

Rossendale Local Plan Examination

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Michael Atherton
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Rossendale Borough Council
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Dear Mr Atherton,

Rossendale Local Plan examination - post hearings letter from the Inspectors

1. Thank you for the Council's contribution and assistance at the hearing sessions held between 24th September and 10th October 2019. Following the completion of the hearing sessions we are writing to set out our views on the way forward for the examination and the next steps.
2. During the course of the hearing sessions we highlighted a number of deficiencies in the Council's evidence base, and identified areas where further work is required to support the policies and proposals in the submitted Plan. This includes additional Sustainability Appraisal work, and production of a range of other technical evidence relating to both strategic and site-specific matters. Our view, based on the current evidence and representations before us, is that this work is necessary to underpin the Council's approach and to demonstrate that the Plan meets the tests of soundness and is legally compliant.
3. Details of the work are set out in the Council's Schedule of Actions (EL6.001) and as such are not re-rehearsed in this letter. We are content that the list reflects the areas of work discussed at the hearing sessions, and welcome the Council's positive response on the matter. The list is extensive and includes key documents such as further evidence on the site selection process, an updated Viability Assessment, and production of an Open Spaces Study. A range of work relating to the suitability, availability and achievability of the proposed allocations is sought. As discussed at the hearing, it will be necessary to publish some items prior to any future publication of main modifications, in order to allow interested parties an opportunity to comment. The Council is requested to liaise with us on the scope and timing of any planned consultation.

4. The additional evidence and responses received will be taken into account in our deliberations on the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan and our final report. The extent and scope of the requested work means that, at this stage, it is not possible for us to provide interim views on the soundness of the housing and employment requirement in the submitted Plan, or any other matters further to the potential main modifications which were discussed at the hearing sessions (as set out in the Council's List of Main Modifications from Weeks 1-3 of the hearings, EL6.002).
5. The Council's indicative timetable in EL6.001 suggests that the additional work will take about six months to complete. In effect the examination will be paused whilst the work is undertaken. During this period the Council is requested to provide the Inspectors with monthly updates on progress and details of any planned consultation. Furthermore, if you have any queries or need commentary on any emerging work, please do not hesitate to contact us via the Programme Officer.
6. Once the work is completed we will write to the Council to confirm the way forward for the examination. If it is necessary to provide interim views on discrete matters prior to this, we will contact you. Following completion of the work, if we consider that the Plan is potentially capable of being found sound and legally compliant the Council would be invited to publish proposed main modifications to the Plan for consultation purposes. If it is necessary to hold additional hearing sessions prior to this, to examine new evidence and hear representors, we will advise the Council as soon as possible.
7. In the interim the Council is requested to produce a revised indicative timetable for production of the Local Plan. This should be published in the examination library as soon as possible.
8. If you have any questions or queries regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us via the Programme Officer.

Katie Child

Luke Fleming

INSPECTORS