

23rd October 2019

FAO: Tony Blackburn
Rossendale Local Plan Programme Officer
15 Ottawa Close
Blackburn
BB2 7EB

Sent by email

Dear Tony,

**Response to Highways England Agreed Position Update, 8th October 2019 (Ref: EL4.010)
Taylor Wimpey – Allocation H72 – Land west of Market Street, Edenfield**

We are writing in response to the 'Position Update – Agreed with Highways England' (dated 8th October) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey in respect of their land interests within Allocation H72, land west of Market Street, Edenfield.

This document (Examination Library Reference EL4.010) relates to proposed allocations H72 and H73 within Edenfield and was issued on the morning of the Hearing session discussing those allocations. As such, whilst the document was discussed orally during that session, participants were granted additional time to review and provide further written submissions as appropriate.

Accordingly, this document clarifies Taylor Wimpey's position in respect of allocation H72 and supplements our previous written submissions (most notably our Hearing Statement responses to questions h and j of the Matter 14 MIQs) and our oral submissions made at the Hearings.

Potential Future Widening of the A56

There seems to be some confusion within paragraph 9 regarding our discussions and submissions to date on this matter, so we set out our position clearly below.

Our current 'Combined Illustrative Masterplan' (Appendix 2 of our Matter 14 Hearing Statement) does not directly accommodate or reference the widening of the A56. This is for the simple reason that no widening scheme has been provided, costed or justified, as acknowledged in paragraph 3 of this letter, which also notes that this would likely only become a named project after 2030:

*"It should be clarified that **no future highways schemes have been developed, nor any funding identified.** Any decision to progress a future project involving road widening or junction improvements (which could be inter-linked) would first need to be subject to further study work and cost benefit analysis to determine whether it represented a viable solution. Such a project would most likely fall into the category of a named project within a future Road Investment Strategy (RIS) period from RIS 4 (2030 to 2035) onwards, unless alternative arrangements through for example future Growth Deal arrangements can be secured, possibly with Greater Manchester, and with the agreement of Highways England and the Department for Transport. Schemes would require additional third party land."*

As such, as things stand, and for the purposes of this Local Plan, there is simply no scheme to plan for, and unlikely to be one for 10+ years.

Notwithstanding this, we fully acknowledge Highway's England aspiration to futureproof and safeguard their network for future widening and other improvements wherever possible.

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Indeed, it is clear that our Combined Illustrative Masterplan does not prejudice this aspiration, as it shows a generous stand-off/ buffer from the A56 boundary (of at least 45m within the Taylor Wimpey part of the site), which would allow the widening of the A56 to the east in the future, as accepted in paragraph 9.

This buffer is primarily proposed for landscaping and amenity/ noise mitigation purposes but has been deliberately oversized within the masterplan to provide flexibility, and therefore even with future widening, there should be ample space left over for mitigation purposes; which would need to be justified as part of any future widening scheme anyway.

In respect of noise mitigation, it is pertinent that the A56 is within a cutting in this part of the site, meaning that bunding and or acoustic fencing are likely to be the principle mitigation feature, rather than a specific physical buffer, meaning that a reduction in width of the buffer by future widening is unlikely to have a material noise impact in this location.

Therefore, whilst our proposed layout does not directly accommodate the widening of the A56 it provides sufficient flexibility for this to take place in the future if required, without materially impacting the development of the site.

In terms of adding reference to the widening of the A56 into site specific policy HS3, as requested in paragraph 13 of the letter, we would object to this on the grounds that this is simply not justified nor effective in line with paragraph 35 of the NPPF, given the lack of an actual scheme.

The potential need for widening in the future is clearly set out in the Council's Highway Capacity Study and Highways England's representations which are both published documents in the Local Plan library, whilst Highways England are a statutory consultee with the opportunity to comment on any future planning application at the site, and therefore in our view this offers them sufficient control over this matter without the need for additions to an already verbose and prescriptive policy.

Land Stability

Moving onto the issue of land stability referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11, we start by emphasising that Highways England accept the key findings and conclusions of the geotechnical work we submitted in late 2018 and support the allocation of the site, subject to further detailed work being undertaken at planning application stage, as confirmed in their letter dated 25th January (Appendix 6 of our Matter 14 Hearing Statement):

"Overall, we are content that, in principle, the indicative layout outlined within the masterplan drawing referred to above would be unlikely to cause instability to our asset provided that the development layout, earthworks (e.g. land regrading), site drainage and construction operations are suitably designed, planned for and executed. That way, it is possible that the risk of geotechnical problems within the site can be engineered-out..."

Highways England is now satisfied in principle that the emerging Rossendale Local Plan site allocation H72 could be developed for housing without adverse impact upon the A56 trunk road, provided that a careful approach is taken to its planning and construction."

We would also reiterate that the original concern raised by Highways England over land stability actually related to slope failures/ issues in locations 1km and 4.5km north of this site where the geological setting is clearly different, and therefore it is our strong view that this is not a significant issue at this site.



Paragraph 11 simply repeats the list of geotechnical requirements (a-f) that were set out in bullet points within this earlier letter, with paragraph 13 requesting that these be added to the wording of site specific policy HS3.

As with the A56 widening issue, we would object to this wording being added to the policy on the basis that it is overly detailed and prescriptive, and also unnecessary, given it is already set out in a published document, by a statutory consultee who will have ample opportunity to comment/ intervene on any future planning application at the site.

Finally, we acknowledge that our masterplan shows drainage ponds/ features along the A56 boundary, in conflict with Highways England requirement f; however these are indicative at this stage (as confirmed in the masterplan key), with the drainage strategy to be developed in tandem with the site investigation works to ensure a comprehensive solution which meets the requirements of the LLFA without impacting on land stability.

I trust the above representations are clear, but should you or the Inspector require any clarification or further information please make contact on the details below.

Yours sincerely,



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