

MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Marton Moss Housing Viability – a Local Commentary

Summary

This is a summary of the report that was produced for the Neighbourhood Forum by planning consultants Envisionuk

The Commentary does not purport to be a housing market appraisal but aims to draw attention to a series of local factors that are likely to come into play when housing development is pursued at Marton Moss which were not fully taken account of in the AECOM consultants produced Housing Site Viability Study.

The report explains the unique character of the Moss which is central to the approach to new housing development in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, itself directly informed by the Marton Moss Design Code. A key feature of the Code being the aim to limit the density of new development to that which typically exists – 8 dwellings per hectare (dph) in the Conservation Area and 15 dph elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Area.

Underpinning the Design Code is the importance of respecting the vernacular character of the local architecture and not allowing standard estate development which was permitted on appeal in the past locally. The Commentary goes on to refer to the current strict controls over development (Local Plan Policy CS26) and how this is likely to have reduced hope value expectations for land but also lead to pent-up demand. A comparison is made with what has happened on the south side of Division Lane in the Fylde Borough Green Belt as a pointer to the likely viability of low density development.

Across Blackpool housing viability has been assessed in a separate study by consultants Lambert Smith Hampton as poor and yet house building is happening. In Marton Moss much of the land is held by local families in relatively small parcels meaning that custom build housing is likely to be the norm where land for development is pre-owned by the promoters and the builders' act as contractors with lower profit margins than developers.

The Commentary uses sales information from the only housing scheme to be built in recent times on the Moss which AECOM were unable to use through a lack of Land Registry data. This development at Birchwood Gardens shows significantly higher sales prices than those assumed by AECOM in their Study. That finding is underlined by analysis of nearly 50 second hand house sales which again show higher values than AECOM found.

In conclusion the Commentary sets out a plausible, evidence based argument for showing that housing viability in the Neighbourhood Area is likely to be significantly higher than assumed in the AECOM study without the need for higher build densities.

Do you agree this Commentary has shown that low density housing development is likely to be financially viable?

Do you disagree, or wish to comment on it?