

# Rossendale Local Plan Examination

## MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS (MIQs)



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### **Matter 13 – Housing site allocations: Whitworth, Facit, and Shawforth**

***Issue – Are the proposed housing allocations in Whitworth, Facit and Shawforth justified, effective, developable/deliverable and in line with national policy?***

- H65 – Albert Mill, Whitworth**
- H66 – Land north of King Street, Facit**
- H67 – Land behind Buxton Street, Facit**
- H68 – Former Spring Mill, Whitworth**
- H69 – Cowm Water Treatment Works, Whitworth**

The general questions below apply to all of the sites within Matter 13 and the answers will correspond with the respective letter.

The additional specific questions raised by the Inspector in the MIQs document for certain site allocations will be set out under the relevant site allocation.

### **General Questions**

**a) Is the site suitable for housing? Are there any specific constraints or requirements associated with the site, or a need to seek mitigation measures to achieve an acceptable form of development? Should these be specified in the Plan?**

**b) Is the proposed site capacity appropriate, taking account of constraints and the provision of necessary infrastructure?**

**c) Is the site available and deliverable in the timescales envisaged?**

The following commentary has been informed by evidence such as the SHLAA 2018 ([EB004](#)), the Heritage Impact Assessment ([EL1.002g](#)), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2016 ([EB032](#)), Landscape Study ([EB025](#)) and responses from consultees such as Highways England and LCC Highways (see Regulation 19 responses [SD010](#)). These have provided information on constraints and, if identified, potential mitigation. Further information provided as part of a planning application has also been used where relevant.

If the Inspector deems it to be appropriate, further detail could be provided on those sites where specific constraints and/or mitigation have been identified (if these are considered to necessitate specific guidance). This could include a site plan and a brief summary of considerations and could be prepared for relevant sites as a Main Modification.

#### **H65 - Albert Mill, Whitworth**

- a) Under planning application 2012/0588 outline planning permission was granted on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018 for 49 no. dwellings and therefore the principle of the site being developed for residential use has been established.

A planning application for 85 dwellings is currently under consideration (planning reference 2019/0341).

- b) The current site capacity is based on the extant outline planning permission granted for 49 dwellings. The capacity can be amended subject to the outcome of the application for 85 dwellings. This will be reflected in future updates to the Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) report.
- c) The site is available and considered deliverable in the years 1-5 of the Plan period as evidenced by the full planning application currently under consideration.

#### **H66 – Land north of King Street, Facit**

- a) The 2018 SHLAA concluded the site was suitable for housing development subject to a land contamination survey being carried out and subsequent remediation if required. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment also concluded that development could be allocated on the site subject to an FRA. The Heritage Impact Assessment concluded the site was acceptable subject to mitigation measures which would preserve the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed Building – St. John’s Church.
- b) Taking into account the known constraints, the proposed area allocated for the site is considered appropriate in order to deliver the proposed site capacity.
- c) The site is available and the Council considers the site developable in years 6-10 of the Plan period.

#### **H67 – Land behind Buxton Street, Facit**

- a) Under planning application 2014/0522 planning permission was granted for a 28 bed specialist care home (C2) and this was completed during 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2019.
- b) The site has been completed and the total no. of dwellings is no longer included in the future supply.

- c) The site has been completed and the total no. of dwellings is no longer included in the future supply.

### **H68 – Former Spring Mill, Whitworth**

- a) The site is considered suitable as a full planning application for 119 dwellings was granted permission at Committee, subject to S106 agreement being signed (planning reference 2018/0318).
- b) The site capacity for 111 dwellings could be amended to 119 dwellings subject to the site obtaining permission.
- c) The site is available and deliverable within the first five years of the Plan as evidenced by a full planning application for residential development which has been approved subject to S106 agreement being signed.

#### **Specific Questions:**

##### **i) Should the site capacity be altered in the context of planning application 2018/0318 for 119 dwellings?**

The Housing Land Supply Update Report produced in response to Question 13 of the Initial Questions ([EL1.002j\(i\)](#)) had a base date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and therefore reflects the number of dwellings identified for this site as of this date.

Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 planning application 2018/0318 was still under consideration and the Council did not consider it appropriate to amend the site capacity whilst a decision was pending. As such, the site capacity for H68 reflects the housing trajectory set out in the Housing Land Supply Update Report. The capacity can be amended subject to the outcome of the application for 119 dwellings. This will be reflected in future updates to the 5YHLS report.

### **H69 – Cowm Water Treatment Works, Whitworth**

- a) The 2018 SHLAA concluded that the site is suitable for housing subject to the constraints being adequately dealt with. The constraints include flood risk and potential land contamination. The SFRA undertook a level 2 assessment of the site and recommended the application of an exception test. The study also stated the western part of the site could be suitable subject to reservoir dam failure scenarios being considered.

The allocation would provide benefits to the community in terms of housing and good access to health facilities and schools as demonstrated by the Sustainability Appraisal. It would be subject to a sit specific flood risk assessment at the planning application stage to demonstrate that the site can be safe during its lifetime and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Environment Agency did not raise any specific concerns regarding this site.

b) Taking into account the known constraints, the proposed area allocated for the site is considered appropriate in order to deliver the proposed site capacity of 20 dwellings.

c) The landowner has expressed an interest in developing the site for residential use. Therefore the Council considers the site available and developable within years 6 to 10 of the Plan period.

### **Specific Questions:**

#### **i) Is the site capable of being safely accessed? Have the concerns of the Local Highways Authority been satisfied?**

The Local Highways Authority consider that the site access of Tong Lane is currently too narrow and requires widening.

#### **ii) What implications does the underground reservoir have on site capacity and the achievability of development?**

The Council has not been made aware of the presence of an underground reservoir by United Utilities, who is the land owner willing to deliver the site for housing.

#### **iii) What effect would the proposed boundary change and allocation have on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it? Are there exceptional circumstances that justify altering the Green Belt?**

The site was assessed in the 2016 Green Belt Review (Parcel 69) and overall it was concluded that the parcel did not perform strongly against any of the Green Belt purposes. It was recommended for release from the Green Belt, as it was not considered to have a substantial negative effect on neighbouring parcels or the integrity of the wider Green Belt.

The exceptional circumstances which are considered to exist for the release of Green Belt for housing and employment development are set out in the Green Belt Topic Paper ([EB023](#)). This concludes that the importance of having a balanced housing and employment supply in a District with challenging geography and viability issues in the east of the Borough has influenced the approach to release of Green Belt land. This is especially given the need to identify land to accommodate at least 3,180 dwellings over the next 15 years which could not be satisfied without the release of existing Green Belt land.

The exceptional circumstances are re-iterated in the explanatory text for Strategic Policy SD2 (Urban Boundary and Green Belt).

Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states, 'where it has been concluded necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed.'

Considering the site is the location of the treatment works for Cowm reservoir, which is being decommissioned, areas of the allocation are identified as brownfield land.

Therefore, taking into account the exceptional circumstances the Council outlined in the 2019 Green Belt Topic Paper and the brownfield nature of the site, it is considered justified to remove the site from the Green Belt for housing.