UPDATE REPORT
FURTHER UPDATE 12/05/2025 (in red)
FURTHER UPDATE 13/05/2025 (in blue)

FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
MEETING OF 13th May 2025

B1. 2025/0061 - Land To The West Of Rooley Moor Road.

At the head of the Committee Report the Applicant is named incorrectly as Rossendale Borough Council. This should be changed to read, 'Cubico UK.'

Further to discussions at Chair's Briefing, officers requested further information from the applicant in relation to the type of vehicles to be used in construction and construction-related deliveries to the site, and in relation to whether any signage / publicity was proposed to warn users of the bridleway along Rooley Moor Road of the construction works taking place.

The applicant's agent has provided the following response:

Construction Vehicles – this is addressed in Section 5 and Appendix 3 of the CMS (V9) submitted with the application. Vehicles have been chosen to minimise the potential for impact both on the surface of Rooley Moor Road, as well as on the moorland (including peatland) habitat / terrain.

Signage – Cubico have confirmed that signage will be provided and agree that this is a sensible and proportionate measure. We have instructed Dulas (the contractor) to prepare a drawing showing the proposed sign locations along Rooley Moor Road, along with some precedent images indicating the types of signage (including the messaging) which will be used – we will issue this as soon as possible ahead of the Committee meeting on Tuesday evening.

In addition to the proposed signage, we would also like to highlight the following measures proposed in respect of the construction works and associated traffic:

- *Cubico will publicise the proposed dates and programme for the construction/installation works (as well as the future decommissioning works) in advance of commencement via the project website, local social media, on-site notices, and by notifying the Councils and key user groups directly via letter/email.*
- *As set out in Section 6 of the CMS (V9), construction vehicle movements will be relatively low in number and restricted to off-peak hours to minimise impact (i.e. not at weekends). The main period of vehicular activity will be on the first day of construction when materials, plant and machinery are delivered to the Loading Area and transported to site via Rooley Moor Road. Vehicle movements on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th days of construction will be limited to movements by staff and removal of plant/machinery on the 4th day.*

- *Access will remain open at all times, with additional controls (such as a banksman) used where appropriate.*

Also, condition 2 - The Construction Method Statement V8 received 14.03.2025 should be replaced with V9 received 17.04.2025.

Further to discussions between officers and the applicant's agent, a Construction Traffic Signage Plan (appended to this update report) has been received. The plan includes details of where signage is to be placed along Rooley Moor Road to alert users of the bridleway to the works associated with the proposals. The plan also includes examples of the signage.

It is recommended therefore that Condition 2 is further amended to include reference to the Construction Traffic Signage Plan (received 12/05/2025).

It is also recommended that a further condition be included which states as follows:

No less than two weeks prior to the commencement of any construction or decommissioning works associated with the development hereby approved, signage as shown on the Construction Traffic Signage Plan shall be placed in the locations identified on that plan, to alert users of Rooley Moor Road to the works associated with the development.

The signage shall all be removed after works have been completed.

Reason: in the interests of maintaining the safety of users of Rooley Moor Road.

Further to the receipt of the Construction Signage Plan on the 12.05.2025, the Council will be re-consulting on the plan. In order, to allow for consideration of the plan and re-consultation responses to be assessed, the recommendation should be changed to: **Delegate Authority to approve the application subject to conditions to the Chairman & Vice Chairman of the Development Control Committee, in consultation with the Head of Planning, following the conclusion of the re-consultation period.**

One further letter of objection has been received which is replicated in full below.

I object to Cubico's planning application for the construction of a meteorological (met) mast for the following reasons: Met masts, while crucial for wind resource assessment, have drawbacks. They are prone to mechanical failure and lightning strikes, and can be difficult to maintain, especially in the severe weather conditions that hit our peatland moors. Furthermore, their visibility can be an issue, and their placement can impact local ecosystems. Remote sensing (RS} alternatives like Lidar and Sodar (light/sonic detection and ranging), offer advantages in terms of safety, portability, and the ability to measure at greater heights. Here's a more detailed look at the reasons for objecting to a met mast in this location: - Technological considerations: Met masts impact nature and the environment and are highly visible, which can be a concern for some landowners or when aesthetics is a priority as in this location at one of the highest points of Rooley Moor. Remote-sensing (RS} devices, such as Lidar, are portable and relatively easy to deploy - and redeploy. They do not need planning permission and can usually be installed in a single day.

This makes them ideal for prospecting potential sites, especially in remote or difficultto-access regions, and this considerably impacts on overall costs. While met masts have helped companies collect on-site wind data for decades, many developers now consider Lidar a viable alternative to met masts for wind resource assessment and other applications due to the technology's proven repeatability and enhanced accuracy over recent years. Lidar can measure wind at various heights, including turbine hub heights, while met masts often require extrapolation for higher altitudes, which can introduce errors. With no exposed towers, Lidar eliminates safety hazards associated with the construction, maintenance, and operation of met masts. Lidar helps lower costs, as exemplified by the RES Group realising a 37-percent cost savings by using Lidar instead of additional met towers for the current Corlacky Hill project in N. Ireland. It seems odd that Cubico has applied for a met mast in light of advances in technology. - Maintenance and Safety considerations: Met masts are susceptible to mechanical failure, lightning strikes, and damage from severe weather like ice and snow, which this area of peatland moor experiences every year. Maintenance activities, such as climbing the mast or replacing sensors, can be hazardous. Remote-sensing devices are cheaper to install and maintain and are capable of gathering better data than traditional met masts. - Data Accuracy and Reliability considerations: Met masts can experience low data recovery rates, which can make it difficult to accurately characterise the wind resource. In severe conditions, sensors may malfunction or be impacted by tower shadow, leading to inaccurate data. - Cost considerations: The cost of installing and maintaining met masts can be significant, especially for very tall masts like the one proposed by Cubico in this planning application. - Environmental Impact considerations: The construction and operation of met masts can have an impact on local ecosystems. They have a very short life - typically 3-5 years yet will damage the environment long-term and sometimes, as in this example of non-renewable peatland, forever. Very tall met masts can have several environmental impacts, such as on bats and birds, which could collide with the structures or their supporting wires, but also potentially affecting mammals and even the local climate. These impacts not only include collisions with the masts or their supporting wires, but also displacement of birds and other creatures from suitable habitats and altered wind flow patterns. Specific Impacts: a) Met masts, especially those with guy wires, can be a significant hazard for migrating and local birds, leading to mortality or injury. b) The presence of met masts can cause birds to avoid the surrounding area, potentially displacing them from suitable nesting or foraging sites. c) Tall structures can disrupt the natural airflow, potentially impacting local wind patterns and weather conditions d) The construction, operation and dismantling and removal of met masts can affect mammal habitats, particularly if the masts are located in areas like this with endangered and rare species including water voles. e) Our local peatland supports species and habitats that are of international importance for biodiversity conservation. f) Peatland supports a variety of life that could not thrive anywhere else, including species of birds, insects, animals, plants and microbes. g) Peatlands in this location are blanket bogs - wide expanses of peat covering large areas of ground. There are many types of peat bogs in the UK but our blanket bog around Rooley Moor is globally rare - and, with 13% of the world's blanket bog found in the UK - these are of international importance. It takes around 1000 years to form 1 metre of peat. Local peatland in this area of Rooley Moor is over 10 metres deep in places. This was exemplified when during construction of Scout Moor 1, a lorry fell into the peat and was submerged. h) Our local peatland bird species are highly valued in Europe, and some local peatland plant species are better represented in the UK than anywhere else in the world. i) Many species rely on peatlands to survive

and are lost when the habitat is damaged. Unfortunately, a lot of the plants and wildlife that live on peatlands are under threat due to habitat destruction. Because they can only thrive in this peatland habitat, they have nowhere else to go. Once our peatlands are irrevocably damaged, as would be inevitable during this met mast construction, the wildlife that live on them will go too. j) Damaged peatlands are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 5% of our planet's carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions. k) Since the access routes opened up by the construction of Scout Moor 1, off-road bikers have been damaging and degrading our local peatland, and with Operation Dragster the police are taking regular action to stop their anti-social behaviour. The access required for Cubico's proposed met mast construction and maintenance will further open up access to such activities adding pressure to already stretched police resources. - Potential for Damage and Safeguarding considerations: The masts themselves, due to their height, can be susceptible to damage from weather events like icing, snow, or lightning strikes, potentially endangering humans and the environment. - Impact on Heritage Assets considerations: Cubico's application will damage the Cotton Famine Road, which is identified as the point of access, as it wasn't built for this type of industrial traffic. The Cotton Famine Road section of Rooley Moor Road is of national and international importance as it is a historical landmark directly linked to the American Civil War and the Lancashire Cotton Famine. It commemorates the hardship and poverty faced by cotton workers in the region due to the cessation of cotton supply from the South. This road is significant because of its connection to the American Civil War and the efforts to end slavery. President Abraham Lincoln acknowledged the people of Rochdale and Manchester in his letters for the hardship they endured during the American Civil War. The Cotton Famine Road stands today as a monument to this period in history. The Abraham Lincoln Association, founded in 1908 in the USA has been involved in advocating for the preservation of this historic landmark and the area's unique history. This Cotton Famine Road is unique in linking the American Civil War to social changes in our own country at a time when John Bright, the Rochdale Pioneer Movement and Chartism influenced social thinking throughout the UK. Sections of the Cotton Famine Road consist of stone setts, which were hewn by hammer and chisel from local quarries. The approximate length of these sections, from Ding Quarry entrance to Catley Lane Head, is 1,950 yards, the number of stone setts across the road varies from 12 along the narrow sections to 24 at Catley Lane Head. With this transnational interest and given the reasons the poor of Rochdale laid about a third of a million stone setts into the fabric of Rooley Moor by hand and working in extreme conditions, the Cotton Famine Road must be worthy of preservation. At an altitude of over 1500 feet this historic feature may also lay claim to being one of the highest roads in England. Enjoyed by walkers & runners, ornithologists and cyclists, this moorland route also forms part of the Pennine Bridleway allowing safe access for horse riders on the Mary Townley Loop. Any construction on this route would impact these activities and create potential safeguarding issues for the animals and humans alike. This upper section of Rooley Moor Road is visible from many miles away (often called the 'yellow brick road') and is a prominent part of the North Manchester / Lancashire / West Yorkshire landscape, within sight of 3 local SSSis. - Alternative Technologies considerations: With advances in technology, Lidar offers several advantages over met masts, including ability to measure wind at greater heights, greater portability, and reduced safety hazards associated with climbing and maintenance. Lidar also is significantly more cost effective. It begs the question whether Cubico has done sufficient research into advances in RS technology, particularly Lidar, over recent years

Officer comment: The recommendation is unchanged from that described above.

B2. 2025/0114 – Land immediately adjacent to MUGA, Whitaker Park

Since publication of the Committee report on this application, officers have received comments from Growth Lancashire (the Council's heritage consultants). Growth Lancashire raise no objection to the proposed development, but suggest that if a more long-term solution for a clubhouse to serve the Padel project becomes necessary then a more appropriately designed structure (featuring more sympathetic materials) should be considered.

Their assessment is as follows:

The application site is located within Whitaker Park, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA).

Unlike in the case of designated assets, LPAs are only required to carry out a simple weighing exercise of those material matters and that any impact (which carries no statutory duty on behalf of the LPA) should be considered against the merits of the whole application.

From a heritage perspective whilst the property can only be awarded low value or significance, I am mindful that the objective of Chapter 16 of the NPPF is to preserve heritage and the LPA will need to consider this in its planning balance. However, as an NDHA, I can only afford a low significance to the building.

The application is for the siting of a Portakabin as a club house for the purposes of supporting the Padel project.

The proposed Portakabin is rectangular on plan and of simple design with a flat roof and has a utilitarian, functional appearance. The image submitted with the application shows a white/off-white Portakabin.

This would be located to the immediate southwest of an existing sports court consisting of tall wire fencing and surfaced courts.

Whilst the sports court clearly reads as a modern intervention in the park, this is relatively permeable with open wire fencing and I feel the introduction of further built development, particularly of this design, will cause some limited visual harm to the Whitaker Park NDHA through introduction of obvious modern development, of a design that is at odds with well-preserved the surroundings, and visual clutter. However, due to the location on the western boundary, which does not impede on any views across the park, I feel that this level of harm can only be considered negligible. The Application Form states that the cabin is intended not to be permanent. I feel that a more appropriately designed clubhouse, constructed from sympathetic materials, should be considered if a clubhouse was to be introduced in the long-term.

For the reasons identified above, the proposal, currently outlined in the submission documents, represents negligible harm to the NDHA Whitaker Park. P208 of the NPPF requires LPAs to seek to reduce or minimise harm. Whilst I have identified some areas of potential harm to the NDHA, scope exists for this to be reduced by considering a more sympathetic design.

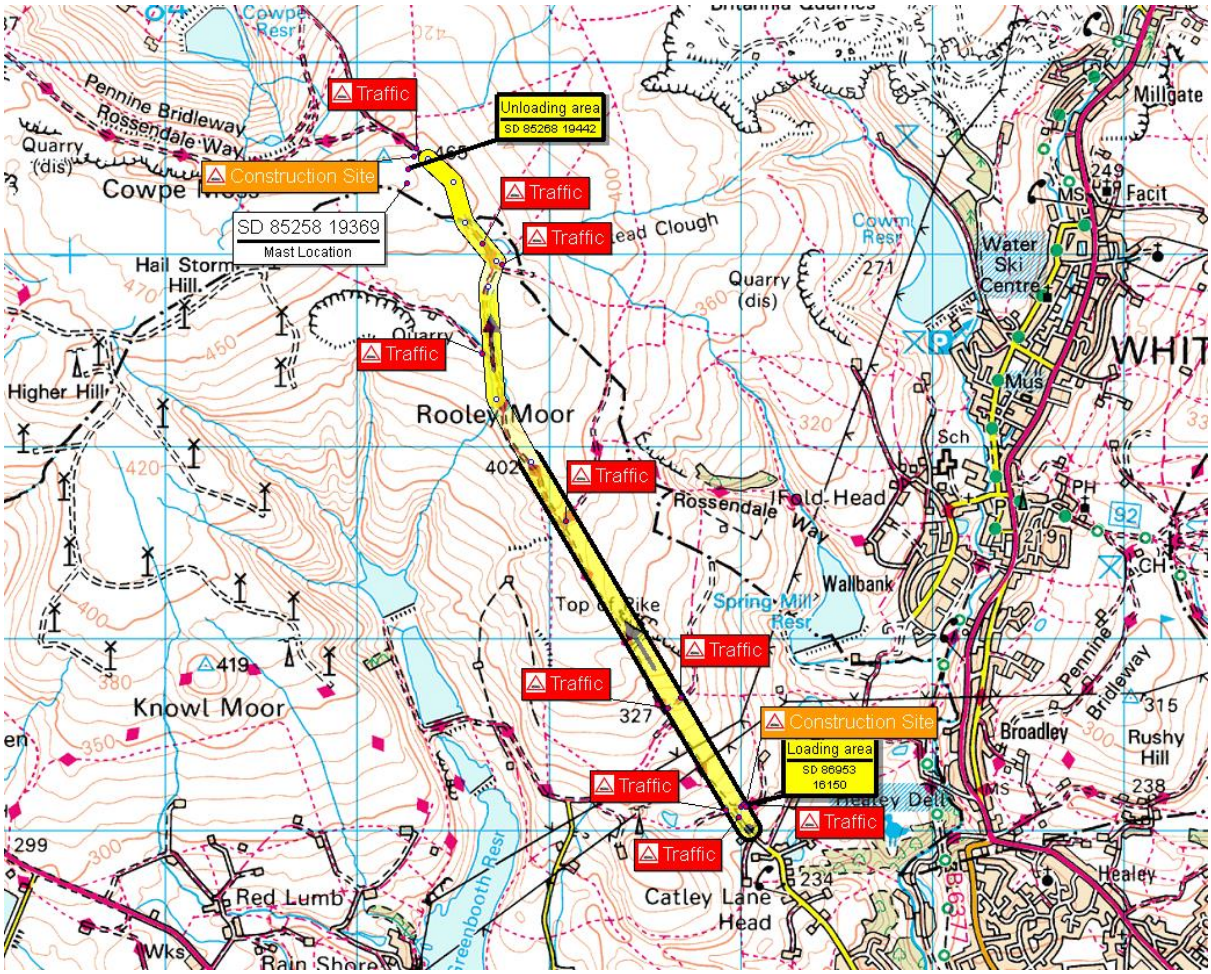
Having regard to the above and the temporary nature of the proposal, it is considered that on balance the proposal remains acceptable. As such, no change is proposed to the recommendation contained within the Committee Report.

Mike Atherton
Head of Planning

13.05.2025

Construction Traffic Signage Plan

See below annotated map showing where signage will be installed to alert key users of Rooley Moor Road and surrounding access points that there will be Traffic and Construction during key periods.



Signage examples

dulas

inspiring renewable energy

In an emergency contact
01654 705000
Mew argyfwng cysylltwch a
01654 705000

Danger
Risk of injury or death if mast is tampered with
Perygl
Risg o anaf neu farwolaeth os bydd rhywun yn ymyrryd ar mast

Danger
Keep clear during electrical storms
Perygl
Cadwch yn glir yn ystod stormydd trydanol

Authorised persons only beyond this point

Personau awdurdodedig yn unig y tu hwnt i'r pwynt hwn


CAUTION
CONSTRUCTION
TRAFFIC