

30th May 2020

Dear Mr Blackburn,

Thank you for your email containing the inspector's excellent searching questions, I look forward to reading the Council's responses.

I have added a few points below, particularly in light of the situation in which we find ourselves but also in response to the 'Representations Received on Proposed Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site' which were made available.

Issue 1 - Need for a gypsy and traveller transit site

In light of the current Covid 19 situation and the pressure that this is placing and will continue to place on Council budgets, is there enough money available for a site of this type ANYWHERE in Rossendale?

Surely the best solution now, is cross boundary working, with neighbouring councils.

Hyndburn (and Blackburn with Darwen)

<https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/pdfs/arc4%20Blackburn%20with%20Darwen%20and%20Hyndburn%20GTAA%20Final%20Report%20July%202019%20Client%20Version.pdf>

In terms of Gypsy and Traveller site provision, in Blackburn with Darwen there is one Council site and six occupied private permanent sites (there are also two sites believed to be Gypsy and Traveller site but unoccupied). In Hyndburn there is one Council site (managed by Lancashire County Council), 13 private authorised sites and two unauthorised sites. There is one Travelling Showpersons' yard in Hyndburn (accommodating 10 households).

Bury, Rochdale, Burnley and Calderdale, the other neighbouring councils, all have or are considering suitable sites.

This also ties into:

Issue 5 - c) Have the potential costs of development, including the provision of services, construction of hardstanding and buildings and other mitigation measures been assessed? Has appropriate funding been identified to bring forward the site?

The site is NOT owned by the council, there are no services, hard standings or buildings of any type there. If a site has to be provided in Rossendale, this cannot be the most cost effective.

And, in my opinion, the big question:

Issue 2 – Site selection process – e) The site at Sharneyford was previously rejected as a site for transit accommodation and not taken forward in the submitted Local Plan. What has changed in the interim?

The answer is nothing, it is still inhospitable for much of the year, the nearest primary school is full, the site entrance is on a dangerous bend, the site floods, the list goes on and on and has been covered previously.

Actually, the only change is:

Issue 3 - Deliverability of the original proposed allocation at Futures Park, Bacup

The Council has apparently allowed a lease which precludes the development of a transit site on Futures Park. I look forward to the Council's response to the inspector's question: ***Is the lease agreement enforceable, insofar as it applies to land outside the lease site?*** Surely one tenant cannot determine what adjacent land is used for?

With the possibility of Futures Park being unavailable, the Council had to provide an alternative. The Sharneyford site proposal was VERY last minute with a public meeting held on 23rd December 2019, only days before the deadline for submission of the Local Plan. Surely a decision of this importance deserves more time for consultation.

Finally, of the representations made to the Council the vast majority objected for a wide variety of valid reasons, only two supported the Sharneyford site.

Edenfield Village Residents Association, without giving any reason whatsoever for their support (one can only conclude that it is because they don't want the site in Edenfield). I find this distasteful.

United Utilities, who clearly see this as a business opportunity to provide utilities to the site. Again, in my opinion, not a valid reason to support the proposal.

Thank you for your time again during our recent telephone conversation.

I look forward to hearing from you soon about the format that the meeting will take.

Best wishes

Philip Taylor