



Jake Berry MP
By email

2nd July 2020

Dear Mr Berry,

Examination of the Rossendale Local Plan

Thank you for your letter dated 3rd June 2020. I apologise for the delay in responding, which is due to other work commitments.

As you aware, the Rossendale Local Plan examination is still open and therefore the Inspectors have yet to determine whether the Plan as submitted is sound or not (or capable of being found sound with main modifications). Although the main hearings were held in September/October 2019, the Inspectors subsequently requested a significant amount of further work/evidence which the Council is still in the process of preparing (as set out in the Schedule of Actions, document reference EL6.001). This includes a range of documents relating to housing supply and site options. These documents were due to be completed by May 2020 but have been delayed due to the current Covid-19 crisis. Additional work has also been sought following the one-day virtual hearing event on a proposed replacement gypsy transit site, held on 17th June 2020.

As the examination is on-going, the Inspectors are unfortunately not in a position to comment in detail on the points raised in your letter. We have, however, noted your concerns, and will ensure that the letter is included in the examination library as part of the evidence base. One of the main issues for the examination (as set out in the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions, July 2019 – see Matter 8) is whether the Plan's approach to Green Belt releases is soundly based, and whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries in line with the NPPF. The Inspectors will have regard to all verbal and written representations made on this and other matters. It should be noted that many of the outstanding evidence documents referred to above will need to be published for a short period of consultation, once they are available. As such, there will be a further opportunity for interested parties to submit comments as part of the examination process.

Please do not hesitate to contact us via the Local Plan Programme Officer, if we can be of further assistance (email: tonyblackburn@rossendalebc.gov.uk).

Katie Child

Luke Fleming

INSPECTORS