

MIQ response re Matter 7 per Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service 5141

Please see our response below in connection with the proposed hearings relating to Rossendale Local Plan

With reference to Matter 7 – Infrastructure delivery

Is the Rawtenstall Gyratory deliverable?

We believe this is one for the Council to answer, however we do not believe that the options have included any costs or practicalities associated with the works required to relocate the Fire station, and we believe this is a fundamental consideration in determining the most appropriate option.

Have the concerns of Lancashire Fire and Rescue been addressed?

It is worth re-affirming our position as previously reported to the council which has partly been incorporated into the revised plan in section 8.2.2:-

The station meets the needs of our demand profile, with current front-line provision and associated crewing arrangements at the site aligned to this. Both the station and the accommodation block are in good condition based upon our current requirements (with minimal planned expenditure in the next 5 years). Within the scope of our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017-22, Rawtenstall Fire Station has been considered most recently during the Emergency Cover Review 2017 (a strategic evaluation of our assets and front-line resources within Lancashire.). These re-affirmed that the location continues to provide the most suitable base from which to meet our emergency response standards for Rawtenstall and the surrounding area. This considers further, the requirement for Retained Duty System firefighters to respond to the site within five minutes of receiving an emergency call, and it is worth emphasising that the scope to continue doing this from any alternative site would severely limit any relocation options.

As such we have no need to relocate the station and are therefore concerned that the plans could result in such a requirement.

Therefore our expectation should the plans go ahead would be that the council identified suitable alternative locations, and met any and all costs associated with providing a new facility.

This position is partly reflected in section 8.2.2 of the RBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019 “Rawtenstall Fire Station continues to meet the needs of Lancashire Fire Rescue in terms of delivering the fire and rescue service across Rossendale. It is a requirement that Retained Duty System firefighters are able to respond within five minutes of receiving an emergency call, which severely limits the scope for relocation of the service. As such, future plans for the Gyratory (as per Chapter 4) will need to fully consider the locational needs for fire cover.”

Furthermore the Plan does reference the potential £4.5 million costs associated with relocating the fire station on page 48 but does not include any land and utility.

But we have not seen any updated costed options which include relocation costs, nor any acknowledgement that these would be met by the council. Nor do we feel that the plans adequately reflect the responsibility of the council to identify suitable alternative locations.

Can the scheme be delivered with the Fire Station remaining in place?

Options 1 – 4 RBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019 Update retains the fire station in its present position, however it moves the road network to run alongside the existing station and accommodation block. We do not feel there is sufficient information to give a detailed response as to the suitability of any of these options, but we have major concerns about the proximity of the proposed new road to the existing building and the impact of this on the welfare of staff and visitors to the station.

If not has a strategy been agreed for its relocation which includes funding and timing?

We do not believe a suitable funding strategy has been agreed, the plans whilst referencing potential relocation costs exclude any site acquisition cost and are silent on who is responsible for these costs. Nor do the Plans reference whether suitable alternative sites are likely to be available or whose responsibility it is to identify them. In terms of timing it is too early to say what these are but we have not seen any indicative timeframes for any potential relocation, and our experience would suggest that identifying alternative sites and relocation to these is an extremely lengthy process.

In terms of the specific options outlined in the plans we have the following comments:-

- Options 5 - 8 RBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019 Update relocates the fire station within the revised site layout. Without detailed plans it is impossible to accurately say what impact this will have however we have major concerns about this option and the space that it provides for car parking, training, storage as well as the close proximity of the revised road layout and the impact this has on the welfare of staff and visitors. Furthermore it appears that some elements of the new build require demolition of the existing facility and therefore consideration would need to be given about maintaining the site as an operational fire station whilst works are undertaken. The difficulty this creates has not been referenced within the plans. Should any of these options progress there would be significant cost in demolishing the existing station and building a new one, we have estimated approx. £4.5m, and no budget has been allocated for this within the Plan.
- Options 9 - 16 RBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019 Update requires the fire station to be relocated to a new site. Without identifying alternative sites it is impossible to comment on the suitability of these options. However our concerns would be about suitability of the site in terms of size and layout to support our requirements, location to tie in with Fire risk within the surrounding area and location in terms of the ability of our on-all personnel to attend station within 5 minutes of a mobilisation. Should any of these options progress there would be significant cost in relocating including site acquisition, we would estimate in the region of £5.5m, and no budget has been allocated for this within the Plan.

Is there an overall strategy which demonstrates the Rawtenstall Gyrotory is deliverable and when it would be likely to be delivered?

We believe this is one for the Council to answer

What would be the implications for the Local Plan if this scheme was not delivered on time or at all?

We believe this is one for the Council to answer

Keith Mattinson
Director of Corporate Services
Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service