

26.03.15

Representation to the Inspector for Pendle Strategic Development Plan – Hearing

Session 2.

The 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment' is heavily flawed with no scientific evidence to back up findings.

The above statement still stands from my representations made 17 February 2014 and 24 November 2014.

Pendle Council has reacted to the requirements of Central Government by undertaking the assessment to find *'suitable' land to ensure a five year delivery programme*; this land bank is to be reviewed year on year to ensure constant supply of land.

However, this is very much lead by spreadsheet analysis in terms of numbers of houses, average house price receipts in particular areas and readiness to deliver by land owners and developers.

The report is immature in its direction and Pendle Council has allowed recommended findings to be influenced by developers.

There is particular issue with the identified 'Policy LIV2: Strategic Housing Site – Trough Laithe Farm'. The problems associated with this site best illustrates the issues prevalent in most of the sites identified in PBCs strategic document.

Given the sheer abundance of sites put forwards by Pendle land owners, there is nothing 'Strategic' about the housing site at Trough Laithe, other than the quick win of ridding Pendle Borough Council of some of the backlog of the apparent housing shortages in Pendle.

Pendle Council has taken advice from land owners at Trough Laithe in terms of deliverability. In the case of the Strategic Housing Site, the developer has suggested a delivery rate of 50 houses per year from 2015 to an uplifted maximum from 481 to 500 houses based on 12.96ha of land.

Furthermore, in a meeting with Councillor Joseph Cooney 21.11.14, he suggested that Barratt Homes had been provisionally approached by the land owner at Trough Laithe and that executive houses were preferred by the developer.

This gives cause for concern, as surely it is Pendle Council who should be influencing the type of development? ie. Are we not in need of affordable and social housing?

This is a significant parcel of land which should be considered extremely carefully for inclusion within the plan.

During an exchange of communication with Andrew Stephenson MP via social media w/c 17 November 2014, Mr Stephenson said "...Sadly Peel who own the land want housing rather than employment, so the council have had to put this down as a possible strategic housing site."

Does the Council not have a choice of what to develop? By his very own admission Mr Stephenson MP admits the council have been led by the developer to allocate the land as a strategic housing site.

The significant issue is the lack of scientific approach from Pendle Council to identify suitable land for housing. More so there is evidence within the strategy of a naïve panic to secure land in response to the Central Government edit.

The Council is ignoring the large number of potential sites put forwards during the previous consultations. Responses from the Council to the vast majority (if not all) of objecting respondents in the previous consultation depict a blanket response which does not respond directly to queries.

For example; in the Councils 'call for sites', Page 113 – Respondent Reference Number - 818033– Owners of land North of Wheatley Lane Road – The Council admits that the Trough Laithe site has been chosen to due its ease of delivery and does not counter the proposal put forwards by 'Owners of Land North of Wheatley Lane Road' other than by stating that the development of a single Local Plan would take time.

Surely, time is what we have got?

The decision to build 500 plus houses on a green field site should not be taken lightly and we should take as much time as is required to be completely satisfied that sufficient research has been undertaken. At this time, satisfactory detail has not been provided nor communicated.

Some excellent and appropriate sites were put forwards by third parties, the vast majority of which have been discounted. Albeit with their own issues, why has the land in Barnoldswick, Brierfield or Nelson not being further considered other than for lack of potential profit margin. Or if it is profit margin that is to be offered, then what about the land to the rear of Lupton Drive, Barrowford, or the land to the rear of St Thomas Primary school. Both parcels of land cannot be seen from elsewhere in the valley. Although, both are still Greenfield.

Kind regards,

Paul Henderson