

MIQ response re Matter 9 per Robert Nicholas

From: bobnic51@btinternet.com
Sent: 28 August 2019 17:31
To: Tony Blackburn
Subject: Rossendale Local Plan

Dear Sir

Re:Rossendale Draft Local Plan Proposals, Regulation 19 Consultation

I have lived in Loveclough for all of my life (some 60years+) and seen the steady transformation of what once was an isolated village slowly becoming on the **east side** of Burnley Road (the A682) what can only be described as an extended housing estate till it reaches the boundary of our neighbouring village Crawshawbooth.

WhatRossendale Borough Council (RBC) plans for my village under the *Rossendale Draft Local Plan, Pre-Submission Publication Version, Regulation 19 Consultation* document will just add another huge block of new housing on the **west side** of Burnley Road (H13 105 houses) with (H5 125 houses) on the **east side** completing the encirclement of the village and opening up the prospect of further development alongside the **west side** of the road till it resembles the **east side**. This would not only destroy the character of the village but also rob the area of its much loved open aspect and amenity.

What lies at the heart of *RDLP Reg 19* is the council's inability to communicate (which is seen by local residents as deliberate) which has led to the present situation of *RDLP Reg 19* being presented to the local community at what is basically the last minute of the eleventh hour which is by any reckoning wholly unsatisfactory! All this flies in the face of a previous undertaking by Rossendale Council to local residents that

“there will be no substantial development to the west side of the A682 Burnley Road at Loveclough”

There has been an obvious failure to consult with the local community particularly with those most affected by the last-minute additions to the proposed Local Plan. Some may regard this (charitably) as an act of desperation on behalf of the council – I have no such views: this was a deliberate concealment of plans which only now have been sprung upon residents. The failure to consult is provable and has the effect of debasing the plan so far as it applies in our area. Locals are far better placed to advise having a greater understanding of their local area, its topography and any issues this may bring forth – which planners do not.

In 2011 the local residents association, the Limey Valley Residents Association (LVRA), in response to the council's previous and subsequently rejected plan conducted a full survey of available land in the Ward. The Association identified a total of 155 potential plots using mainly brownfield land and largely infill sites with developments of between 2 and 20 houses. This would have accommodated the then perceived requirement housing allocation for the Goodshaw Ward. However, later, Officers from the association identified sites on the east side of Burnley Road which would accommodate all the additional housing (111) to make up the council's quota. In both cases the council failed to investigate the viability of these options and subsequently produced the current Plan.

Of course what is not taken into consideration or brushed over by the council is the fact of the long and narrow nature of the areas within the boundaries of Goodshaw Ward. What is definitely NOT needed is large tracts of land given over to development. In particular, the setting of Swinshaw Hall would be impoverished under H5, and the proximity of the Conservation Areas of Goodshawfold and Loveclough Fold would likewise be detrimentally affected by H17 and H13 respectively. Also the council, like the local residents, knows full well that any development in the area would open the flood gates to more development. The council has said though without a written commitment to the residents association that

"they would stop any further development from taking place".

This of course is a blatant falsehood: all the council is interested in is building as many houses as it can preferably four and five bedroom with just lip service to starter homes in the name of greed. Rossendale council knows as well as the local residents the fact that the available land on the west side of the Limey Valley would support several hundred homes and this in the long term is just what they plan to do!

I would now like to draw your attention to the east side of Burnley Road site H5 Swinshaw Hall and surrounding lands. I would like to address the questions as posed in the Inspectors Matters Issues and Questions

H5 - Swinshaw Hall, Loveclough

Question

Is the site capable of being safely accessed? Have the concerns of the Local Highways Authority been satisfied? Specifically, can a widened access from Burnley Road, a private access to Broad House and a secondary/emergency and pedestrian/cycle access onto Goodshaw Road be achieved?

Response

It is extremely difficult to visualize a solution which would answer the above question. Taking the question of widened access to the site the only place possible would be at the junction of the A682 and Swinshaw Lane and this would have to supply access for the whole site. Cutting through mature woodland and crossing two public rights of way. This would mean something like 240 vehicle movements to and from Burnley Road each day from a single point of access. Of course Goodshaw Lane could be used but it is totally unsuitable for large traffic movements. Goodshaw Lane is a single track road in parts just 4 mt wide in places along with in summer copious verge/hedge overgrowth narrowing the lane still further and along its length there are numerous blind bends (see attached photos). The lane is already something of a rat run which brings into danger the numerous walkers, including many regular dog walkers, families with push chairs, school children, cyclists and horse riders who use the lane to escape the A682.

Private access to Broad House already exists and is unsuitable to any form of vehicle access to the proposed sites. Diverting traffic on to this lane would increase the risk to all users. And it is also not suitable for emergency vehicles because of the points made above.

Question

ii) What effect would the proposed allocation have on drainage, flooding and existing residents nearby living conditions?

Response

The houses fronting the road (ie. 1205 Burnley Road to the Old School House) have all in the past been subjected to flooding in periods of very heavy rainfall. Most of the time the fields which slope quite steeply towards Burnley Road (see attached photographs) absorb the rain but if built on would just exacerbate the problem, particularly with climate change and the risk of more heavy and unusual rainfall patterns (like a month's rain in one or two days) the risk would be multiplied.

Question

iii) Can the setting and significance of Swinshaw Hall be preserved? if so how?

Response

The answer to this question is simply **NO**. Swinshaw Hall is a magnificent building dating back to the 16th century with links to the historic Towneley family and sits in a setting befitting its style. Its location set between two arms of trees with an open frontage shows off the building to its best and has done so since its construction. Placing any dwellings in front of the hall or nearby will ruin the setting and destroy its appearance. The only way the setting can be preserved is simply not to build anywhere near this historic hall. For the council to even consider allowing building near the hall is just another example of the contempt they have for the population of Loveclough.

The building of 266 houses in the vicinity of Loveclough which is serviced by the A682 is simply not viable.

Inadequate infrastructure is also a major concern to the wider population in the area. The A682 is the only major route from our village to Rawtenstall or Burnley and beyond. The road is totally unsuitable for improvements to accommodate additional traffic and there is no scope for road widening due to the large number of houses bordering the road which are largely Victorian terraces without parking facilities. The consequences of this are that road side parking effectively narrows the A682 for much of its length from Rawtenstall to Loveclough. Added to this during times of snowfall, due to the estates to the side of the A682 not being gritted, the residents of the said estates also park on the A682!

Service provision is also a concern with one already oversubscribed primary school in the Ward and an absence of doctors and dentist surgeries. Statistics indicate that medical practices in Rawtenstall will be oversubscribed within 1.5-2 years of the plan being implemented with the NHS having no plans to inject funds.

Whilst I have a modicum of sympathy with the council having a housing target (3180) imposed upon it, I, like many residents, have grave concerns that the provision of land for the projected development of over 250 properties in Loveclough will destroy what is a beautiful area that is much loved by the inhabitants.

The local residents association have tried to work with the council only to be stabbed in the back. The development of the sites will bring down an environmental disaster blighting the area initially, and no doubt with worse to come as it will set off uncontrolled development in the area with inevitable loss of wildlife habitats and the increased risk of flooding for those homes that are unfortunately near the River Limey and situated in H5. Like many people in the area I am appalled by the way the council has behaved in this matter in the first place. The seemingly underhanded way the proposals have been forced on local residents without due process basically denying people due time to respond in a proper manner was a disgrace. With planning permission given to site H13 before the planning inspectors' decision, the whole process has a very nasty smell about it and shows a council planning department that is not fit for purpose.

Robert Nicholas

Loveclough