

EDENFIELD COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

24th October 2022

Dear Alyson,

1. I am writing to thank you and colleagues for meeting the Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum (the Forum) on 18th October and for the information you updated us on with the Local Plan site allocations in our area. Regrettably, I need to convey a sense of disappointment on a couple of planning matters from the Forum. I set out both of them below.
2. The first point of concern is that Rossendale Local Plan Policy H66 for Land West of Market Street in Edenfield is not being satisfactorily implemented as far as the Forum is concerned. As the Local Plan is to guide development between 2019 and 2036, and was only adopted on 15 December 2021, it is understood that this policy should be given full weight in planning decisions.
3. The second is, the developer of the largest land parcel engaged in an unfair and rushed consultation in the height of summer when many residents were away on holiday, some residents not even receiving the information, no consultation with the Forum as was promised in the Local Plan, and especially no feedback since, the village being left in limbo as to whether any consideration to their feedback had been given, causing concern and unrest to residents. Although most local people were opposed to the principle of the major housing development in the location, they still have the right to be properly engaged and consulted. Edenfield is their local area and it would seem counter-productive for unforeseen material planning considerations not to be addressed, leading to ongoing delays possibly by lengthy legal challenges or complaints necessary via the local government ombudsman, due to a poor attitude and exclusive high-handed approach by the developer.
4. For local people to trust the planning system they must see a transparent and accountable approach. The Forum wants to ensure that Edenfield, which has a proud history, distinct character, and sense of place is properly planned with all the local knowledge of the area's biodiversity, and historical and cultural issues conveyed, so that local assets are enhanced, and that any area deficiencies, such as over-capacity community facilities including the local schools are addressed in accordance with Local Plan Policy H66, which stipulates eleven important provisos concerning the 400 dwellings being supported.
5. The first and second bullet points of the Policy H66 say that development must be subject to a comprehensive masterplan approach, with a design code agreed. This has not yet happened. Indeed, the intending developers seem to be resisting a comprehensive approach, preferring to deal just with their own respective sites. The Council's position, expressed in the meeting on 18th October, that it cannot ensure

the production of a comprehensive masterplan, notwithstanding its professed commitment to do so in paragraph 121 of the Local Plan, is deeply concerning. At the very least, it is essential that the implications of proposals for any one parcel of H66 are scrutinised so as to avoid limiting the way in which other parcels may be developed and with regard to the cumulative impact of all the other current and proposed development in Edenfield. It is important to note that the Forum has progressed a design code as part of the evidence base for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which was produced by independent consultants AECOM. Local community members have spent considerable time on this, and it is important to them that the work undertaken positively informs the future masterplan and design code. Otherwise it will be a waste of grant funding provided at public expense from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The aim is to retain the local distinctiveness and rural village character to ensure a high quality of place in the future. This is an element that the National Planning Policy Framework sets out in the various different sections, such as 12: Achieving well-designed places. Even though the Forum has provided the Council with the design code produced for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan it was unclear at the meeting whether these had been forwarded to all four developers.

6. A key local issue identified is access. Due to the scale of the housing being planned, impacts from increased movement in the area by foot, cycle, public transport, private car, and larger service vehicles, including HGVs need to be fully considered in the round. This issue is captured by bullet point 3 as new development should benefit from a Transport Assessment to ensure safety and mitigation measures. It is the opinion of the Forum that this ought not to happen in a parcel-by-parcel, piece-meal, fashion as it is contrary to specific text contained in adopted Policy H66 and could lead to unacceptable levels of congestion on the roads through the village and the loss of parking availability for residents and visitors as well as illogical routes for pedestrians and cycles and impede highway safety, which could result in practical difficulties in the developments coming forward.
7. I hope that you can convey our concerns to interested partners and can convene a further meeting so that the Forum's concerns and planning issues can be discussed fully and resolved in a positive and iterative manner with the developers involved.

Yours sincerely

Ian

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