**Pre-Hearing Note 1 from the Inspectors to the Council**

**Rossendale Local Plan Examination**

**14 May 2019**

Thank you for sending through the Rossendale Local Plan and other requested documents. We are still at an early stage in our preparation and reading of the evidence base. However, we have a number of initial questions for the Council on which clarification would be appreciated. This will help us to determine how best the Examination should proceed, and to better focus the Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs). It also includes several requests for further information. As our preparation develops we may have further initial questions of this nature.

**General**

1. The Submission Version of the Plan (SD001) appears to have a number of differences to the Pre-Submission Publication Version (SD023). Can the Council confirm the nature and purpose of these changes, and whether SD001 was published for consultation purposes?
2. The Duty to Cooperate Statement (SD008) incorporates what is described as a ‘Draft Statement of Common Ground.’ Are there any updates to the document since submission of the Plan, or are any updates planned prior to the hearing sessions?
3. Can the Council provide a list of all documents that were submitted to the Examination but were not publicly available when the Pre-Submission Version Local Plan (SD023) was published under Regulation 19.
4. Can the Council direct us to Natural England’s response to consultation on the Habitats Regulations Assessment (2019) (SD006.1)? If Natural England has not been formally engaged on this document, please can the Council do so and advise how long it will take for a response to be received and submitted to the examination.
5. What area does the Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum cover? The Council is requested to include documentation relating to the area and the designation of the Forum in the examination library.
6. The Council is requested to produce separate Submission Policies Maps for each settlement identified in the hierarchy and Edenfield. These should preferably be between 1:2500 and 1:5000 scale and on a more detailed map base which shows physical features such as buildings, boundaries as well as road and place names.
7. The Submission Policies Map shows a number of changes to urban boundaries and Green Belt boundaries, in addition to the proposed allocation sites. The Council is requested to provide a document/note which outlines these individual changes and the reasons for the changes (and includes site maps detailing each change).
8. The Local Plan requires some development to provide or contribute to the provision of sites of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs). Can the Council explain whether any specific proposals for SANGs have been identified; and if so, are there any relevant local documents that can be submitted to the examination?
9. Can the Council confirm the addresses of the proposed housing allocations and existing employment allocations (specifically the settlement names)? In some cases this information is missing from Tables 1 and 2 in the Plan.

**Site assessment work**

1. The Council’s site assessment work (of rejected and allocated sites) is set out in a range of documents, and cross referencing is not straightforward due to different site numbering systems and an absence of borough-wide maps in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). In order to aid the Examination process the Council is requested to produce:

* A Site Assessment overview document (one for accepted and one for rejected options) which sets out for each individual site:
  + a summary of the technical site appraisal results – drawing on conclusions from the SHLAA, Green Belt Review, Heritage Impact Assessment document, Employment Land Review, Employment Sites Access Study and other documents where relevant
  + summary of site SA results
  + conclusion, setting out reasons for allocation/rejection
  + individual site map (on a clear OS map base showing physical features and road/place names)
  + site reference number (plus site numbers used in other evidence documents, to allow cross referencing)
* Linked to this, a map of the borough which shows the rejected sites (with site reference numbers).

1. The Council’s Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) document (EB034) sets out a summary of results relating to the allocated sites. The Council is requested to add the full HIAs to the examination library, in order to clarify the identified assets, likely impacts and potential mitigation measures.
2. Does the Council have any further supporting information/technical work available relating to the suitability, availability and deliverability of the proposed housing, employment and mixed-use site allocations, which could be included in the examination library? For example, draft Masterplans, technical reports and other evidence?

**Housing and employment provision**

1. The Council is requested to provide a Housing Supply Topic Paper which identifies likely housing provision over the Plan period, updates the Council’s five year land supply position, and draws together all the supply evidence in one place. This will aid the Examination process. The Paper should include:

* A summary table which sets out estimated housing provision over the Plan period, broken down by sources of supply (e.g. existing planning permissions, other commitments, windfalls, allocations and other sources).
* An overview of sources and assumptions/method applied to derive site capacity, delivery rates and timings (including, for example, justification for any lapse rates or other adjustments, a breakdown/analysis of past windfall rates, and general phasing and density assumptions).
* Linked to the summary table, a housing trajectory (which takes account of all sources of supply and builds on that in Appendix 4 of the Plan)
* Background tables of existing commitments and allocations, which set out gross and net site areas, net density, number of units, estimated phasing/delivery rates by year, and brief commentary/overview on delivery progress and planning applications (building on the allocation tables in Appendix 4 of the Plan). Where relevant this should include evidence relating to whether a site is deliverable (having regard to the definition in the NPPF).
* Updated five year housing land supply calculations (taking account of all relevant sources of supply, and updating document EB010).

1. In relation to employment land, the Council is requested to confirm:

* The Plan period for employment provision (2019-2034 or 2014-2034?)
* The employment land requirement and estimated employment land supply relating to this period (broken down by source of requirement/supply)
* Whether the requirement and supply figures are gross hectares, or net; and
* The type/mix of different B use classes (B1, B2, B8) that the Plan seeks to provide.

1. The Council is requested to produce a series of tables which set out how housing and employment growth over the Plan period would be spatially distributed by Development Hierarchy categories (e.g. Key Service Centres etc) and by settlement. The tables should incorporate a detailed breakdown of the various supply sources (e.g. extant permissions, allocations, windfall). Allocations should be sub-divided further to delineate between sites within existing urban boundaries, Green Belt releases, and other allocations outside existing urban boundaries.
2. Can the Council confirm which proposed allocation sites are currently located in the countryside (but not in the Green Belt)?

**Infrastructure**

1. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (March 2019 Update) (SD0014) identifies a number of medium and high priority projects where either the delivery mechanism or costs are unknown and many items of infrastructure are subject to gaps in funding. Is the Council is able to provide an updated position for any of the infrastructure projects identified?
2. The Council is requested to prepare a Gantt chart showing the delivery of overall growth over the Plan period (including commitments, windfall etc). It should also show each housing, employment and mixed-use allocation and the infrastructure necessary to bring forward each site, so we are able to see when items of infrastructure are required to unlock specific development. Each item of infrastructure should use the same references as detailed in Table 22 of SD014.

**Potential timescales for the hearings**

1. At this stage we anticipate it may be possible to hold the hearing sessions in Autumn 2019. We can confirm that we are available the week commencing 22nd September 2019, for a period of 2-3 weeks. It would be appreciated if you could let us have your feedback on these potential timings and the availability of venues.

The Council is requested to respond to the more straightforward matters in this Note by **Tuesday 28 May 2019**, and to provide a timetable for the production of the more detailed items.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us via the Programme Officer. Thank you for your assistance.

Katie Child

Luke Fleming

INSPECTORS