

Compensation Measures for Green Belt Release

January 2023



Rossendale
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

1. Context	3
2. Green Belt Measures	4
3. Identified Schemes within Rossendale	4
(a) Rossendale Forest	4
(b) Rossendale Incredible Edible	5
(c) New Hall Hey Gateway.....	6
(d) Compensatory Measures Specifically for Whitworth	7
(i) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) / Cycleway Upgrades and Improvements to the Network	7
(ii) Enhanced sport and recreation facilities.....	8
(iii) Biodiversity and wildlife corridors.....	9
(e) Compensatory Measures Specifically for Edenfield.....	9
(i) Edenfield Cricket Club	9
(ii) Edenfield C.E. / Stubbins Primary School Extension	9
(iii) Public Rights of Way / Cycleway Upgrades and Improvements to the Network	9
(f) Other PRoW / Cycleway Improvements linking to Specific Employment Allocations ...	11
NE1 Extension to Mayfield Chicks	11
NE2 Land north of Hud Hey	11
NE4 Extension of New Hall Hey	11
4. Further Guidance	12

1. Context

This document supersedes the Council's earlier response on Green Belt Compensatory Measures contained in Examination Library 11, document reference EL11.001b.

Policy SD4: Green Belt Compensatory Measures in the Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036 states that "where land is to be released for development, compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land will be required".

The following allocations are on land that meet the above criteria within Policy SD4, i.e. the land was designated as Green Belt but has since been released from the Green Belt as part of the Local Plan in order to support the planned development.

Table 1: Allocations involving Green Belt release

Ref	Site Name	Proposed Development
H63	Cowm Water Treatment Works, Whitworth	10 units, Years 1-5
H64	Irwell Vale Mill	30 units, Years 1-5
H65	Land East of Market Street, Edenfield	9 units, Years 6-10
H66	Land West of Market Street, Edenfield	400 units, Years 1-15
H67	Edenwood Mill	47 units, Years 1-5
NE1	Extension to Mayfield Chicks	2.81 ha (gross) / 1.57 ha (net)
NE2	Land North of Hud Hey	3.43 ha (gross) / 2.03 ha (net)
NE4	Extension of New Hall Hey	6.04 ha (gross) / 3 ha (net)
NE5	Extension to Baxenden Chemicals site, Rising Bridge	4.92 ha (gross) / 4.4 ha (net)

2. Green Belt Measures

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Green Belt states that compensatory improvements may be informed by supporting evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities including those set out in local strategies, and may include:

- a) new or enhanced green infrastructure¹;
- b) woodland planting;
- c) landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- d) improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- e) new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- f) improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.

It should be noted that there are specific measures that will be necessary in order to make developments acceptable, and these will not be considered for Green Belt compensation. For example, play areas for children will be sought on-site for the benefit of the new residents, similarly suitable landscaping and protection of key views will be required, particularly in such sensitive areas on the edge of the rural/urban interface. These Green Belt compensatory measures relate to making improvements to the remaining Green Belt.

3. Identified Schemes within Rossendale

The Council has identified projects which could contribute to Green Belt compensation. Some of these measures are Borough-wide whereas others relate specifically to identified allocation(s). It should be noted that this is not a definitive list, proposals for Green Belt compensation measures not identified within this document will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(a) Rossendale Forest

The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030 identifies an action to increase tree cover across the Borough. This is being developed under the name of the Rossendale Forest and work is ongoing through the Council's Corporate Asset Review to identify suitable Council-owned sites, with tree planting already occurring on numerous sites. The Council is working with a third party facilitator, the Ribble Rivers Trust, and the Climate Change Network. As well as Council-owned land, other land owners are involved and there would be an opportunity for landowners /

¹ Green Infrastructure encompasses a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies

developers of land currently in the Green Belt to contribute to this. The key objectives are to assist with offsetting carbon emissions, as well as assisting with flood prevention and alleviation.

Woodland management of existing areas will also be required. Lancashire County Council lease land from Rossendale BC and measures have been identified to improve the biodiversity at Horncliffe Woods. In particular disease is affecting trees such as ash and larch which will require targeted measures.

Access to such woodland areas should also be introduced or enhanced to provide additional recreational opportunities.

All schemes involving the loss of Green Belt may contribute to this.

(b) Rossendale Incredible Edible

Incredible Edible is a national voluntary body which promotes community cohesion by growing food in open spaces and encourages people to grow their own both at home and in shared spaces, promoting good, healthy eating and choices. It believes that food encourages kindness and consideration of others. A community garden has been created at a GP Surgery in Haslingden, apple trees planted in the Orchard at Haslingden with planters installed at Rawtenstall town square and Whitaker Park.

Incredible Edible Rossendale (IER) would like to offer an additional service to isolated single people “who are housebound and have space which needs tidying and needs a bit of colour adding to it..... We want to brighten someone’s day when they look out of their window”. Opportunities are available to enhance this work wider throughout the Borough.

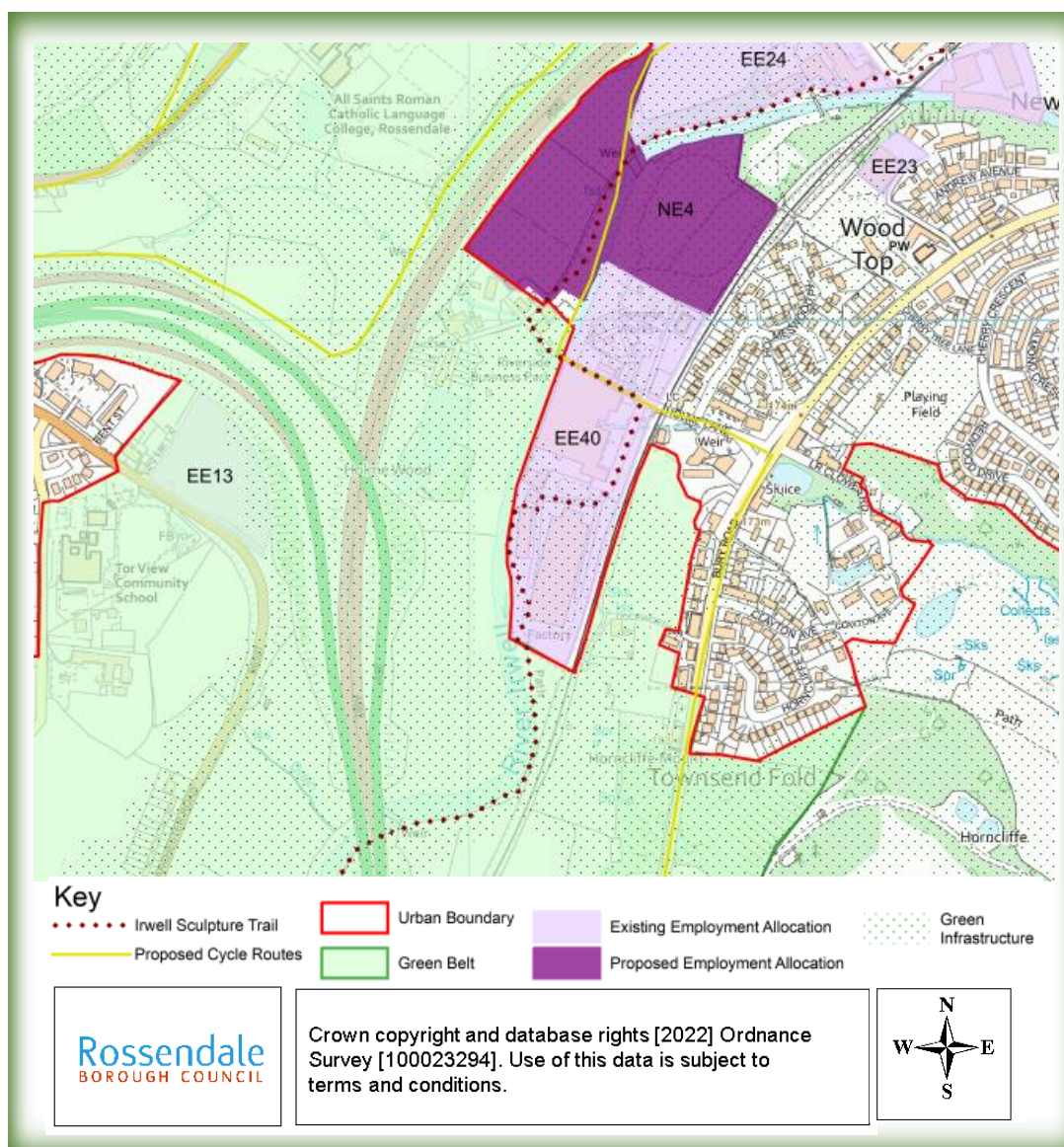
All schemes involving the loss of Green Belt may contribute to this.

(c) New Hall Hey Gateway

The Council's Business Plan identifies the conception and preparation of the New Hall Hey Gateway Masterplan / Development Brief, to enhance pedestrian and cycle links on land adjoining the Rawtenstall Spur, in the ownership of Lancashire County Council. Only part of this land is in the Green Belt but it is considered that it will provide enhanced facilities and improve access to the Green Belt.

The land within the Green Belt to the south of New Hall Hey could be eligible for compensatory improvements to the Green Belt by improving the routes through this area and enhancing the walking and cycling connections into and out of Rawtenstall Town Centre, whilst potentially also delivering recreational and green infrastructure benefits along the River Irwell. Feasibility work has been undertaken to connect the Valley of Stone at Rawtenstall to NCR 6 at Helmshore and route options are being explored.

This action relates particularly to the employment allocation at New Hall Hey (NE4) but could apply to other Employment allocations in the current Green Belt.



(d) Compensatory Measures Specifically for Whitworth

The earlier document addressing the Compensation Measures for Green Belt release is contained within Examination Library 11 of the Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036 examination webpage (document reference EL11.001b). Following receipt of the Inspectors' Post-Hearing Letter, and during the drafting of EL11.001b the Council were working on the expectation that housing allocation H63, Cowm Water Treatment Works in Whitworth, was to be recommended for removal from the Plan in the Inspectors' Final Report following an objection from Lancashire County Council on highway safety grounds. As such, no compensatory measures were included in EL11.001b for H63, the only Green Belt release within Whitworth.

However, in light of new information from the site promoter regarding access, Lancashire County Council confirmed that they would not object on highways safety grounds for up to 10 dwellings on the site subject to appropriate mitigation measures and internal layout. It was therefore recommended in the Inspectors' Report that this housing allocation be retained.

As such, the Council has since consulted further with various interested stakeholders, including Whitworth Town Council and United Utilities who own this land to develop potential Green Belt compensation projects for the development, expanding on those suggested within [EL8.008.10](#) during the Local Plan examination.

(i) Public Rights of Way (PRoW) / Cycleway Upgrades and Improvements to the Network

The site is adjacent to Cowm Reservoir which is in the Green Belt and is publicly accessible for walking and recreation. PRoW exist to the east and west of the site and there is a bridleway along the east side of the reservoir, just to the north of the site, as well as routes around the reservoir itself. These can be easily accessed from the site and this direct access should be retained and enhanced as part of any development. These paths link to longer routes and the wider path network within the Green Belt and beyond, including to the Pennine Bridleway, so providing opportunities to enhance or create new footpaths. PRoW 14-5-FP 84 has been identified as particularly inaccessible. There are several areas of accessible woodland in close proximity to the site, including around Cowm Reservoir and access to these could be enhanced.

The disused Thurns Head and Hey Lane Quarries, designated as Local Geodiversity Site, are just to the west of the site and can be accessed by PRoW. Opportunities to enhance public access to these could be investigated and new or enhanced links to these directly from the site could be provided (whilst respecting any biodiversity/geodiversity within the area). All of the PRoWs mentioned also provide opportunities to improve the accessibility of these wider areas for less mobile users.

Rossendale Borough Council continues to work with Lancashire County Council to improve the network of cycle routes within Rossendale, both for recreational purposes as well as to promote active travel. This includes projects such as National Cycle Route 6 and the Valley of Stone. In particular the Councils are working together on the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) to develop walking and cycling routes, ensuring linkages between all the Borough's towns.

(ii) Enhanced sport and recreation facilities

Cowm Reservoir provides recreational opportunities, including water-skiing and is surrounded by extensive footpaths. Direct access to the path network leading to these facilities from the allocation should be retained and enhanced as part of any development. Opportunities to enhance the recreational or cultural benefits of the disused quarries to the west of the site could be explored, and new or enhanced walking and cycling links directly from the allocation could be provided subject to further investigations.



(iii) Biodiversity and wildlife corridors

There are several areas of woodland within and in close proximity to the site. Opportunities to provide further tree planting, particularly if this would link with existing woodland on the site and beyond could be explored. Priority Habitats such as Lowland Fens, Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps and Blanket Bogs are located to the west and north of Cowm Reservoir as well as further up on the moors as shown on Magic Map². Appropriate ecological enhancements to these valuable habitats should be considered. The disused Thurns Head and Hey Lane Quarries form part of a Local Geodiversity Site, identified partly due to the industrial archaeology in this area; opportunities to discover more about the geodiversity³ value of this area could be explored.

(e) Compensatory Measures Specifically for Edenfield

(i) Edenfield Cricket Club

The Playing Pitch Strategy identifies that although the changing rooms and Clubhouse facilities are satisfactory there is a concern that the outfield is becoming increasingly uneven. Compensation could be provided to remedy this, subject to an Agronomy Report undertaken by an England & Wales Cricket Board approved sports turf specialist.

(ii) Edenfield C.E. / Stubbins Primary School Extension

The residential allocations in Edenfield, particularly H66 which proposes approximately 400 dwellings, may require additional classroom capacity at one of the two primary schools in the area – Stubbins or Edenfield C.E. Either school extension would require new additional development to be located within the Green Belt and improvements to Green Infrastructure, playing pitches or travel to school routes could be investigated. This would be considered as part of the overall Masterplan for H66.

(iii) Public Rights of Way / Cycleway Upgrades and Improvements to the Network

Rossendale Borough Council continues to work with Lancashire County Council to improve the network of cycle routes within Rossendale, both for recreational purposes as well as to promote active travel. This includes projects such as National Cycle Route 6 and the Valley of Stone. In particular the Councils are working together on the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) to develop walking and cycling routes ensuring linkages between all the Borough's towns.

Specific routes have been identified close to the Green Belt releases in Edenfield.

² [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magicmap.defra.gov.uk/)

³ Geodiversity may be defined as the natural range (diversity) of geological features (rocks, minerals, fossils, structures), geomorphological features (landforms and processes) and soil features that make up the landscape i.e. the non-biological aspects of nature

H64 Irwell Vale Mill

An application for this site has been approved with a corresponding s106 agreement being signed, which includes including flood mitigation measures). However, should the current scheme not be progressed further it is expected that the Council will be seeking the flood mitigation measures as agreed with the Environment Agency. Some specific cycleway/bridleway improvements have also been identified by way of compensation:

- Cycling - Improving the surfacing and drainage on the bridleway (14-3-BW 414) connecting Milne St (in Irwell Vale) westwards to National Cycle Route (NCR)6.
- Cycling - Improving this bridleway route eastwards along Hardsough Lane towards Church Lane and Blackburn Rd (in Edenfield), and linking to H66.
- PRow – improve footpath 14-3-FP125 to tramper standards from Lumb viaduct along the River Irwell to Chatterton. (This has been costed at £40K).

H65 Land East of Market Street and H66 Land West of Market Street

- Cycling – Improvement and resurfacing of 14-3-FP125 & 14-4-FP306 to feed into the wider walking and cycling network and allow greater connectivity between Edenfield, Irwell Vale and Ewood Bridge
- Cycling - Improving 450m of Hardsough Lane and the connecting bridleway from Church Lane (14-3-BW128) will improve connections to NCR6 and the wider PRow network (see H64) above)
- PRow – A number of potential PRow improvements have been identified to the east of Edenfield, which are within the Green Belt. These potential improvements include:
 - Connecting to the Pennine Bridleway – improve Byway 14-3-RB277 (at the end of Gincroft Lane, costing up to £25K) and 14-3-FP147 (Sandbeds Lane).
 - Improvements to the ford along Byway 14-3-BOAT276 at Dearden Clough (approx. £50K max).

H67 Edenwood Mill

- PRow - Within 400m of this proposed allocation are the improvements to 14-3-FP125 along the River Irwell, discussed for H64 above.

(f) Other PRow / Cycleway Improvements linking to Specific Employment Allocations

NE1 Extension to Mayfield Chicks

- PRow - Long term aspiration to divert FP 14-4-FP309 which runs north of the site, away from the river bank, as this has needed re-instatement in the past. This route towards Rawtenstall is well used and links to NE4 (at New Hall Hey).
- PRow - Improving 14-4-RB303 at Horncliffe Woods (to the east of the site) would benefit the network (costing approx. £45K).

NE2 Land north of Hud Hey

- Cycling - NCR 6 uses the carriageway of Rising Bridge Rd, heading north on the western side of the A56. Creating a fully off-road route from west of Hud Hey Rd bridge along the A56 would bring significant benefits to the users of this route. Preliminary discussions have taken place with Highways England.
- Heritage interpretation panels regarding areas of Acre could be implemented as part of these PRow / cycleway improvements.

NE4 Extension of New Hall Hey

- PRow – Improving 14-4-BW311 together with an improved crossing point across the A682 (the Rawtenstall Spur) from NE4.

4. Further Guidance

Green Belt compensation has been included within the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure the “impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land” (paragraph 142)⁴.

As stated above the list of measures discussed in this document is not prescriptive and there may be other measures that developers are able to provide that meet local aspirations.

It is advised that developers request pre-application discussions with the Council prior to submitting any planning application on these sites so that Green Belt compensation measures can be discussed and consulted upon.

Developers will need to show clearly how they are proposing to address Green Belt compensation. They will also need to explain how this is additional to the other measures that they will be proposing in order to meet Biodiversity Net Gain, and requirements relating to open space, affordable housing, education, accessible housing, custom and self-build opportunities, and transport improvements etc.

Where a masterplan is expected to be prepared to guide the development of these allocations, details should be given to show how the applicant will meet their requirements to compensate for the loss of Green Belt if applicable, taking into account the criteria set out in Section 2 of this document.

⁴ [National Planning Policy Framework - 13. Protecting Green Belt land - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426623/NPPF-13-Protecting-Green-Belt-land-Guidance.pdf)

Rossendale
BOROUGH COUNCIL