

# **EDENFIELD COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 26 MARCH 2024**

### **ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE PAST YEAR**

#### **FORUM STATUS and MEMBERSHIP**

The Forum is formally designated by Rossendale Council as a Neighbourhood Forum for the area of Edenfield under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 1990. The original designation period was for five years until April 2023. Therefore, in early 2023 an application for a further five-year period of designation was made by the Forum to the Council who (after consultation) approved the application covering the period to April 2028. The Forum currently has 357 members representing about 30% of households in the village.

#### **MASTERPLAN CONSULTATIONS**

In December 2021, despite considerable opposition from residents, the Council approved the Rossendale Local Plan. This removed from the Green Belt the land west of Market Street, being the field at Chatterton Hey, the fields between Market Street and the bypass and the fields between Blackburn Road and the bypass. Together these are identified in the Local Plan as site H66 on which the Local Plan envisages new build houses of up to 400 in number.

The Local Plan requires a Masterplan for the whole of site H66 to be produced. However, co-operation between the various landowners has not been as forthcoming as might have been expected. Nevertheless, a Masterplan or sorts was submitted in November 2022 which generated a considerable number of objections including from the Forum. During the year under review two revised versions of the Masterplan were submitted and dealt with as follows: -

**16 June 2023 (consultation period to 11 August 2023).** A walk-in event was held by the Forum at the Community Centre on 15 July 2023 attended by just over 100 residents to whom information was given alongside visual displays in respect of the Masterplan proposals. The Forum submitted to the Council two lengthy documents on the proposals consisting of 27 pages of general representations plus a further 12 pages of comments on transport/traffic issues supported by anonymised comments from 24 residents collected at the walk-in event. A schedule of 432 names of those from whom the Forum had received confirmation of their support was also submitted alongside these documents. In addition, a 17-page report on technical traffic/transport issues produced by SK Transport on behalf of the Forum was submitted.

**28 September 2023 (consultation period to 6 November 2023).** The Forum submitted to the Council 144 pages of representations including resubmission of the transport/traffic comments and the SK Transport report (see above) plus a 73-page Design Code report produced for the Forum by Aecom.

#### **PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS**

**28 June 2023 Taylor Wimpey application re 238 houses on site H66 (ref 2022/0451 – consultation period to 11 August 2023).** The Forum submitted to the Council a 49-page document setting out detailed representations.

**14 July 2023 Land at Alderwood application re 9 houses on site H66 (ref 2022/0577 - consultation period to 7 August 2023).** The Forum submitted an 11-page document setting out detailed representations.

**23 October 2023 Northstone Development application re 50 houses on site H66/car park on green belt land adjacent to the School/Guide Court (ref 2023/0396 - consultation period to 6 December 2023).** The Forum submitted to the Council a 46-page document setting out detailed representations.

## **MISSING CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

In respect of the Masterplan and Taylor Wimpey Planning Application consultations which ran concurrently to 11 August 2023 it was identified that some submissions by residents had not been properly recorded by the Council on its website. The Forum undertook a review of the responses shown on the website and notified the Council that there were 34 responses to the Planning Application which also related to the Masterplan and 64 responses to the Masterplan which also related to the Planning Application. The Council has now corrected the position with further Masterplan responses uploaded on 9 February 2024 and further Planning Application responses uploaded on 31 January 2024.

## **MEETINGS (involving representatives from the Forum)**

**Forum Management Committee** meetings were held on 28/3/23, 25/4/23, 6/6/23, 25/7/23, 22/8/23, 10/10/23, 8/11/23, 11/12/23, 30/1/24 and 5/3/24. Minutes from these meetings are available on the Forum's website.

**Rossendale Council** meetings were held on 28/6/23, 17/8/23, 28/9/23, 23/11/23 and 22/1/24. All these meetings were attended by Senior Planning Officers plus Edenfield Councillors and Councillors involved with the Development Control Committee. At the meeting on 23/11/23 Officers from LCC Highways also attended by video link for part of the meeting.

**Local MP Sir Jake Berry** hosted a meeting on 3/8/23 which included Edenfield Councillors.

**Taylor Wimpey** attended a meeting at the Community Centre on 7/11/23. Further details are available on the Forum's website.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

Newsletters were distributed to all Edenfield residences in June 2023, October 2023, and November 2023 with, at the time of writing, another planned for March 2024. An "Edenfailed Again!!" window display poster together with details of how to submit Masterplan/Planning Application comments to the Council and/or support the Forum's representations was also distributed to all Edenfield residences in July 2023.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

A Neighbourhood Plan is a document for a local area to give the local community a say in planning policies for that area. Sadly, it does not override the Rossendale Local Plan which envisages some 450 houses for Edenfield (sites H65, 66 and 67). However, once completed, it should mean that such houses are built, laid out and designed in such a way as to be in keeping with the village and its history.

The Forum's Plan for Edenfield has made significant progress during the year under review. The consultation in respect of the draft (Regulation 14) plan which started at the beginning of March 2023 ended on 17 April 2023. A considerable amount of feedback was received which was reviewed and, where appropriate, has led to changes to the draft Plan. The feedback included lengthy comments from both Taylor Wimpey (the only developer to respond) and Rossendale Council Planning which were useful in determining the changes made.

On 15 February 2024, the revised Plan together with a summary of the consultation responses and other supporting documentation totalling over 350 pages was submitted to Rossendale Council who will check that it is complete and in an acceptable format. Thereafter it will be subject to a six-week public consultation (anticipated to commence in May) and then the Plan and consultation responses will be reviewed by an independent Examiner and ultimately final approval of the Plan from Edenfield residents will be sought via a local referendum.

**Mervyn MacDonald – Chair, Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum - for and on behalf of the Management Committee - 8 March 2024.**