



**Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum
Rossendale Local Plan Examination**

30th August 2019

Matter 19 – Housing supply and delivery

[Policy SD7]

Questions

**a) Is the Council's approach to estimating supply from existing commitments justified and robust?
In particular:**

- i. Is the non-application of a lapse rate justified?

Response:

On balance, yes. Current national Planning Practice Guidance does not refer any longer to applying lapse rates.

- ii. Are the estimated lead-in times and build-out rates for each committed site, as shown in the housing trajectory, justified and soundly based? Where relevant, are the rates supported by clear evidence that sites are deliverable in line with the National Planning Policy Framework definition?

Response:

Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) and individual site promoters should respond to the first question, to explain how the rates were reached and to justify the lead-in times given. Taking Site H72, land west of Market Street in Edenfield as an example however, Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum (ECNF) would question both the start date on-site of 2020/21 and the seemingly arbitrary build-out rate of 30 homes a year from then to 2033/ 34. There appears to have been no link between this start date and the trajectory and the provision of infrastructure that is necessary to serve the site's large scale residential development. It is clear too that more of the information for the site in the RBC (July 2019) document '[Appendix B – Housing Trajectory and Background Table](#)' may well be out of date, as already acknowledged by the Council:

"Part of the site is owned by Taylor Wimpey who note that expect to submit an application on adoption of the Local Plan (scheduled for early 2020). Technical work has been instructed with surveys taking place over this summer. So the only information available currently is that submitted with our latest reps in October 2018 (attached again for completeness), however the initial findings from the technical works, and potentially some complete reports will be available

by the time of EiP, scheduled for September/ October 2019. Part of the site (Horse and Jockey site) is currently under construction for 10 houses - Planning ref. 2015/0238"

ECNF is concerned that RBC continues to try to link the Horse and Jockey Site to allocation H72, in order to perpetuate the impression that part of the site is brownfield. This concern has been raised by ECNF with the Council previously; an Erratum to cover the point was issued on 3 September 2018, confirming that H72 is entirely greenfield.

b) Is the small site allowance justified and supported by evidence?

Response:

No clear justification has been provided to date for the Plan's approach to small sites (for up to 4 dwellings); RBC's [Housing Topic Paper](#) (March 2019) explains how between 2010 and 2018, an average of 18 new homes pa was provided on such sites; the correct number is however 20 (Table 3, Dwellings Completed on Small Sites). The Paper continues:

"3.2.17. The Council assumes that the delivery on small sites will continue in the future but this is not currently captured within the land supply assessed in the SHLAA nor in sites proposed to be allocated in the Local Plan. Some small sites already have planning permission and are identified in the five year supply. As these are likely to be delivered in the next 3 years, the small site windfall allowance should only be applied to the last 2 years of the five year housing land supply (and on an annual basis thereafter). This will avoid duplication and double counting within the early Plan period. Table 9 below shows the small site allowance considered within different periods."

The Table shows dwellings expected to be delivered between April 2018 and March 2023. It includes a small site windfall allowance of only 36 homes, for the latter part of the time period.

ECNF notes that there is no reference to small sites in the submission Plan itself, other than in the context of Policy HS2's allocated sites - the Strategy Topic Paper states:

"Many windfalls are on small sites; this is also reflected in the allocations themselves in Policy HS2 with 40% of sites being for less than 10 dwellings."

Small sites of up to 4 homes are not however counted in the total number of dwellings of 2,853 in the submission Plan's Table 1 (sites for more than 5 dwellings are).

ECNF considers that it would be more reasonable for RBC to assume that the 20-homes pa contribution rate will in fact increase, in part due to proposed changes to policy and the Urban Boundary. ECNF research has found that the RBC weekly application lists indicate that planning permission or prior approval was given for 74 dwellings on small sites in the year commencing 11th June 2018. Another 4 dwellings on a small site was granted outline permission, and a lawful development certificate was issued for a dwelling disused for 20 years (see Appendix ECNF – HLA 5).

RBC Document [EL1.002jii Housing completions between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019](#) shows that 35 (gross, 27 net) dwellings were completed on small sites in that year. Document [EL1.002k Response to Programme Officer on 09.07.19 re Q15 of Pre-Hearing Note 1](#) shows 101 dwellings under construction on small sites. ECNF considers it reasonable to assume that most of them will be completed by 31st March 2020 and concludes that making an annual small sites' allowance of 20 homes is too low. A reasonable minimum would instead be 25 pa.

ECNF also considers it reasonable to assume that there will be windfall sites which are not small sites, that is, windfall sites capable of providing five or more dwellings.

c) Has the Council undertaken a comprehensive assessment of housing capacity within the built-up settlement areas, and allocated all potential sites capable of accommodating 5 or more dwellings which are suitable, available and achievable?

Response:

The Council needs to answer this question but from ECNF's perspective, no, it has not.

ECNF's own research has demonstrated that there are sites for 1,508 dwellings, with potentially another 439 becoming available from surplus employment land (see Appendices ECNF HLA 1-7 & ECNF- ELR1). In summary:

- Examination of the SHLAAs (June 2017 and August 2018) and other documents reveals a number of sites which ECNF considers could be developed for housing but which do not appear in Table 1 of the Local Plan.
- ECNF's full analysis of the sites considered to be viable and deliverable has shown errors of judgment and omissions by RBC:
 - *Sites Rejected by RBC:* Appendix ECNF-HLA 2 summarises the sites rejected by RBC and gives the Council's reasons for not taking them forward. It also includes the reasons why ECNF instead considers them to be deliverable. A minimum of total of 918 extra dwellings would be provided by these sites. These sites are mapped in ECNF Map 1.
 - *Yield Improvements:* Appendix ECNF-HLA 3 identifies sites where the potential yield is greater than shown in Table 1 of the submission Plan. There is a site-by-site explanation for the difference. In total these sites could provide 40 additional dwellings. These sites are mapped in ECNF Map 1.
 - *Early completions and reductions:* RBC's document *EL1.002j(iv) Appendix C - Status of Allocated Sites* suggests that, because of completions prior to 1st April 2019, the number of dwellings to be completed during the plan period will be 78 less than in Table 1. There may also be a further reduction of 17, based on the applications/permissions for sites H12 & H13. The reduction could be $78 + 17 = 95$.
 - *Extant planning permissions:* Appendix ECNF-HLA 4 lists sites wrongly excluded from the Plan's Table 1, being sites with '*extant planning permissions which have not*



started or are still being built out, and are not expected to be completed [by 31st March 2019]". Additional dwellings in this category number 270. These sites are mapped in ECNF Map 1.

- *Small sites:* Appendix ECNF-HLA 5 considers small sites and suggests that small sites alone could be expected to contribute a minimum of 25 dwellings per annum, or 375 over the plan period. This figure does not include windfall sites for 5 dwellings or more either.
- *Empty Homes:* ECNF has noted that there were 1,207 empty homes on 1 October 2018, of which it has been deduced that approximately 640 would be normal transactional vacancies and around 570 would be longer-term. A contribution from this source towards the housing target appears not to have been considered. (See Appendix ECNF-HLA 7).
- *Regeneration of sites no longer suitable for employment use:* Numerous sites are currently termed employment land but many are no longer suitable for employment use. ECNF 's view is that if 50% of these sites were to be determined to be appropriate for housing, this could provide a net gain of up to 439 dwellings. (See Appendix ECNF-ELR 1.)

The total number of dwellings identified in ECNF's housing land availability analysis is $918 + 40 + 270 + 375 - 95 = 1,508$. To this should be added 439 dwellings which can potentially be built on the surplus land from ECNF's employment land analysis, giving a total of 1,947 dwellings.

Lastly, Appendix ECNF-HLA6 considers the potential for further development in Bacup if RBC were to provide a pro-active resolution to access constraints. Not included in the above totals is a minimum of 128 extra dwellings in an area of need.

d) Should an overall lapse rate be applied to allocations within the supply calculations?

Response:

No – please see the response to a) i. above.

e) Are all of the allocated sites confirmed as being available for development within the Plan period?

Response:

No. Please see ECNF's response to question a) ii. above, with particular reference to H72, land west of Market Street in Edenfield.



f) Does the Plan identify a sufficient supply of homes to meet identified requirements over the Plan period?

Response:

As explained in ECNF's response to question c) above, the submission Plan allocates an oversupply of land to meet identified requirements. Excluding sites that are proposed for removal from the Green Belt for residential development - together with revising the numbers of new homes that e.g. could be provided on alternative sites and bringing vacant homes back into use - would overcome this unsound aspect of the Plan.

g) Does the Plan identify sufficient land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites of 1 hectare or less, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework?

Response:

RBC should answer this question in detail, to clarify the information in the Plan itself, and in the evidence base. It is noted that the submission Plan states (page 23, para. 56):

"Approximately 50% of the sites allocated are small and medium in size reflecting the nature of the Valley, and this follows recommendations in the NPPF that at least 10% of the sites allocated for residential development in a local plan should be sites of a hectare or less."

The 2019 Housing Topic Paper gives different information:

"4.3.2 The NPPF states that the Local Plan should allocate at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites that are no larger than one hectare. There are 48 allocated sites that are one hectare or below. This makes up approximately 62% of the total number of sites (or 18% of the net developable area of housing land proposed). In relation to the number of dwellings, this equates to 24% of dwellings on allocated housing land being proposed on sites of one hectare or less."

h) Is the Council's approach to calculating five year housing land supply, as set out in the Council's response to the Inspector's Pre-Hearing Note (Question 13), robust and in line with national policy and guidance? In particular:

- i. Is the application of a 20% buffer supported by the evidence?

Response:

ECNF does not have any evidence to dispute the application of a 20% buffer and accepts the explanation given for it in the Housing Topic Paper, as follows:



“3.2.11 The housing completions figures for Rossendale within the previous three years show an under delivery of housing and therefore the Council should apply a 20% buffer to “improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply” as explained in the NPPF. This has also been identified in the latest HDT results.

3.2.12 As discussed earlier in section 2 of this topic paper, the local housing need for Rossendale in the Local Plan is 212 additional dwellings per year. This amounts to 1,060 dwellings for year one to five of the Plan period. Adding a 20% buffer, the minimum number of dwellings to be provided within the first five years of the plan becomes 1,272 dwellings”.

- ii. Is there clear evidence to support the inclusion of sites which fall under category b) in the National Planning Policy Framework’s definition of deliverable? E.g. sites which have outline permission for major development, are allocated in the Plan, have a grant of permission in principle or are identified on a brownfield register.

Response:

RBC should respond to this question.

- iii. Is the inclusion of a small site allowance justified?

Response:

Yes, although the approach to small sites, and the allowance made for them, should be revised – please see ECNF’s response to question b) above.

Yours sincerely,

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