

CALDERDALE LOCAL PLAN

HOUSING ALLOCATION – LAND AT HORLEY GREEN ROAD, CLAREMOUNT (LP0103)

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

2022



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The production of this paper has been necessitated following receipt of the Post Hearings Letter from the Inspector to the Council dated 21 March 2022. Following the completion of the hearing sessions and submission of requested evidence, the letter outlines the Inspector’s views on the way forward for the examination. In the letter, the Inspector raises concerns regarding housing allocation LP0103 – Land at Horley Green Road, Claremount, Halifax. Those concerns are as follows:

1. The site is currently public open space and is allocated in the Plan for 56 dwellings. The Council’s Open Space Quantitative Standards document (CC111) identifies deficits of open space in the area. The site also makes a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the locality.
2. The Council’s evidence indicates that the proposed lower figure of 29 dwellings in the revised housing trajectory (CC125d) is due to steep topography on the south-west and south-east edges of the site. It appears that a further reduction in capacity and indicative developable area would be necessary to provide new high quality, usable and centrally located open space on part of the site, which compensates for quantitative loss and contributes to local character. There is no evidence before me that allotments are deliverable or would provide appropriate compensation.

Site Background

The site is a slum clearance site purchased by the Council in the 1960s under Part 3 of the Housing Act 1957. It currently comprises grassed amenity land. The site is used as an informal open space and was previously allocated as open space in the Unitary Development Plan.

The site was identified as a priority site for housing development in the Calderdale Together Housing Investment Partnership 16th March 2018. This aims to bring forward 500-650 new homes across the Borough over the next 5 years using the Council’s and Together Housing Group’s land holdings. Together Housing Group prepared a preliminary layout in July 2019 showing how the site could be developed for 29 two- and three-bedroom homes. This excluded the steep slope on the western and southern edges of the site. This led to the revised boundary in the Housing Trajectory (and a reduction in the developable area to 1.25ha (CC125d).

The site has been the subject of consultation for the past three years as part of the disposal process and through the Local Plan Examination. All the stages necessary for the Council to dispose of the site have been carried out and the site is not subject to restrictive covenants. It is difficult to find unconstrained Council owned land that can be used to contribute to housing provision

A community group, the Friends of Horley Green, are a constituted group in the Claremont area who made an Expression of Interest under the Council’s discretionary Community Asset Transfer Policy. This was considered at the Council’s Cabinet on 4th October 2021 and was called in by the Place Scrutiny Board on 25th October 2021. Despite the case put forward by the Friends of Horley Green, it was resolved to proceed with housing development on the site in view of housing need in the area and across the whole Borough. Nevertheless, members recognised the hard work put into the application and acknowledged that they will work with the group to incorporate as many of the

elements from their business case that are reasonable and viably possible whilst bringing forward a quality residential development on the site.

The Council therefore has a site which is developable in the next few years with a willing developer who will be able to help meet the need for affordable housing on the site.

Incorporating Open Space in the development

Housing Services has stated that by removing eight plots at the proposed allocation an area of approximately 2300m² of open space could be created with the site still providing 21 dwellings. Table 1 provides further detail on the approximate areas that could be released for open space provision at the site given differing residential site capacities. These figures are indicative only but demonstrate that the housing allocation is developable albeit with a slightly reduced capacity.

Table 1- Indicative on-site Open Space provision scenarios

No. Dwellings	No. Dwellings Removed	Area Released for on-site OS Provision
25	4	884m ²
23	6	1352m ²
21	8	2300m ²

Following further consultation with the Council’s Green Spaces and Street Scene section following receipt of the Inspector’s Letter, the Information and Asset Management Officer has advised that currently there are no LEAPS for children and young people within a 240m radius of the proposed site and one NEAP within 600m, Horley Green Play Area which only has swings on site. For a Local Equipped Area of Play on site an area between 500-1000m² would be needed which would provide facilities for Children and young people in the immediate vicinity that are currently lacking. The area would need to provide a buffer zone which would be dependent on the size of play area. This would be between 5m and 30 m from the perimeter to the nearest dwelling, the smaller the play area the smaller the buffer needed.

If the development was to provide less than 500m² for play, the Horley Green Recreation Ground provides only minimal facilities for the size of the site and therefore could be considered as a site to provide off site provisions by expanding the range of play equipment and by improving access to the site increasing accessibility. It should be noted that any play equipment, on or off site would need to be maintained by Together Housing and not become a Council Asset.

Whilst the quantitative assessment for Open Space showed that there is a deficit of Parks and Gardens within 400m (0.041Ha/1000population) and 600m (0.784 Ha/1000 population), within 1200m the site provides 3.962 Ha/1000 population, which is well in excess of the proposed Calderdale Standard of 0.8 ha/ 1000 population.

Many of the complaints from local residents have related to the loss of somewhere for the residents of the local nursing home to walk. An innovative design of the site should provide safe walkways through the development, so this use is not lost. The steep banking to two sides of the site has been

deemed as unsuitable for development, however these could be utilised to increase flora/fauna biodiversity to the area by the planting of appropriate wildflowers and habitat creation.

A previous recommendation was made to create allotments on part of the site to compensate for the loss of Open Space. Whilst this suggestion was indicative and has been superseded by a more general open space site specific consideration in Appendix 1 as detailed in Table 2 below, the Council agrees with the Inspector that this would not be an appropriate compensatory measure. Council owned allotments are allocated on a first come first serve basis and are offered to all residents across the borough so would be of no direct benefit to the current residents in close proximity of the proposed site.

Given the above considerations the Council’s preferred option is to reduce the current indicative capacity figure of 29 dwellings, as shown in the housing trajectory (CC125d), to an indicative capacity of 24 dwellings. This represents the best option for the Council and Together Housing in balancing the need for the provision of affordable housing and providing the appropriate level of compensatory on-site open space. As with all housing allocation in the trajectory the actual number of units built may vary slightly from this indicative figure.

Table 2: Site Specific Considerations for LP0103

Site	Site Specific Considerations – Proposed Modification	Reason
LP0103	<p><u>- Development proposals should include the provision of on-site open space facilities and the enhancement/provision of open space facilities within the catchment of the development.</u></p> <p>- Consider the impact on visual amenity currently provided by the site.</p> <p><u>- Development proposals should have regard to the character and landscape value of the existing Open Space at the site.</u></p>	<p>To ensure that the proposal complies with paragraph 74 of the NPPF (2012)</p> <p>TASK 162 & 163 MATTER 18</p>

Conclusion

Whilst LP0103 is a relatively small site, it is key to the Calderdale Together Housing Investment Partnership (CTHIP) which aims to deliver up to 650 new affordable homes in Calderdale over the next 5 years. The site has political support from the Council and will utilise Council owned land to help meet this target.

This paper demonstrates that by removing a small number of dwellings from proposed housing allocation LP0103, an approximate area of between 2300m² and 884m² of on-site open space could be created. Consultation with the Council’s Green Spaces and Street Scene section confirms that there is potential to create an on-site Local Equipped Area of Play in excess of 500m² which would provide facilities for Children and young people in the immediate vicinity that are currently lacking.

It is the Council’s opinion that developing site LP0103 with the required on-site Open Space provision is a viable proposition given that the site is located on Council owned land, the proposal will contribute towards affordable housing provision in the locality and that any open space requirements can be accommodated on site. Depending on the final residential capacity and level of

on-site open space provision at the site, it may also be possible to provide off-site provision by expanding the range of play equipment at Horley Green Recreation Ground and by improving access to the site.