

## MIQ response from Steven Clark re Cut Lane Rishton 270825

I am writing to highlight my specific concerns over the Cut Lane Rishton housing development of the Hyndburn local plan.

As I understand it, the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) advises that any Local plan should be balanced and consider several aspects of planning policy.

However, I feel that the current local plan is more focussed on promoting additional housing, and plays down any impacts on the status quo as insignificant, is not a balanced reflection, and moreover neglects the needs of the existing local community and their needs.

As mentioned in section 8 of the NPPF, titled “Promoting healthy and safe communities” the policy states that any plan should:

*“enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the **provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure**, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”*

With this in mind, I wish to highlight two significant impacts of this proposal:

1. The proposed access road development would result in a significant reduction in local green space (approx. 1/3 acre). This reduction may sound insignificant, but it should be recognised that this is not just any strip of land, but:
  - a) was conveyed to the **residents of Rishton** for use as a public park in 1953 in memory of Captain Charles Bernard Petre. This is reflected in the tenure of the land as a public leisure space, and recognised that the majority of inhabitants of Rishton lived in terraced housing (and still do) with no access to green space.
  - b) One of Hyndburn Boroughs flagship Green Flag parks. The [Cut wood park management plan](#) states in its vision and aims that it will “provide a greater quantity and quality of public open spaces”, and therefore its aims are in direct opposition to the Hyndburn local plan.
  - c) has huge cultural significance to Rishton residents, as recognised in a recent petition below, which received over 1300 signatures (approx. 1/4 of the population of Rishton) [Petition · Save Rishton's Green Belt and protect Cutwood Park - Rishton, United Kingdom · Change.org](#)
  - d) would mean the removal of 3 or 4 significant, mature / veteran trees. These trees are the habitat for several important species of animal including roosting woodpeckers and bats.

This has also been the subject of a very recent debate over the classification of this woodland as being ancient, i.e.:

23<sup>rd</sup> July - I reviewed the Natural England map, which designated Cut Wood as an Ancient woodland, and informed HBC

30<sup>th</sup> June - HBC queried Natural England (INSP002), who advised that their map should take precedence and their designation of Ancient woodland was sound

22<sup>nd</sup> Aug - After an assumed re-consideration, Natural England downgraded the park from Ancient Woodland.

Due to the short timescales of this re-classification, one has to ask questions over what rigour was used to designate the park as Ancient in the first place as a national register, and whether the same rigour was used to remove it. This possibly brings into question whether any other biodiversity assessments made by Natural England require a further review for their "objectivity".

It is also understood that Hyndburn Borough Councils standard policy would be to compensate for any loss of trees by the planting of replacement (I assume) younger trees,

However, no commitment can be made to maintain the area of green space within Rishton.

As such, this development would **have a net reduction in tier 1 green space for the residents of Rishton**, and is considered to have a significant negative impact on the current population, in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing.

2. The proposed access road development would have a detrimental impact on the access to Rishton and Great Harwood, and to the overall safety of residents. The access road will require a 4 way traffic light at the junction of Cut lane with Blackburn Road, which will:
  - a) Increase tailbacks through Rishton at peak times. Currently, tail backs from the lights at Rishton are evident out to the Cut Lane, and often through to the Rishton Reservoir (0.9 miles!)  
The introduction of more lights at Cut Lane, along with additional pedestrian crossings which will undoubtedly be required will only exacerbate the issue.
  - b) Blue light services use Blackburn road as a major thoroughfare into Rishton and Great Harwood, with vehicles often having to overtake the tails back on the wrong side of the road.  
This not only has safety implications for road users, but also the customers awaiting blue light assistance.  
This is a significant safety issue and needs adequate review from the appropriate institutional bodies.
  - c) Reduce the availability of parking around the park, which is already a significant issue, with cars parking on pavements and over cycle lanes.
  - d) Families wishing to access the park would now have to navigate a two lane highway, rather than a minor access road, with negligible traffic.
  - e) The ambulance access bay at the cut lane mid-park entrance would likely be removed or require a further reduction in green space to maintain this.

Please could I strongly encourage that you add further weight to your review around these proposed impacts, with the aim of ensuring balance and soundness in this plan.

We have to ensure that we balance the negative impacts and safety concerns of 6000+ Rishton residents against the need for 188 new houses.

Reading the current planning material, it is not clear to me how this balance is correct.

If the council are committed to this housing development, we have to question whether other access roads are more appropriate / don't require the loss of our treasured park.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Steven Clark