

C O M M I T T E E R E P O R T		
REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE
Chief Planning Officer	Planning Committee	Date: 12 April 2021

<b>ADDENDUM</b>
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**ITEM 3e – 20/01347/OUTMAJ - Land North of Town Lane, Whittle-le-Woods**

**The recommendation remains as per the original report.**

**Councillor Gabbott** has objected to the application and has commented as follows:

- 1) it is safeguarded land which is currently under dispute due to central government but we cannot make decisions if our position is right.
- 2) it goes against our local plan in that: SO2: To ensure there is sufficient and appropriate infrastructure to meet future needs, funded where necessary by developer contributions. There is no mention of how infrastructure will be provided and Coppull is in need of an upgrade in several local services that are under pressure.
- 3) I do not believe that this application sufficiently complies with our policy ST1: New Provision or Improvement of Footpaths, Cycleways, Bridleways and their associated facilities in existing networks and new development.
- 4) it will contribute to more vehicles on the roads and increase emissions due to issues such as Policy ST2: Rail Facilities, Electrification and Improvement Land will be safeguarded for a railway station, and associated facilities including additional car and cycle parking at:  
ST2.1 Station Road, Coppull for a new railway station;
- 5) I believe that it further exacerbated the extremely high density of homes in the Coppull ward going against SO6: To achieve densities for new housing that recognises the local character of surrounding areas, whilst making efficient use of land.
- 6) Coppull has a lack of green space especially amenity land for the health and wellbeing of residents. This land is used by a vast amount of locals and this development would remove their right to amenity green space as per Policy HS4A: Open Space Requirements in New Housing Developments All new housing developments will be required to make provision for open space and recreation facilities, where there are identified local deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility or quality and/or value of open space and recreation facilities.
- 7) this will have a long term devastating impact on the environment, wildlife, natural habitat and green space and this application contradicts the requirements we have set out in SO15: To foster 'place shaping' to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the built environment in Central Lancashire by encouraging high quality design of new buildings
  - SO16: To protect, conserve and enhance Central Lancashire's places of architectural and archaeological value and the distinctive character of its landscapes
  - SO17: To maintain and improve the quality of Central Lancashire's built and natural environmental assets so that it remains a place with 'room to breathe'.
- 8) As per BNE1 this development will have a significant detrimental impact because of its density, siting and scale. It will also be overbearing for neighbouring properties

with the potential to overlook and overshadow. The elements of this proposal are of low quality and fail to adhere to the local plan and stay within the local character. It adversely impacts the highways and risks the safety of pedestrians and vehicles. It has a huge impact on important landscape features. The current green fields and landscape features help to absorb sound and it would create a dramatic increase in noise for neighbouring residents. There is also a lack of thought on how to prevent crime and promote community safety.

9) BNE 3.6 states it shall not be permitted.

10) BNE 6 states no nuisance effects on neighbours in relation to lighting but this cannot be guaranteed as the area is away from the highway and is high density and will require lighting that will be a nuisance to existing residents.

11) Policy BNE9: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

In Chorley, Biodiversity and Ecological Network resources will be protected, conserved, restored and enhanced:

12) Policy BNE10: Trees Development proposals which would result in the loss of trees and/or involve inappropriate works to trees which contribute positively to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area will not be permitted. there is no exceptional circumstance which would warrant the destruction of established trees.

13) the council would be brought into disrepute if it went against the following strategic objectives SO18: To improve the health and wellbeing of all Central Lancashire's residents and reduce the health inequalities that affect the more deprived areas.

- SO19: To improve access to health care, sport and recreation, open green spaces, culture, entertainment, and community facilities and services, including healthy food.

- SO20: To create environments in Central Lancashire that help to reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime, especially in the more deprived areas which often experience higher levels of crime. which if permission is granted would not adhere to these objectives in our local plan.

14) it goes against the councils green agenda, climate change emergency announcement and

SO24: To reduce water usage, protect and enhance Central Lancashire's water resources and minimise the pollution of water, air and soil. This development puts further strain on air quality and pushes the council further away from its target.

15) the area has previously seen an application refused: 400 Dwellings and Shop Units Ref. No: 5/5/09586 | Status: Refusal of Outline Planning Permission nothing has changed and so the result should be the same.

Finally, 5.1.2 of the air quality assessment particularly concerns me and could affect the health of residents especially during the Covid pandemic with the major health issue being respiratory problems.

**Parish Councillors Peter Higham and William Yates** have objected to the application and have both commented as follows:

- This land has not been designated for development in the current Local Plan.
- Chorley has exceeded its requirements for housing needs.
- The single access onto Town Lane will cause major traffic problems on Town Lane to the east on Blackburn Road and to the west at Waterhouse Green.
- Will have a very detrimental effect to the flow of traffic as these are already difficult areas of congestion.
- Previous Redrow housing developments have caused extensive flooding to houses on Town Lane and Waterhouse Green. Although the installation of attenuation tanks on these sites were supposed to prevent flooding this was not the case and flooding occurred.

- Public footpaths transverse and circumvent this site which will be totally ruined by this development.
- Residents with children in the village have constant problems trying to secure a place for their children in a local schools due to there being no places available.

**Whittle-le-Woods Resident's Association** have objected to the application and have commented as follows:

Summary of Objection

A very detailed objection has been received from Whittle-le-Woods Resident's Association as summarised below. At their request a copy of their full objection is appended to this addendum.

Is inappropriate on several grounds including scale, style, and lack of social and environmental sustainability.

If the land is to be developed in the future, it should be at much smaller scale, retaining more of the land in its current open character, and be progressed in the future ONLY when the local infrastructure is better able to provide services for the increased population.

It is not a mixed development with smaller (affordable) housing crammed into the least favourable areas of the site.

The design does not respond to the local area in terms of townscape or design. This echoes Redrow's 'standardised' approach nationwide.

Journeys from the site will largely be by car. The DAS assessment of its foot and cycle connectivity is based on underestimated measurement of distance, ignorance of footpath suitability and optimism of propensity to walk, cycle or use the infrequent bus service.

The assessment of journeys, including at peak time, seems significantly lower than that which would normally occur with a development of this size.

The only point of access is onto Town Lane, which has several points of restriction. Several structures along Town Lane, including a narrow canal bridge, are listed and the whole road has a 7.5 tonne weight limit. This will prove problematic in both the construction and the occupancy phases. Other local roads which may become 'cut-throughs' are unsuitable and will compound the problem.

Contrary to Redrow's assertions, the site shows considerable capacity for wildlife much of which would probably be reduced if the development proceeds at the proposed scale.

The effects of the development on areas already prone to flooding is likely to be severe. The incidence of extreme rainfall events is likely to increase and the excess run-off AT THESE TIMES is likely to exacerbate current risk to Waterhouse Green, just downstream of the site. Flood warnings are a regular occurrence in this part of the village. They are very concerned that the ability of the proposed attenuation measures will not be enough to prevent a worsening of the already bad situation for local residents. They are very concerned that insufficient pre-application monitoring has been carried out to firmly conclude that the proposals will not increase the vulnerability of Waterhouse Green / Town Lane, to flooding and we believe the applicant's survey and report do not cover the issues that need to be addressed.

Infrastructure in Whittle-le-Woods is currently inadequate to support the present population, especially in terms of school spaces and healthcare, and will be even more so if a development of this scale proceeds. The shop referred to has closed, the doctor's surgery is relocating an extra c.800m further away from the site, and the dentist indicated does not take NHS patients.

Foul sewage would use the existing network along Town Lane. The same applicant also intends to connect the new properties at Croston's Farm to this same pipe. We believe this is likely to overload the system and cause issues.

Redrow's record on developing properties that provide environmental sustainability is poor – though the DAS pays lip-service to this there is no indication that they will deliver anything over the statutory minimum in this field. This will do nothing to help meet the Government's Climate Change targets.

The issues raised at previous community meetings, planning consultations and Redrow's own inadequate pre-planning consultation have not been addressed.

The nuisance from noise and air pollution from the M61 has not been adequately addressed.

The plans include 'areas for future development'. This would increase all of the issues that cause problems with the site, as well as being very close indeed to the M61.

The proposed footway/cycle-path connection to Town Lane is unlikely to be mobility-friendly and is positively dangerous at the junction point. Redrow's record of good provision in this area is poor. The cycleway indicated on the indicative masterplan to the north does not yet exist and is unlikely to be built in the rear future. Routes to a single local shop for pedestrians is generally not suitable for shopping trips and the cycle route is not easy. The committee are invited to undertake a site visit which includes walking or cycling to the local amenities.

The subject site has such significant constraints that sustainable development, responding to the nature and context of the site is very difficult. At the scale proposed it is impossible. If the site is to be developed it should be for many fewer properties, designed sympathetically to compliment the local character, leaving the northern and eastern parts of the site as open land. Much more attention needs to be paid to environmental sustainability, responding to the site's ecology and ensuring safe access and use of Town Lane.

The proposal does nothing to offer benefit to the local community – on the contrary, it will be a significant disbenefit in almost every respect. For example, see the analysis of healthcare in the area.

**Whittle-le-Woods Flood Action Group** have objected to the application and have commented as follows:

Summary of Objection

As a village, Whittle-le-Woods has encountered significant and increasing distress based on actual residential flood events, EA flood alerts (30 spanning the last 4+ years) and Telemetry system alerts (8 of which have occurred in 2020 alone). The telemetry system was an investment made following the 2015 Boxing Day floods

allowing a 'local' understanding of the River Lostock and its erratic and sudden behaviours to be achieved.

Following the 'once in a 100 year' events of 2015, they have worked with CBC, EA, LCC, Whittle Parish councils and a number of third parties in dispatches to help to build flood mitigation resources, improve surface water run offs through culvert clearance & improve our knowledge of the river all in the hope of protecting the village and villagers, lives and livelihoods. The immediate community residing in either the highest risk Flood zone area (as defined by the EA) and/or up/down stream have been tremendous in their endeavours, commitment and tolerance of what is now everyday life - living with the threat of the River Lostock on their doorstep. The meandering stream that turns into an aggressive force given in some cases only a few hours worth of rain.

The Flood Action Group (FAG) has liaised tirelessly with primarily Whittle Parish Council to secure funding on an annual basis and continues to play an active and protective role on a weekly, sometimes daily basis clearing gullies, clearing the river banks, deploying sandbags etc. Rest assured this work will continue.

The development proposal simply serves to perpetuate the flood risk already existing at the highest level. The development site does not have a flood risk associated to itself, however the downstream consequences are highly likely to be negatively significant to flooding.

They have attached a number of reports to their objection commissioned in the past 12 months that clearly outline in detail the associated risk – both current and indeed in anticipation of future development. It must be stated at this point that Redrow have already had planning permission granted for another 54 dwellings (Croston's Farm) with spades already in the ground – this will further the downstream impact. The field based report has been produced by independent experts indicating that the risk increases by a factor of three based on a development of this scale. The FRA produced by Waterco lacks local knowledge and detail and was produced back in 2019 – this is the reporting used to support the planning application. The submissions relating to surface water run-off into both the River Lostock and other drains used to carry away surface water is a smoke screen as these both would end up in the River Lostock in the Flood Risk Zone. The reports are not specific enough, lack detail and are out-dated.

The EA also and very importantly commissioned an assessment of the River Lostock dated 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (which they have attached). This report is extensive. It details options available to mitigate against flooding. It recognises the downstream threat in Whittle-le-Woods to the extent that the EA submitted for funding for 'upstream storage'. This comes at considerable cost and as such the National Programming Team proposed that this should be deferred until 2024/25 based on cost ratio. The EA team feel so strongly about this that they are challenging the National Programming Team saying 'that we don't want this project deferred due to repeated flooding in the community'. This indicates that a considerable threat currently exists and all of this reporting was produced before a '3 fold impact development' was proposed. What will the risk to lives and livelihoods be now based on these new proposals? They do not fully understand why the EA themselves would not object – they interpret that the EA are providing the green light to allow permits to be granted based on the vicinity of the development to the River Lostock without taking the time

to thoroughly evaluate this application – the above report (Lostock assessment) clearly does this.

They object and ask the content of this correspondence to be considered, consider the detailed reporting attached, understand the endeavours of the community and ask the council to support them in their attempts to protect a village and a community that is threatened and compromised by a proposal based on limited detail, a lack of local insight and a total disregard for the impact it will have on an adjacent/downstream community. Just because the development isn't sited in a Flood Risk Zone does not mean that serious implications don't exist for others.

### **The Environment Agency**

Confirm that we have received consultation requests from Chorley Borough Council for the [six] proposals on Safeguarded Land.

With regards to these sites, they are not planning any works or undertaking any appraisals that could conflict with these.

They state they have also looked through the comments from the drainage engineer and we have no comments. The Environment Agency is not resourced to comment on surface water drainage, sewer flooding and flooding from ordinary watercourses as these are outside our remit as a statutory consultee.

The Environment Agency have provided further additional comments regarding strategic flood risk in relation to this state They state:

*In 2018 the Environment Agency commissioned an Initial Assessment into flood risk on the River Lostock from Whittle-le-Woods to Ulnes Walton. The assessment sought to identify the baseline level of flood risk and options to mitigate the identified risk, as the first step towards development of a possible flood alleviation scheme. One of the conclusions of this study was that Whittle-le-Woods would need a further more detailed assessment. We plan to begin this assessment in April 2021.*

*In the Initial Assessment construction of a flood storage area is one of the recommended solutions to reduce flood risk downstream of the proposed development site in Whittle-le-Woods. The land considered as a flood storage area is east of the proposed development site. There is no direct impact on the site proposed for development and construction of a flood storage area will only proceed if future studies lead to a successful business case. However, due to the proximity of the site we are keen to start a dialogue with the developer as the proposals develop this year.*