanced housing supply across the Borough; is viable and contributes to housing mix across the Borough.

### Futures Park, Bacup (Policies SS, EMP2 and EMP6)



Futures Park is a 4.6ha site adjacent to the Council offices between Stacksteads and Bacup. It is an important site for the regeneration of Bacup and creation of new job opportunities. It is largely flat or gently sloping and is adjacent to the A681 corridor with good access for HGV's and is on the main 464 bus corridor. It thus has the potential to become a quality employment site for eastern Rossendale in an area where such sites are limited and wages are low. Some land remediation is likely to be required to bring the allocation forward.

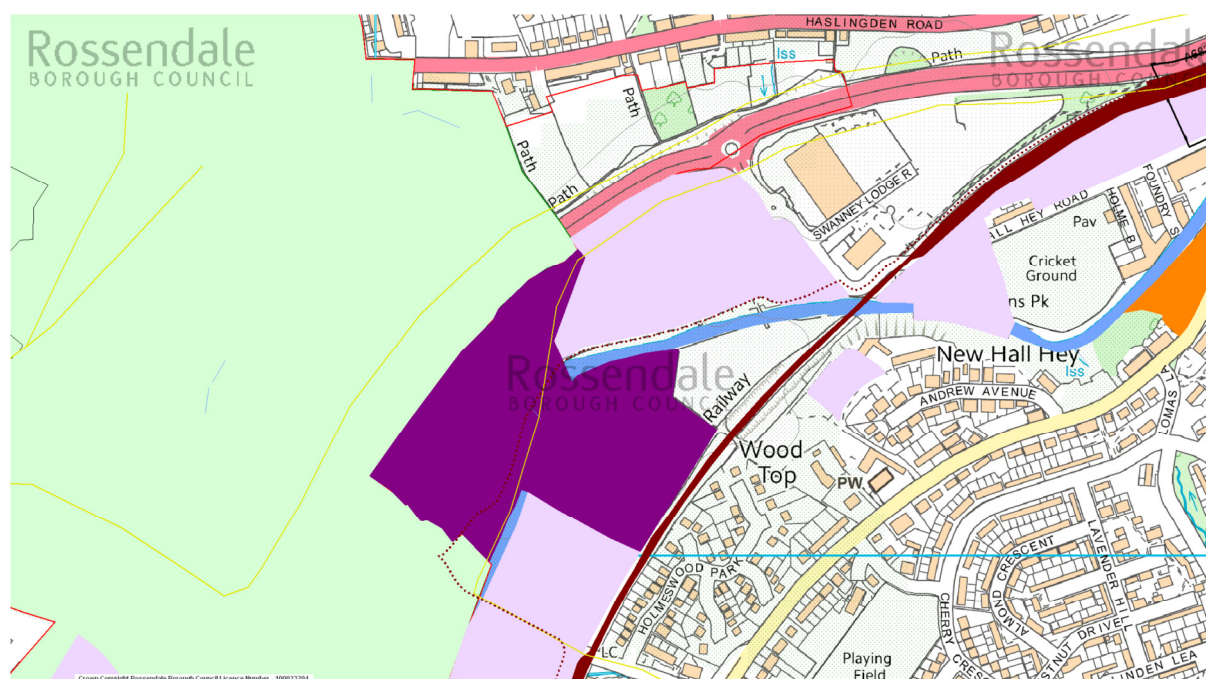
The site is earmarked for mixed use. This is because it is at the base of the route leading up to Lee Quarry which is one of the country's premier Mountain biking venues. Provision of “Base Camp” type facilities with a small element of related retail would also link in with the “Valley of Stone” Greenway which is regarded as a very important part of the Borough's active tourism offer.

A third element of the mixed use concept is provision of a Gypsy and Traveller Transit site in a corner of the site. Futures Park is currently a favoured stopping over point for Gypsies travelling through the area and is in the Council's control for management purposes.



### **New Hall Hey Extension (Policies SS, EMP2 and EMP7)**

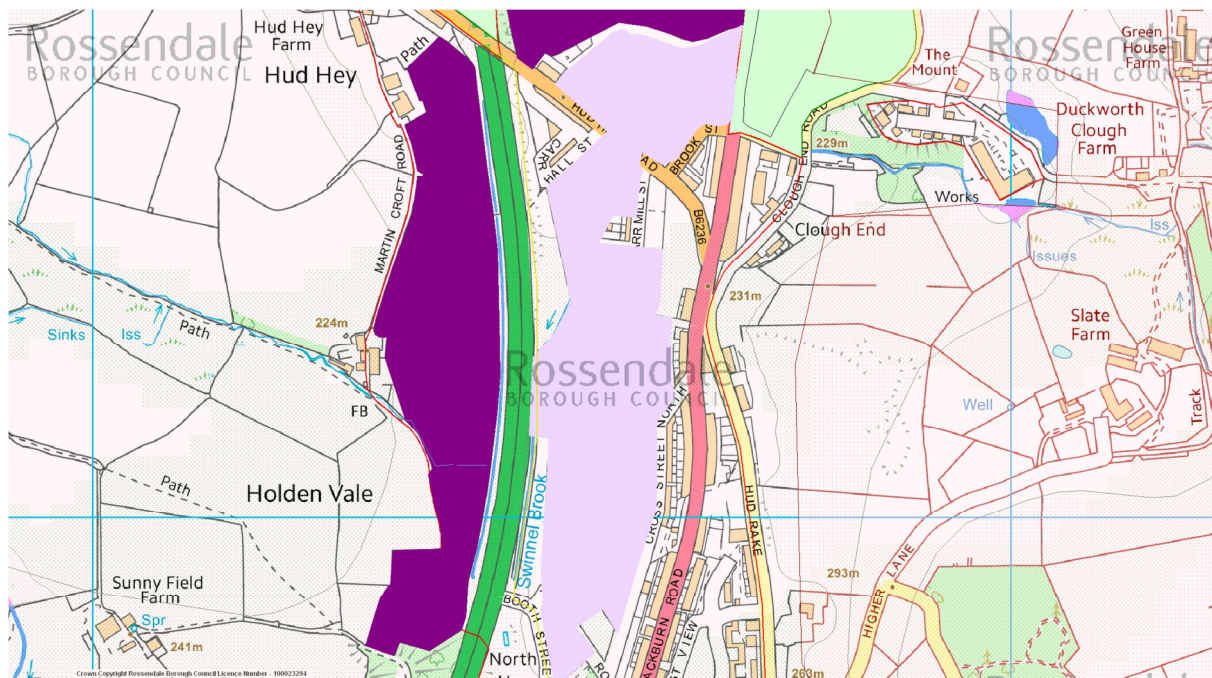
This site is adjacent to the A682 coming out of Rawtenstall and is close to the A56. It is a Gateway site on the approach to the Borough and would extend the existing adjacent employment area. It is in an area where businesses are likely to want to develop due to its good road access and has proximity to an existing skilled employment pool that live around Rawtenstall. It has the capability to provide skilled jobs within the Borough. There are some constraints on the developable area due to the presence of overhead cables, other infrastructure and topography. The eastern side of the site would require a new bridge across the River Irwell. Land west of the River Irwell is in the Green Belt but it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist for its release given the lack of suitable, available employment land in the Borough close to the A56 corridor and the need to provide good quality jobs. The site will contribute to a balanced employment portfolio in an attractive location to the market; is viable and contributes to a balanced approach between housing and employment.



### **Carrs Industrial Estate Northern Extension (Policies SS and EMP2)**

The existing Carrs Industrial Estate is a very popular location for employment uses with low vacancy rates. Expanding on this known popularity and demand will help in both retaining and attracting businesses to the Borough. It will also contribute to retaining and creating employment in the Borough and assist in reducing the net outflow of workers to

neighbouring areas and helping maintain a balance between housing and employment growth. Identification of suitable sites in the A56 corridor is particularly important in achieving this objective.



## **Brownfield land and use of higher densities**

NPPF paragraph 122 emphasises the importance of making effective use of land, in particular brownfield land and use of higher densities.

The Council has undertaken a review of the potential for increasing the amount of brownfield land by re-assessing sites in the SHLAA. As a result of this the brownfield target has increased from 20% in the Regulation 18 consultation to 30%. This is included as a requirement in Strategic Policy HS1. The density figures on sites were also re-examined and increased.

Twenty three brownfield sites are being brought forward (20 from the previous consultation and three new sites) providing 603 houses with an average density of 100 dwellings per hectare. Amongst those sites, one is situated within the Green Belt (Land east of Market Street, Edenfield) and another one is currently in the countryside (Loveclough Working Mens Club).

Eight mixed sites are proposed for allocation and could deliver 407 dwellings (at an average density of 34 dph). Three of these sites are currently wholly or partly within the Green Belt (Cwm Water Treatment Works, Irwell Vale Mill and Edenwood Mill), and one site is within the countryside (Land at Blackwood Road, Stacksteads).



Combining the brownfield sites and the mixed sites, they could deliver 1010 dwellings at an average density of 75 dph, or 1117 dwellings if density is increased to 85 dph.

The brownfield target is a minimum figure based on allocations. There will be additional “windfall” sites that will come forward which historically have tended to be on brownfield land. However the 5 Year Land Supply 2017-2022 indicates that on average windfalls totalled 16 dwellings pa over the previous 5 years. Many windfalls are on small sites; this is also reflected in the allocations themselves in Policy HS2 with 40% of sites being for less than 10 dwellings.

Policy HS7 indicates a requirement for development in sustainable locations (defined town centres and within 300m of key transport corridors). The supporting text indicates an expectation of density figures in excess of 40 dwellings per ha in town centres. A definitive figure was not placed in the Policy as it is often possible to negotiate a higher figure than 40 dwellings on individual applications based on the site specific circumstances.

## **Town Centres**



Town and District centres-both in terms of their offer and their visual appearance-are very important to the overall perception and prosperity of the Borough. Like many towns nationally changing shopping patterns have left their mark on settlements in Rossendale. The Plan seeks to support these centres as they change and evolve to meet modern needs but enhance and retain the character that makes them important.

Rawtenstall is defined in the Plan as a Town Centre while Bacup and Haslingden are each defined as District Centres (Strategic Policy R1). The Council is committed to focussing new retail development and other town centre uses within these locations. The Townscape

Heritage Initiative (THI) in Bacup is currently making a significant visual difference to the Conservation Area in the core of the town centre and it is intended that this will help to make the area more attractive to inward investors. The Council is working with shop owners and interested parties in Haslingden to enhance shop frontages. The Council is taking forward the declaration of a Conservation Area in Haslingden (Policy ENV2) to better reflect and protect the historic character of the area. The biggest Town Centre initiative is the

“Spinning Point” development in Rawtenstall which includes major new retail and leisure facilities plus a revamped public space adjacent to the new Bus Station. This will serve as a major new facility in the Borough and it is intended to revise the Primary Shopping Area Boundary to reflect this (Policy R2).

As recommended in the Town Centre, Retail, Leisure and Tourism Study (2017) Crawshawbooth is included as a Local Centre (R1). A new car park is proposed (Policy TR4-Explanation) to support and serve this centre as is declaration of a Conservation Area. (ENV2)

## **4. Environmental Assets and Quality**

The Borough’s environmental assets and built heritage are a fundamental part of its character which the Plan seeks to protect and enhance (Strategic Policies ENV1 and ENV2).

Strategic Policy ENV1 forms the main overall Development Management policy for the Plan and guides consideration of environmental issues as well as high quality design. Strategic Policy ENV2 sets out the approach to designated and non-designated assets with a focus on protecting the areas distinctive identity and sense of place. It takes a new more pro-active approach to the significance of non-designated assets and facilitates designation of new Conservation Areas.

Protecting the landscape, environment and built heritage is important for a wide range of reasons. As well as providing a setting for new development such assets are important in their own right and provide a variety of functions. An example of this is the peat on places such as Scout Moor. This acts as a carbon store; holds water, reduces run-off and provides habitat for a number of endangered species. The Council is working with partners to enhance the habitat in this area.



The Environmental Capacity Study 2017 identifies the multi-functional role of environmental corridors within the Borough. Policies ENV4 and ENV5 recognise the importance of not just seeing areas of ecological value as isolated “islands” but that functionally there are links between them that are not in themselves specifically designated for wildlife but play an important role in allowing species to move between sites. The Policies Map designates these corridors as well as designated sites such as the West Pennines Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Environmental corridors can also play a wider multi-functional role delivering recreational and health benefits. Thus the “Valley of Stone” Greenway uses a number of the Green and Blue Corridors within the Borough while GP’s prescribe exercise for patients with mental health problems, many of whom live in deprived areas but live close to Environmental corridors.

Rossendale forms the upper catchment of the River Irwell and its tributaries (including the River Spodden through Whitworth). Fast run-off rates from the uplands into the rivers can result in significant flooding not only in the Borough but contribute to flooding further downstream in Bury, Rochdale and Salford. Flood risk limits development in many locations identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The use of Green infrastructure such as “Slow the flow” measures including “leaky dams” can make a difference to flow rates (Policy ENV9). The Council is working with partners in the Irwell Catchment Partnership to address these issues.

The Landscape Study 2015 provided a detailed assessment of the character of the area. Policy ENV3 identifies how the Council will address landscape issues including the natural and built environment. Use of appropriate materials is particularly important as part of that process but the Plan seeks to treat the design of new development and how it fits into the landscape in an integrated manner.

Building on recommendations from the Habitats Regulation Assessment Appropriate Assessment Policy ENV4 requires developments of over 100 dwellings to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the impact of the proposal on specific bird species. This could include the creation of Suitable Alternative natural Greenspace (SANG's) though no sites have yet been identified.

Health Impact Assessments may be required as part of ENV1 and will be required as part of the Masterplanning for larger sites. These will help to ensure that the design of new developments maximises opportunities to bring health benefits.

The use of Masterplans is identified for many key sites and forms an important plank of ENV1. Policy HS2 indicates that these should be prepared for all housing developments of over 50ha and the requirement to prepare them is also identified for larger employment sites in EMP2. The aim of Masterplanning is to take an integrated approach to design that looks not just at the individual buildings but also the context of the site, the greenspaces and the infrastructure in a holistic way.

Rossendale has an extensive history of mining and quarrying with stone from the area being used in Trafalgar Square. Some of this legacy has been recognised as of national importance, such as Lee Quarry being a SSSI for geological purpose and derelict buildings and tramways being of importance to industrial archaeology. Lee and Cragg Quarries also been successfully used for leisure purposes (mountain biking) and are a key part of the areas tourism offer. Care however has to be taken with the mining and quarrying legacy because of their potential impact on any new buildings in the vicinity. Lancashire County Council is the Mineral Planning Authority and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan they produce is part of the Development Plan for Rossendale.

Built heritage is a fundamental part of the character of the area. This comprises both listed and non-designated assets (Strategic Policy ENV2). Historically the Borough has not had a "Local List"; the new policy will provide a framework for this to be produced and will allow valuable local assets to be given greater weight in the consideration of planning applications. Designation of a number of Conservation Areas will enable the character of valuable townscapes in settlements such as Helmshore and Newchurch to be protected and enhanced.





## 5. Infrastructure

Like many areas, much of the infrastructure within Rossendale dates from the Victorian era and the time of rapid industrial expansion. Sewers and drains dating from that period need maintenance and periodic upgrading by the Utility providers, as does more recent infrastructure such as the electricity and gas supply networks. Reducing flood risk is a key priority and Environment Agency has identified a number of culverts that are priorities for action as well as plans for increasing flood protection for settlements such as Chatterton and Irwell Vale.

Modern infrastructure such as Mobile phone masts and broadband provision is being progressively upgraded. Because of the topography there are parts of the area that are more difficult to serve than others.

A number of schools in the Borough, at both Primary and Secondary level are operating close to capacity. All but two of the Borough's Secondary Schools are close to capacity while Primary Schools in the South West of the Borough and in Rawtenstall/Crawshawbooth are expected to reach capacity in the first five years of the Plan period with Whitworth also having very limited capacity. Improvements will be dealt with on a case by case basis. A new or expanded Primary School will be required in Edenfield to accommodate the proposed Strategic development within the settlement.

Health facilities in the Borough are currently operating satisfactorily but by the end of the first five years of the Plan there will be a need to provide additional capacity in GP practices.

Perhaps the largest infrastructure challenge is the transport network. Strategic Policy TR1: Strategic Transport recognises this. Improvements to strategic transport, in particular links to Manchester via the A56/M66, are anticipated to be delivered in the second and third periods of the Plan but are dependent on Highways England funding and also the Strategic Transport Plan of Transport for the North.

Development of a commuter rail link is a long term project but it is regarded by the Council as a strategic priority to link the Borough with national rail network. “Park and Ride” facilities at Ewood Bridge to facilitate this are protected on the Proposals Map. The cycle network in the Borough is currently undergoing significant investment through “Growth Fund” and Lancashire CC money which is being used to develop the “Valley of Stone” Greenway and upgrade National Cycle Route 6. Further linking routes are expected to be developed through the Plan period.

The internal road network in the Borough experiences existing congestion problems at some key pinchpoints which is projected to get worse over the Plan period. The Council commissioned Mott McDonald to undertake a Highway Capacity Study of 15 key junctions in the Borough to identify expected traffic growth until 2034. As a consequence a number of these junctions were subjected to further detailed analysis and mitigation measures identified (see below)

<b>Junction</b>	<b>Costs (without land/utilities/demolition, etc costs)</b>
Gyratory, Rawtenstall	
• Do minimum option	£0.9 million
• Roundabout option (not preferred)	£3.2 million
• Works and signalisation	£6 million
Waterfoot signalisation	£0.8 million
Toll Bar, Stacksteads	£0.9 million
Edenfield mini-roundabout	£0.2 million
A56 Bentgate	£0.2 million
Tesco Haslingden roundabout	£0.5-£1 million

The Gyratory in Rawtenstall is a key junction in the Borough with much of the traffic from the east of the Borough passing through it as well as the settlements to the north. This junction is forecast to reach capacity by 2024 and significant infrastructure work will be required. The Council will work with partners to ensure that a funding case is assembled to take forward these improvements. Improvements to other junctions, notably at Waterfoot,



Toll Bar and Edenfield, will be required later in the plan period. The urban nature of these sites will make delivery of solutions challenging within the existing highway boundaries.

## **6. Conclusion**

As with any similar document, the Rossendale Local Plan makes a number of difficult choices about the amount and location of development. The overall Strategy reflects the importance of delivering the Standard methodology figure for new housing supply is delivered on a year by year basis and ensuring that there is a balanced approach with new employment provision.

The need to facilitate new development also needs to be set against taking as sustainable an approach as possible that respects the setting of the Borough and its essential character of valley settlements surrounded by hills.

The Plan aims to achieve this balance by focussing development in Key and Local Service Centres and defined major sites. Protection and enhancement of built and natural environmental assets is recognised as an integral part of the Borough's future development.

The Topography and existing infrastructure provision are constraints on development. The Plan recognises that for development to go ahead infrastructure improvements will be required to facilitate this. Partnership working will be essential to achieve this.

## Appendix-Draft Settlement Hierarchy Criteria

### LEVEL 1

#### Key characteristics

Town Centre or District Centre-retail & leisure; Leisure facilities; High frequency bus service; range of primary schools; GP's

1a) **Rawtenstall** – higher order shops; greater range of bus services

1b) **Bacup, Haslingden and Whitworth**

### LEVEL 2

#### Key characteristics

Local Centres for retail and leisure; High frequency bus services; primary schools; (Waterfoot has a High School); GP's/Dentists (Waterfoot)

2a) **Waterfoot**

2b) **Crawshawbooth**

### LEVEL 3

#### Key characteristics

Local Parade or more than one shop; good quality bus service (around perimeters for Helmshore); Primary schools; playing fields

**Edenfield, Helmshore; Stacksteads and Rising Bridge**

### LEVEL 4

#### Key characteristics

At least two of the following characteristics: At least 30 minute frequency bus service; Primary school; shop; community centre

**Britannia; Broadley/Tonacliffe; Facit; Goodshaw/Loveclough; Shawforth; Stubbins; Water; Whitewell Bottom**

### LEVEL 5

#### Key characteristics

One or none of the following services: Primary School; at least hourly bus service; shop; Community Centre

**Acre; Cowpe; Ewood Bridge; Irwell Vale; Sharneyford; Weir**