



Public Meeting 28th February 2017

Questions / Comments from the floor together with the Answers that were provided.

This a record of the questions raised/comments made by members of the public who attended the meeting and the answers that were given.

1. Can you give us more detail of what is “Building for Life” standard?
A: Building For Life (or BFL12) is a quality standard for house building setting out designs and locations for improved living. Booklet available on stand in Hall and can also be viewed at website: <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>
2. Will there be any concessions to environmental issues in the BLF document?
A: Environmental issues are considered in the document and as far as we are aware it does not advocate concessions on environmental issues, however, each development is different and has to be considered in its own right.
3. Will the building standards include adaptability eg wider doorways and the potential for people to work from home?
A: The BFL standard is a quality standard, not a building regulations standard, these will still have to be adhered to and these will influence doorway widths etc. Working from home has other implications such as broadband availability and this is subject to area coverage by the service providers not the house builder.
4. What is the timeframe for forming the plan?
A: Typically a Plan for the size of the Blackrod parish will take between 18 months and 2 years to complete.
5. Facilities have been lost in the village – such as public toilets and possibly the library. What influence can the steering group have on this? Will residents have a say over public space developments?
A: The Steering group is leading the work on the compilation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the future and has no influence over current planning developments. We are not aware of the Library closing in the near future but we will highlight the importance of it in the Community facilities area of the Plan.

We aim to include public space / open spaces in the Plan and seek to protect these where possible.

6. Are the existing developments outside of the Greater Manchester Spatial Review? How do these affect “300” houses mentioned? What can the plan do about this?

A: Existing housing developments from 2015 are included in the Spatial Review figures including the 300 houses that could potentially be built in Blackrod. As some 146 houses have been built, or are planned to be built, since 2015 the remaining 154 house would be required to be built over the next 18 years to 2035.

If the Spatial Review and potential housing development numbers are ratified then the Plan could influence how and where these houses are built.

7. What (building) is going to happen – what has the go ahead? What can the plan not influence and what can it influence?

A: The Plan cannot stop development. It can influence development in terms of the numbers, types and locations for house building - more in keeping with the community requirements. The Plan cannot influence current housing developments so what is in the planning stage today will proceed.

8. There appears to be conflict between Bolton and Blackrod. It seems that areas that Bolton own, they can go ahead and develop.

A: If land is owned by Bolton they have the prerogative just like any other landowner to develop and seek planning permission. In the current environment of austerity where Bolton has to cut back and make savings they are more interested than before in turning any owned land into a financial benefit to help fund services.

9. Regarding the Hill Lane, at the public meeting it seems the land available for the development had already been marketed and so planning could not be opposed. Are there any other areas in the village that have also been identified and put forward but not yet developed?

A: We are not aware of any other areas of land in Blackrod that has been specifically marketed by Bolton. There have been areas of land put forward for development under the Spatial Review.

10. With regard to the plan – is education not part of the plan?

A: Neighbourhood Plans are planning documents and as such do not cover the provision of Education per se. However, within the Community facilities topic group making sure we have the facilities/buildings in place over the next 15 years to cope with increased pupil numbers is included within the Plan.

Post Meeting Comment: Local Education Authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places based on live birth data and a formula around numbers of pupils generated by new housing developments and data on inward/outward migration.

11. Are there any Section 106 monies that can come to the local area and not to the wider area, and does the Neighbourhood Plan have any power over this?

A: Section 106 monies are dependent and specific to individual housing developments over a certain size and so far Blackrod has not benefitted from any payments. The Neighbourhood Plan would seek to obtain Community Infrastructure Levy funding wherever possible.

12. It appears that Bolton has not adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy. If it had, income from developments could rise from 10% to 20%.

A: This is a statement made at the meeting. The revision of Neighbourhood Planning Bill is currently going through Parliament and may change this stance of Bolton.

13. Facilities such as the schools and the GPs are already at saturation – what are the plans with regard to this? Blackrod children are already not able to get places in Blackrod schools.

A: Meetings are being held with schools, GPs surgery and lots of other Community services to assess the impact of an increased population in Blackrod. Where possible we will be including development arrangements within the Plan. Blackrod schools are increasing their intake of pupils to match the increase in demand over the next five years.

Post Meeting Comment: Local Education Authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places based on live birth data and a formula around numbers of pupils generated by new housing developments and data on inward/outward migration.

14. Are there any options for landowners to opt out of the Neighbourhood Plan?

A: The Neighbourhood Plan is not an opt-out, or opt-in, Plan. The Plan is intended to reflect the requirements of the whole community including landowners. Everyone will have the opportunity at the referendum to vote to accept or to reject the Plan

15. Will restrictions be placed on what landowners can do on their own land?

A: No. The Neighbourhood Plan does not take away the rights of land ownership or replace current planning regulations or replace the national planning framework.

16. Housing impacts on the whole infrastructure of a community. Education should be part of the plan. With the possibility of an additional 150 houses – the current schools will not be able to cope.

A: The Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document and cannot include Education as a service provision. There are other organisations better placed to determine the curriculum and how our children should be taught. The Plan can, however, consider capacity of schools and influence future expansion to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils.

Post Meeting Comment: Local Education Authorities have a statutory duty to provide sufficient school places based on live birth data and a formula around numbers of pupils generated by new housing developments and data on inward/outward migration.

17. Bolton sets admissions numbers for schools. The governors of the Blackrod Church School have recognised the pressure on places and made representations to Bolton.
A: This is a statement made in the meeting in part answer to item 16 above.
18. Have you spoken to any developers to see what their views are and what they can offer the village? A Housing Needs assessment is required to state what should be built.
A: The Steering Group, who are overseeing the development of the Plan, have to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest with any party who is involved in the compilation of the Plan. It is considered that developers may have a vested interest in the work. Agreed with the statement about a Housing Needs Assessment and that this is currently being arranged.
19. Are Bolton not obliged to put in infrastructure before any development starts, and are they doing it?
A: This is a general question not specific to the Neighbourhood Plan but no, they are not obliged to put infrastructure in place before any development starts.
20. Looking at the number of houses currently in Blackrod and the number of residents – doing the maths, it seems that there is low density in Blackrod. So do we need any more houses?
A: Good observation and it may be correct that's why we need to commission a Housing Needs Assessment to provide us with the information and evidence for this.
21. There would be sufficient school places for Blackrod children in the local schools, but places are being taken by children from outside the village as a result of Bolton's admission policy with regard to siblings already in the school.
A: This is a general comment not specific to the Neighbourhood Plan.
22. The regulations say that for every 100 houses built, developers have to include play space for children. We need to be wary that developers don't put in 90 houses to avoid having to do this.
A: Agreed with this comment.
23. Will the steering group be impartial – will the decisions be left with the group?
A: The Steering Group members are residents of Blackrod and represent the wider community. They are working to strict Terms of Reference and a Code of Conduct to ensure their impartiality. The residents will be consulted at key stages of the Plan's development and they will be asked to vote on the Plan at the end of the process.
24. Is there flexibility within the building specs, as this could impact on local builders in the village and local jobs?
A: Neighbourhood Plans do not change or influence building regulations / specifications. However, we are keen to ensure that builds are more sympathetic to the village scene, its landscape and topography. We do not see onerous restrictions to local builders or threats to jobs.

25. New people coming into the village will expect a decent standard. Roads are currently not wide enough which can cause problems for emergency services gaining access. Also there should be sufficient parking spaces eg a three bedroom house can need 4 parking spaces for a family with 2 adult children at home.

A: Road restrictions and parking standards are to be reviewed for potential inclusion in the Plan.

26. New houses will need improvements to sewers, electricity etc. Road works to upgrade these will create issues for residents.

A: Agreed. These are generally short term inconveniences while the development is being completed and normal provisions should keep issues impacting residents to a minimum.

27. What provision will the plan make for social housing?

A: This, and other factors related to housing need, are to be included in the proposed Housing Needs Assessment & Survey which is planned for Blackrod as part of the Neighbourhood Plan development work

28. Are the playing fields and the community centre safe from future development?

A: The playing fields behind Vicarage road are considered as Open local space so we will be looking to protect this within the Plan. The Community Centre is a key community asset which will soon be taken over and run by the community and will operate under the name of Blackrod Sports and Community Centre.

29. What is the time frame for the plan?

A: Typically a Plan for the size of the Blackrod parish will take between 18 months and 2 years to complete.

30. Is there a ratio of new houses to the loss of pubs?

A: Not that we are aware.

31. Regarding developments in the pipeline – what are the future plans on the north side of Blackrod – where can we find out where they are?

A: The only developments that we are aware of are the proposed power plant off Moss Lane and the land adjacent that has been submitted as a potential development site under the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework call for sites.

Note: during discussion it became evident that reference to the North side of Blackrod actually meant the south eastern end of the parish.

32. I use stables at Gibb farm. I have been told that the farmer has received a letter from Bellway homes to ask if he has any land to sell. They are also developers at the Horwich Loco works.

A: There will always be speculative requests made of landowners by developers seeking new plots of land on which to build. Gibb farm only have a small area of land in Blackrod which is the proposed site for a power plant.

33. Are there plans for a Power Plant on Moss Lane?

A: A planning application has been submitted and had numerous objections but so far no decision has been made by Bolton.

34. Are there any plans for equestrians?

A: Yes. We are hoping to discuss ideas with the local stables, horse owners and farmers/landowners regarding a bridal way, which we hope will become part of the Plan.

35. What is the time frame for the plan and what could the implications of Brexit have on it?

A: Typically a Plan for the size of the Blackrod parish will take between 18 months and 2 years to complete. The Plan will be completed before Brexit has been agreed and we do not anticipate any associated impacts.

36. Are there any other areas in Bolton doing a Neighbourhood Plan?

A: No, Blackrod is the first in Bolton.

37. Will Bolton try to get in with developments ahead of the time frame of the plan?

A: There is a lot more potential to develop sites outside of Blackrod, in other parts of Bolton, so we do not think working on a Neighbourhood Plan will influence Bolton's decisions on whether to rush development in Blackrod or not.

38. Bolton's Plan has loopholes – houses could be built before the plan is implemented.

A: See answer to the previous question. In addition: Bolton is currently reviewing its own Local Plan with the view of closing the kind of loopholes that were previously exploited like at Hill lane.