

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Planning and Development	Council	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Planning matters

### Purpose of report

1. To outline the immediate challenges facing the Council with regards to speculative applications seeking outline planning permission for housing development on sites which are not allocated for current housing development in the existing local plan.

### Recommendation(s)

2. To note the update.

### Executive summary of report

3. 6 applications seeking outline planning permission have been received by the Council for permission to build housing on land that is designated as safeguarded for future development needs in the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026.
4. This report is to simply bring these to the attention of elected members and provide some contextual information only, given the cumulative scale of these proposals, it is important elected members are aware of them.
5. The Chorley Local Plan designates 11 sites as safeguarded for future development needs, with one of those sites, Pear Tree Lane, Euxton the subject of a successful planning appeal in Summer 2020. Of the remaining 10 sites, the Council have received and validated applications for housing on 5 of those.
6. These will be determined in accordance with statutory requirements.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

### Corporate priorities

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	X
Clean, safe, and healthy homes and communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

## Background

8. A series of events over the past 12 months have led to a situation whereby national policy dictates that Chorley has a local housing need figure of 569 homes per year. This is based on a national formula which looks back at previous delivery. This is viewed as flawed for the Borough of Chorley as it fails to take into account the impact of significant one off delivery sites such as Buckshaw Village, and fails to address actual measured housing need and does not take into account initiatives for future growth such as the Lancashire City Deal. Chorley is not alone in this position and there has been a national outcry from many Councils about the standard method.
9. Appendix One illustrates the delivery of housing that has taken place across Central Lancashire.
10. The three councils of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble had an agreed approach to the distribution of housing across the single Central Lancashire Housing Market , which was more aligned to planned growth, including the location of jobs, supported by independent evidence and was both strategic and sustainable . This was achieved via the MOU for housing distribution, which set out the ratio to be applied to the overall housing need for Central Lancashire, thereby attributing the appropriate portion of the need, based on robust evidence. This approach, which went some way to remedy the flaws in the standard methodology through local redistribution of housing numbers on a single housing market area , can be interpreted to be acceptable in national policy and was approved in previous planning appeal decisions.
11. However, following the Pear Tree Lane decision in August 2020 in which the Inspector attached full weight to the standard method local housing need figure rather than the redistributed housing figure set out in the MOU, Preston Council took the decision to withdraw from the MOU therefore planning for their solo annual housing need of 250 homes per year. Preston remain committed to the Central Lancashire Plan and to a strategic joined up approach to sustainable housing distribution.
12. The Pear Tree Lane decision was issued on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and the appeal was upheld and planning permission granted for up to 180 dwellings on Pear Tree Lane.
13. Inspector Mike Haydn refused Gladman's' claim for costs on the basis that there were clear merits to the case presented by the Council.
14. According to the national policy for determining local housing need, the individual annual housing requirements for the three Central Lancashire Councils are as below and for context are shown against the most recently approved development figures:

**Table of Standard Method for Local Housing Need**

Local Authority	Agreed MOU Distribution	Standard Method Annual Housing Requirement	Central Lancashire Core Strategy
Chorley	278	569	417
Preston	404	250	507
South Ribble	328	191	417
Central Lancs Total	1,010	1,010	1,341

15. The national policy for housing numbers does not consider the spatial relationship for planning and economic growth we have with Preston and South Ribble nor does it take account of previous under-delivery of new homes or land constraints such as green belt.
16. Following the outcome of the Pear Tree Lane appeal the Planning Inspector diverts us to

making use of the Government Standard Method of 569 homes per annum. The Council does not agree with this outcome nor the methodology behind the standard method and it leaves Chorley in a position that a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated on that basis.

17. It is the view of the Council that it is for the local plan process to review strategically the cumulative impact of the future development of the borough as part of a comprehensive assessment. Given that Chorley has now delivered the bulk of the existing local plan allocations, a thorough review of the impact on infrastructure taking account of matters such as school places, transport, flooding and health is crucial. National policy is very clear that all development should be sustainable, and that green belt must be protected.
18. LCC Schools Planning Team are engaged in reviewing the data they use to plan for additional school places and other consultants are also engaged.
19. Chorley forms part of the Central Lancashire single housing market area and as such, collectively, taking account of the housing land supply of Preston and South Ribble councils, there is existing sufficient supply of new homes to meet the aggregate housing need.
20. In a short period of time between a planning appeal decision in August 2020, and Preston City Councils' decision to depart from the MOU, several planning applications for housing on safeguarded land have been received.

### **Government recent proposals to change the Housing Need Methodology**

21. The government has recently consulted on Changes to the Current Planning System which initially proposed to increase the number of homes required in Chorley from 569 to 771 per year. Following a significant amount of opposition, the government revised their plans and promised to look at more appropriate areas for housing growth. The government published the outcome of the consultation on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and whilst committing to focussing growth on cities and brownfield land, the figures have not changed for Chorley and remain at 569 homes a year. Therefore, until a new local plan has been produced, even in draft form, this is the figure expected to be applied.

### **Planning applications received**

22. Six planning applications seeking outline planning permission have been submitted to the Council to build housing on safeguarded land in the borough. These applications could see sites which are currently safeguarded from development for future generations brought forward far earlier and without the comprehensive and robust strategic plan process, including looking at broad issues of school places, transport, strategic flood risk and also the extensive public engagement that the local plan entails. Such issues will instead have to be considered as part of the planning application process. Furthermore, there is a need to review other policies to achieve carbon zero; respond to the climate change emergency and the green agenda. The six sites are listed below, and full details are available on the council's website:

#### **Adlington**

Outline application (specifying the access point) for the development of up to 25 dwellings and associated infrastructure (including 35% affordable housing)

Land at Carrington Road Adlington

Ref. No: 20/01200/OUTMAJ | Received: Validated: 09 Nov 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

#### **Eccleston**

Outline planning application for the construction of up to 80 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) and associated infrastructure, with all matters reserved (aside from vehicular access from Doctors Lane).

Land at Tincklers Lane Tincklers Lane Eccleston.

Ref. No: 20/01331/OUTMAJ | Received: Wed 09 Dec 2020 | Validated: Wed 09 Dec 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

Outline application for the construction of up to 15no. dwellings (with all matters reserved save for access from Tincklers Lane)

Land at Tincklers Lane Tincklers, Lane Eccleston

Ref. No: 20/01085/OUTMAJ | Received: Tue 13 Oct 2020 | Validated: Fri 23 Oct 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

Outline planning application (with all matters reserved) for the development of land off Parr Lane, Eccleston for up to 34 dwellings and associated infrastructure (including 30% affordable housing).

Land South off Parr Lane Eccleston

Ref. No: 20/01193/OUTMAJ | Received: Fri 06 Nov 2020 | Validated: Fri 06 Nov 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

## **Coppull**

Land adjacent to Blainscough Lane Coppull

Ref. No: 20/01399/OUTMAJ | Received: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020 | Validated: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 123 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) with public open space provision, structural planting and landscaping, and vehicular access points from Grange Drive. All matters reserved save for access.

## **Whittle-Le-Woods**

Outline planning application for the construction of up to 250 dwellings and associated infrastructure (including 30% affordable housing) with all matters reserved aside from the access from Town Lane.

Land North of Town Lane Whittle-le-Woods

Ref. No: 20/01347/OUTMAJ | Received: Mon 14 Dec 2020 | Validated: Mon 14 Dec 2020 | Status: Awaiting decision

23. The 6 planning applications will be processed in accordance with the required statutory framework and this report does not in any way attempt to fetter that process.

24. However, it is felt that the Council needs to make its position clear that:

*In principle, applications for housing not in accordance with the existing local plan, are considered to be premature, that these additional homes have not been accounted for in terms of plans for infrastructure needs such as schools, transport, and health services. Chorley Council is of the view that the standard method is flawed, and it is for the local plan process to address longer term distribution and allocation of land for housing needs. We*

*strongly encourage our partners- land owners, agents, and developers to get involved in that process and talk to us about their future aspirations.*

*The Council remain committed to a plan-led approach, to providing certainty to local communities as to the location of where new housing will be and that land designated as safeguarded is not intended to meet housing need now, it is for future generations. There is finite land available in Chorley and it must be used carefully.*

**Public statement**

- 25. It is proposed that a public statement is issued alongside the formal validation of the planning applications which have been received, which are seeking permission for housing to be built on safeguarded land.
- 26. The purpose of this statement is three-fold:
- 27. Provide clarity to applicants, agents, and developers of the Councils’ general position in principle to applications for housing on either safeguarded or other protected land.
- 28. Give assurance to our local communities that the Council are communicating those principles with a view to encouraging participation in the local plan process and attempting to open a positive dialogue with landowners, agents, and developers.
- 29. To deter speculative applications for housing and promote engagement in a more positive planning process, the local plan, to meet common goals whilst saving the public purse.

**Implications of report**

- 30. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors’ comments are included:

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

- 31. There are no risks associated with this report.

**Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

- 32. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

**Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

- 33. Effectively this is a statement by the Council in support of its Local Plan allocations. It must be recognised, that this statement is at odds both with the Standard Methodology and recent planning inspector decisions. It is not binding on its role as Local Planning Authority and is not a planning consideration for the purposes of Planning Committee decisions. However, it should be acknowledged that some of the evidence used to draw the conclusion on which the statement is based are matters which the Planning Committee may wish to consider and draw their own conclusions in the context of the particular application before them. Drawing the same conclusion would not be perceived of itself as the statement fettering the discretion of the Planning Committee members.

Jonathan Noad  
Director of Planning and Development

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>
Various		20/1/2021

**Housing Completions in Central Lancashire 2010-2020 compared to Core Strategy Target**

Year	Chorley		Preston		South Ribble	
	Net dwellings completed	Core Strategy Requirement	Net dwellings completed	Core Strategy Requirement	Net dwellings completed	Core Strategy Requirement
April 2010 – March 2011	527	417	127	507	221	417
April 2011 – March 2012	552	417	265	507	170	417
April 2012 – March 2013	638	417	202	507	168	417
April 2013 – March 2014	582	417	142	507	346	417
April 2014 – March 2015	723	417	488	507	486	417
April 2015 – March 2016	597	417	282	507	371	417
April 2016 – March 2017	517	417	791	507	189	417
April 2017 – March 2018	661	417	634	507	312	417
April 2018 – March 2019	573	417	785	507	437	417
April 2019 – March 2020	640	417	1121*	507	412	417
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6010</b>	<b>4170</b>	<b>4837</b>	<b>5070</b>	<b>3112</b>	<b>4170</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>+1,840</b>		<b>-233</b>		<b>-1,058</b>	

\* covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September as they were unable to undertake monitoring in April

**Comparison of current Local Plan and Standard Method Housing Requirements in Lancashire**

Local Authority	Average Delivery over the last 3 years*	Current Local Plan Housing Requirement	Standard Method Housing Requirement	Difference between Local Plan and Standard Method Housing Requirement
Blackburn with Darwen	356	625	154	-471
Blackpool	326	280	121	-159
Burnley	250	194	62	-132
Chorley	625	417	569	+152
Fylde	531	415	272	-143
Hyndburn	136	213	56	-157
Lancaster	509	522	410	-112
Pendle	219	298	146	-152
Preston	757	507	250	-257
Ribble Valley	454	280	143	-137
Rosendale	117	247	190	-57
South Ribble	387	417	191	-226
West Lancs	375	324	193	-131
Wyre	376	460	296	-164

\* Source: Lichfields