

Forward Planning  
Rossendale Borough Council  
One Stop Shop  
Bacup  
OL130BB

**30/08/2019**

Dear Inspectors,

**ROSSENDALE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION: INSPECTORS MATTER, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

1. I am a resident of Private lane, Haslingden and have been for over 20 years. I have previously provided representations to Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) regarding the Pre-Submission Draft of the Rossendale Local Plan (RLP) and would request that my previous representations be read in conjunction with this letter.
2. As identified within my previous representation I currently live adjacent to Haslingden Cricket Club (HCC). HCC has been located at its current location since its foundation in 1853 and is a founder member of the Lancashire Cricket League, one of the most prestigious amateur cricket leagues in the country. HCC is a focal point in the community and the only cricket club in Haslingden and Helmshore and is used by local teams and other sections of the community for the purposes of cricket development such as local secondary and primary schools.
3. My previous representation and this Hearing Statement relates specifically to proposed allocation H52 - Land to the rear of Haslingden Cricket Club. Appendix 4 of the RLP identifies 0.75ha as capable of delivering 30 dwellings within 5 years.
4. The remainder of this Hearing Statement responds to the questions raised within the Inspectors Matter 11 statement: '*Housing site allocations: Haslingden and Rising Bridge*'. This Hearing Statement is structured by first answering the General Questions and then the site specific questions in turn as proposed by the Inspectors.

**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?**

5. As is discussed within the remainder of this letter and within my previous representations the following constraints are:
  - The proposed development area currently comprises a '*Playing Field*' and it has been identified within RBC's Playing Pitch Strategy that the site should be retained and expanded. The development of the land would therefore be contrary to Paragraph 97 of the NPPF and would likely result in an objection from Sport's England as there are no specific circumstances which warrant its development.
  - The proposed development area contains HCC's carpark. The carpark is essential to the ability of the site to operate as a Cricket facility. The removal of the car park would have a

detrimental impact on residential amenity and create a significant traffic management and parking problem within the surrounding area on match days and when the club hosts events.

- The access to the site is not adequate and the road would need to be widened. The land is not within HCC's ownership and it has not been demonstrated that there is an alternative access solution available.
  - The density and developable area indicated within Appendix 4 of the RLP are over-stated. The reduction in both of these to a realistic area would reduce the quantum of development able to be delivered and impact on the viability of the site.
6. It is evident from the list above that the site does not comprise a suitable development in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and the Council's evidence base, the allocation is therefore unsound and should be omitted from the RLP.

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

7. Proposed allocation H52, is identified as a 0.74ha piece of land capable of delivering 30 dwellings by 2023. This comprises a proposed development density of 41 Dwellings per Hectare (DPH).
8. The SHLAA identifies that the net developable area is 0.45ha and proposes a density of 30 DPH. This results in a development yield of 13 dwellings, a figure which is substantially lower than that proposed by RBC within the RLP.
9. A significant proportion of the developable area included within the SHLAA comprises the car park, which is critical to the existing and future use of the club. The net developable area in both the SHLAA and the RLP should exclude the car park (as extended) to ensure that HCC can continue to run viably. This would reduce the net developable area of the scheme further.
10. The densities proposed by both the SHLAA (30DPH) and the RLP (41 DPH) are unachievable and are not consistent with densities of the surrounding area. The density of existing dwellings on Private Lane is approximately 23 DPH; the development along the northern boundary is a modern development built by McDermott Homes within the last 18 years and comprises an efficient layout which maximises space. It is evident that the development yield proposed within allocation H52 should be considered in this context and a more appropriate yet realistic density of 20 DPH anticipated should be proposed. This would provide a maximum development yield for H52 of 9 dwellings.
11. The removal of the car park from the developable area and the reduction in density would result in a proposal of approximately 4 dwellings; this level of development does not pass the threshold allocation size. The reduction in development yield raises significant concerns regarding the viability of the proposed development considering the access, surface water flooding and Sport's England constraints. RBC and HCC have not demonstrated that the site is suitable or available with a realistic prospect that the site can be viably delivered as is required by the NPPF. The site is therefore not deliverable and its allocation is not sound.

**H52 – Land to the rear of Haslingden Cricket Club**

**i) Would the development of the site involve the loss of open space of public value? If so is its loss justified within the terms of paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework?**

12. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF clearly identifies that an assessment needs to be undertaken to demonstrate that sport's facilities are surplus to requirement to facilitate the development of the land.
13. The Rossendale, Pendle & Burnley Playing Pitch Strategy (2016) considers the existing scenarios for Sports facilities across the area and identifies that the existing quantity of grass wicket pitches should be protected.
14. The Playing Pitch Strategy clearly concludes that HCC's facilities need to be protected and enhanced, as can be seen below:

63	Haslingden CC Rossendale	Cricket	Club	One standard quality pitch with 21 grass wickets and one non turf wicket. No spare capacity during peak time. One cricket practice area off the outfield, concrete and not been used for years.	Lancashire County Cricket Groundsmen Association and LCCB to work with club to review quality issues.	LCCB Club	Local	M	S	Protect Enhance
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15. The Playing Pitch Strategy identifies that there is a single practice pitch; this was located in the north western corner of the facility to the west of the car park. This practice pitch is located next to my house and I can confirm that it was used for a significant period of time; the practice pitch was not maintained and has not been used in the recent past. This land does however, comprise land which is capable of being used for practice areas as it has been in the past.
16. Prior to the assessment being undertaken HCC submitted application reference 2012/266 in May 2012 for the construction of artificially-surfaced cricket nets, to provide 8 sets of wickets in 4 lanes. The site location plan can be seen below:



17. The application for the practice nets was approved on 24 July 2012 and practice facilities have now been delivered.
18. The Council's committee report in relation to application reference: 2012/266 provides the following description of the site:

*“Haslingden Cricket Club is accessed via a Private Lane off Broadway, Haslingden. It consists of a with a cricket pitch towards the east and a 2-storey club house, parking and other outbuildings towards the west end. To the south and west of the club house is a grassed area used for practice purposes, which is bounded by the rear gardens of residential properties*

*fronting Grasmere Road, with boundary treatments consisting of timber panel fencing and trees / shrubs.”*

19. It is clear from the description and application above that the proposed development area comprises uses essential to the running of HCC and predominantly land which is used for either practice purposes or car parking. The entire site therefore accords with the definition of ‘Playing Field’ used by Sports England and included within the Glossary of the NPPF:

*“Playing Field: Means the whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch. The reference to ‘the whole of a site’ applies to all areas of a playing field not just those which happen, for the time being, to be laid out as pitches”*

20. Sport England is a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing field land (as set out in SI2010/2184 (The Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010). This policy states that: Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or prejudice the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a playing field or land allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or draft deposit plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England, specific circumstances apply. The five specific exceptional circumstances where Sport’s England will not object to a planning application are outlined within my previous representation.
21. The loss of the car park, practice areas and open space would comprise the loss of sporting/ ancillary facilities as well as land which could be made into practice facilities. The loss of this land would affect the use of the club as it would restrict the practice facilities at the club and the club would lose the car park which is fundamental to HCC’s ability to function in this location. This therefore indicates that there is no specific circumstance to identify that Sport’s England would approve of the proposed development.
22. Paragraph 97 of the NPPF clearly identifies that an assessment needs to be undertaken to demonstrate that sports facilities are surplus to requirement to facilitate the development of the land. An assessment of the site has been undertaken within the Council’s playing pitch strategy and it has been clearly identified that all Cricket Pitches within the Borough should be retained, with Haslingden Cricket Club specifically being identified as a club which should be retained and expanded. The proposed allocation of H52 is contrary to the recommendations of the playing pitch strategy and contrary to the provisions within Paragraph 97 of the NPPF. This is a conclusion which has clearly been reached by RBC within their SHLAA report which states the following:

*“The site is available although the south-eastern corner has a planning permission for a cricket practice area and the northern part is currently used as a car park for the cricket club. The site is suitable for a housing development subject to Sports England and Highways agreements due to concern on cricket pitch availability in the Borough and loss of car parking.”*

23. It is therefore clear that RBC’s own evidence identifies that the site is not currently developable as the agreement of Sport’s England and Highways has not been provided and it has been identified within this representation that Sport’s England’s policies indicate that the proposals would be subject to an objection. H52 is therefore not available and its allocation within the RLP is unsound.

**ii) Should the site be a mixed use allocation based on the relationship with Haslingden Cricket Club?**

24. As identified above the Site does not comprise a suitable site for residential development and should therefore remain allocated as Greenland and Recreation Area as it is currently within policy E.1 and E.2 the Rossendale Core Strategy (RCS) (2011).

**iii) Is the site capable of being safely accessed? What would be the implications for access to Haslingden Cricket Club?**

25. HCC's car park is located to the north-east of the site and has been expanded recently to accommodate an increased number of patrons. On match days and when the club hosts events the car park is filled to its full capacity as is evidenced within the photos appended to this representation.
26. The car park is used as an ad-hoc 'fair ground' during HCC's annual Bonfire Night event (which HCC have hosted for over 15 years). Due to the loss of the parking facility for this event, HCC has to place marshals at the entrance to Private Lane ensuring only vehicles of residents enter the cul-de-sac. It is necessary for HCC to do this, as without the car-park there is limited space for vehicles to turn or park on Private Lane as there is no pavement for the first 10 to 15 meters, vehicles cannot pass each other in that part of the road and the event causes increased pedestrian footfall. The removal of the car-park permanently, as is proposed within the RLP, would necessitate this type of solution on all match days and events. A parking solution such as this would be detrimental to the amenity of local residents on Private Lane and be a significant monetary drain for the management of the club. The permanent removal of the car park would create/ worsen parking issues on the surrounding residential streets, as it would force patrons to park elsewhere, this would not be on Private Lane itself as there are double yellow lines on both sides of the full extent of the road. The loss of this car park and development of the HCC site would therefore be contrary to Paragraph 127 of the NPPF as the proposal would not function well immediately or for the lifetime of the development and would have a detrimental effect to residential amenity. This is a conclusion which has clearly been reached by RBC within their SHLAA report which states the following:

*"The site has a planning permission for a cricket practice area. The Playing Pitch Strategy indicates that all cricket facilities should be retained, therefore the development is subject to Sports England agreement. The remaining part of the site appears suitable for housing development, although if the development occurs on the car park it can lead to highway issues in terms of access and safety. The vehicular access to the site is also via a private lane which restraints the access. The site is considered suitable for housing development subject to Sports England and Lancashire County Council Highways agreement."*

27. RBC's own evidence identifies that the site will be "suitable in medium to long term". The site is evidently not suitable in its current form and therefore is not developable in accordance with the NPPF's definition. The site is therefore not available and the allocation of the site within the RLP is unsound.
28. The loss of the car park may also have an impact on the future of HCC, though the sale of the land to a developer may provide short term monetary gains, it would limit the future expansion of the Club and limit the size and nature of events it can host. The NPPF clearly advocates for

the protection of retention of sporting facilities such as HCC and the important role and function a historic club such as this plays in the health, well-being and social cohesion of the community.

29. The SHLAA identifies that the access to the site via Private Lane is narrow and states that this is a 'major constraint' to development. The SHLAA fails to identify that Private Lane comprises a single track road with a 'token' 0.5m pavement along the southern side. The land along the entire northern boundary of Private Lane is within third party ownership. The land to the south east of Private Lane, comprises my land and another residential property in private ownership. The road narrows at the entrance to Private Lane and is also within third party ownership on both sides and subsequently the lane could not be widened to accommodate the increased quantum of development as required and identified within the SHLAA.
30. The access on to Private Lane from Broadway via Grasmere Road requires that a driver navigate a blind bend on to a single track road. This often requires the driver entering Private Lane to wait for other vehicles to exit the road. The vehicles waiting have to wait on a small hill at the junction with Broadway; during peak times this can cause traffic to back up to the bus stop on Broadway. This creates a significant hazard as during peak times the junction between Broadway, Grasmere Road and Private Lane is congested by ad-hoc parking for school drop off and pick up and Private Lane is used by many pupils of Haslingden High as a cut through on the way to and from school. This increases the level of traffic and congestion in this location and reduces visibility. A development of 30 dwellings would more than double the number of dwellings on Private Lane (23 currently) and therefore significantly increase the level of traffic and increase the risk of accidents for both pedestrians and vehicles.
31. Due to the access constraints the site is not considered to comprise a 'suitable' location for development as required by the NPPF and subsequently cannot be considered deliverable or developable.

### **Summary**

To conclude I respectfully request that allocation H52 be removed from the RLP. This representation has clearly identified that the proposed allocation of Land to the rear of Haslingden Cricket Club does not comprise a deliverable allocation.

I would also like to confirm attendance at the Hearing Session in respect of Matter 11 on the afternoon of Thursday 3 October 2019 and I would be grateful if you could confirm attendance by return.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J. McQuoid

(Formerly Mrs J George)