## APPLICATION REPORT - 20/01053/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 12 October 2020

Ward: Adlington And Anderton

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Erection of seven buildings comprising light industrial business units

Location: Land South Of Mercer Court And East Of Westhoughton Road Adlington

Case Officer: Mr Iain Crossland

**Applicant: Mr Joynt** 

Agent: Mr Paul Baines, PAB Architects Ltd

Consultation expiry: 3 May 2021

Decision due by: 13 August 2021 (Extension of time agreed)

### RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

# SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2. The application site is located to the south of Rawlinson Lane and Mercer Court between a railway line to the east and existing residential development to the west. It lies within the settlement area of Adlington and is currently accessed via a short road currently serving three residential dwellinghouses on Mercer Court.
- 3. Whilst bordered by trees, a large majority of the site is covered by hardstanding, with the site previously being used intermittently for storage purposes, and more recently as a base for Network Rail contractors to carry out works to the railway. The site is long and narrow at approximately 20m in width, extending to approximately 285m in length.
- 4. The character of the surrounding area is residential and consists largely of modern detached dwellings with more traditional terraced and semi-detached dwellings further to the west of the site facing Westhoughton Road. The railway line to the east of the site is a notable feature in the context of the application site.
- It is noted that planning permission has been previously granted, in 2016, for the erection of two dwellings to the north of the application site (application ref. 16/00498/FUL) adjacent to no.3 Mercer Court, and more recently in 2019 for the erection of 7no. dwellings and associated works (application ref. 18/00191/FUL).

# **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

6. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of seven buildings comprising light industrial business units, which fall within use class E(g) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The proposed buildings would be of a traditional design style with dual pitched roofs and gable features faced in a combination of red brick and render. The buildings would differ in scale slightly between three building types but would have a maximum measurement of approximately 20m by 9m footprint, whilst each

building would have a ridge and eaves height of 6.2m and 2.7m respectively. Access would be taken from Mercer Court and the buildings would be set out in a linear arrangement along an access drive with a turning head to the far south of the site. Each building would split into two units resulting in a total of 14no. light industrial workshop units.

### REPRESENTATIONS

- 7. Representations from the occupiers of 26no. addresses have been received citing the following grounds of objection:
  - Impact on residential amenity through noise and disturbance through the use of the units and vehicles accessing the site.
  - Impact on highway safety and need for traffic calming measures on Rawlinson Lane.
  - Impact on the amenity of residents through loss of outlook and privacy.
  - The character of the area is residential. The re-introduction of an industrial use would be out of character.
  - Residential properties have experienced flooding in this area and the proposal would make this situation worse.
  - Ecological impacts such as impact on bats.
  - Loss of screening of the railway.
  - The noise assessment is outdated and needs revisiting.
  - No need for new business units.
  - Light pollution from security lighting.
  - · Presence of harmful substances.
  - The fire risk to the new units.
  - Increased criminal activity.
  - Impact on railway land.
  - Reduced house values.
  - · Security fencing should be required.
  - Inaccurate site plans.
  - Impact on residents through the construction phase.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

- 8. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit: Have no objections.
- 9. Waste & Contaminated Land: Comment that the development site is former railway land where there is a possibility of ground contamination; however, given the nature of the proposed development as non-residential and what is known about the site, it is unlikely the site would be determined as contaminated land.
- 10. Lancashire County Council Highway Services: Have no objection subject to conditions.
- 11. Lead Local Flood Authority: Have no objections subject to conditions.
- 12. United Utilities: Have commented that the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to conditions.
- 13. Network Rail: Originally objected to the proposal on the basis of the proximity of development to railway assets. This objection was withdrawn in April 2021 following the receipt of amended plans on 8 March 2021.
- 14. Regulatory Services Environmental Health: Have no objection.
- 15. Heath Charnock Parish Council (27 Nov 2020): The Parish Council considered this application at its meeting on 12 November 2020 and object to this proposal. Comment is made that it is a long narrow site running at the rear of residential properties which front onto the A6 and between the railway line. The Parish Council note that the site was proposed for residential development in the initial public consultation of the next Central Lancashire 15 Year Strategic Plan for Chorley, South Ribble and Preston City Council districts and

consider that residential use would be preferable to industrial use. The specific concerns of the Parish Council are: to safeguard the residential amenity of the homes surrounding the proposed site; the proposed access off Rawlinson Lane is at the side of the railway bridge and is close to the buttress; it is effectively a minor residential road which is unsuitable and inappropriate; the potential frequency and size of vehicles which 14 industrial units will generate cannot be accommodated at this location onto Rawlinson Lane and close to its junction with the A6; if granted, the proposal will generate more larger and heavier vehicles using lower Rawlinson Lane as a short cut to Standish and the M6; at 14 units it seems to be over development of the site with inadequate parking provision and circulation space; the ability to control the type of activities within the units; problems of pollution from noise, dust and possibly from smells. It was noted that some nearby residents have expressed their concerns to Chorley Council as the Planning Authority.

- 16. Heath Charnock Parish Council (17 May 2021): On 6 May 2021 Heath Charnock Parish Council considered the amended plan and reconsidered the comments it has previously submitted. The proposal remains largely as previously submitted with marginal change only. The Parish Council confirms that it stands by all of its previous comments in respect of this application. The access to the site is not appropriate. It is not appropriate to introduce light industrial use close to and at the rear of a significant number of existing residential properties in this locality
- 17. Adlington Town Council (29 Oct 2020): Considered this application at its meeting on 19 October 2020. The Town Council said that the attraction of local employment is an important consideration to maintain Adlington as a place to live and work. This site was considered an inappropriate location due to: the site being long and narrow to the rear of the back gardens of residential properties and with access proposed from Rawlinson Lane close to the railway bridge, and at that point being in entirely residential use. The railway line restricts the width of the site. Concerns were about access and safety; the size, number and type of vehicles that light industrial use would generate; over development of the site with inadequate parking provision given that 14 units of accommodation are shown on the plan but 7 are referred to in the application summary; the ability to control the type of activities within the units; problems of pollution from noise, dust and possibly from smells. It was noted that some nearby residents had already expressed their concerns to Chorley and the Town Councils which under the circumstances the Town Council agreed to endorse.
- 18. Adlington Town Council (21 April 2021): The Town Council considered this application again at its meeting on 19 April 2021 based on the amended plan. As stated at its 19 October 2020 meeting this site is still considered to be an inappropriate location due to: 1. The site access from Rawlinson Lane is close to the railway bridge. At this point the adjacent land is entirely residential in use and scale. This is an inappropriate location to introduce larger commercial and light industrial vehicle traffic. The volume and frequency of traffic generated would be significant given this single access point would be serving up to 14 light industrial units and is located to the back of the rear gardens of many residential properties along and off the Westhoughton Road (A6) frontage. 2. The site being long and narrow to the rear of the back gardens of the aforementioned residential properties and between the railway line. This restricts the width of the site. At 14 units it seems to be overdevelopment, with inadequate parking provision and limited turning space. It is inappropriate development in essentially a residential area. 3. Concerns were expressed about access and safety; the ability to control the type of activities within the units; problems of pollution from noise, dust and possibly from smells; the hours of operation both on weekdays and at weekends to minimise intrusion and the impact on neighbouring residents who wish to enjoy their homes and gardens. 4. Awareness of the concerns expressed by nearby residents to both Chorley and to the Town Councils. The Town Council shares and endorses as light industrial activity on this site is inappropriate.

The Town Council hopes that Chorley Council as the Local Planning Authority will consider and recognise these genuine concerns in respect of this proposal

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

#### Principle of development

- 19. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) set out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 20. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
  - a) an economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 21. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).
- 22. For decision-taking this means:
  - approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 23. Paragraph 80 of the Framework covers Building a Strong Competitive Economy and states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 24. It is noted that policy 1(d) of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy states that some growth and investment will be encouraged in Urban Local Service Centres such as Adlington, where the site is located, therefore, the proposed development is in line with this policy.
- 25. The application site is not designated within the Chorley Local Plan 2012 2026 and is previously developed land. The site is located within the settlement boundary, as defined by Policy V2 of the Local Plan. Within the settlement areas excluded from the Green Belt, and identified on the Policies Map, there is a presumption in favour of appropriate sustainable development, subject to material planning considerations and the other Policies and Proposals within this Plan.

- 26. Policy EP3 The Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 provides guidance for the development of new business and industrial developments. This policy sets out a number of criteria to be satisfied by such proposals. The most relevant criteria to this proposal are set out and assessed as follows:
- 27. a) they are of a scale and character that is commensurate with the size of the settlement; The proposed development consists of 7no. single storey structures of modest scale (up to 6.2m in height), providing light industrial units of up to 80m.sq. They are of a traditional building design style with a domestic aesthetic rather than a modern industrial style, and would be laid out in a linear pattern reflecting the geometry of the site. The development is of a scale that is commensurate with the type of area within which it would be located, which is largely residential, as the units would be of would be low in height and would have pitched roofs and gable features. The design and character would be reflective of the traditional design styles evident in the nearby housing estates and are an appropriate design response to the site and its surroundings.
- 28. b) the site is planned and laid out on a comprehensive basis;
  The site would be developed on a comprehensive basis accounting for access, parking and servicing requirements, landscaping and site constraints, whilst balancing this with an effective and efficient use of the land.
- 29. c) the site will not prejudice future, or current economic activities within nearby areas;
  There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would prejudice future, or current economic activities within nearby areas and provides windfall opportunity, balancing with other situations whereby employment land has been lost to residential uses.
- 30. d) the proposal will not cause unacceptable harm e.g. noise, smells to surrounding uses; The application seeks planning permission for light industrial units, which falls within the light industrial use class specified under class E(g) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). This use class specifically allows for any industrial process being a use, which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit. On the basis of this definition if a business were to occupy one of the proposed units, which resulted in the disturbance of residents the use would not be considered to fall within this use class and would not, therefore, be permitted under any planning permission that may be forthcoming as a result of this proposal. This provides a strong degree of protection in relation to residential amenity, as industrial uses that impact on residential amenity would not be permitted by under the class of development applied for. In order to secure this protection it is recommended that a condition is attached to any grant of planning permission to in order to define the permitted use.

Notwithstanding this the applicant has submitted a noise assessment in support of the proposed development, which demonstrates that the use of the units for industrial purposes would not have a significantly adverse impact on residential amenity. This has been reviewed by the Council's environmental health officer (EHO) who confirms that the noise assessment is adequate and the assumptions used are reasonable, including the use of older but more representative background noise levels, and a worst case scenario assumption that all units would be simultaneously producing internal noise. The EHO, therefore, raises no objection and recommends that within the structure of the buildings noise attenuation measures are provided and that operations are carried out with windows and doors closed, whilst it is also recommended that working hours are from 8am each day and no earlier. It is, therefore, recommended that conditions are attached to any grant of planning permission in relation to these recommendations.

31. e) the site has an adequate access that would not create a traffic hazard or have an undue environmental impact;

Access would be taken from Rawlinson Lane to the north via Mercer Court. The acceptability of the highway impact is assessed in detail below.

32. f) the proposal will be served by public transport and provide pedestrian and cycle links to adjacent areas;

Public transport is readily accessible from the site with a high frequency bus route running along Chorley Road, which is a short walk away to the east, providing regular daily services to a number of surrounding towns including Chorley, Bolton and Preston. Adlington train station is the closest station to the site and is less than 1 mile away to the south. The location is easily accessible on foot or bicycle to residential areas. As such the site provides excellent accessibility to a large catchment.

- 33. g) open storage areas should be designed to minimise visual intrusion;

  No open storage areas are proposed and is it recommended that outdoor storage be restricted by condition.
- 34. h) adequate screening is provided where necessary to any unsightly feature of the development and security fencing is located to the internal edge of any perimeter landscaping;

The site is not a prominent one, being located between residential land and the railway. As such any visibility of the site from public vantage points is limited to views from the opposite side of the railway at the end of Barn View and a footpath from Maytree Court. As such landscaping and the position of fencing is not of particular importance in this respect.

- 35. i) on the edges of industrial areas, where sites adjoin residential areas or open countryside, developers will be required to provide substantial peripheral landscaping;

  The site does adjoin residential areas and, therefore, landscaping is an important aspect in this regard. It is proposed that existing boundary fencing be maintained together with existing trees and shrubs to the site boundary features. New planting is proposed to complement the proposed site layout, although no such details have been provided at this point. It is, therefore, recommended that the landscaping details be required by a condition attached to any grant of planning permission that may be forthcoming.
- 36. j) the development makes safe and convenient access provision for people with disabilities; It is proposed that access around the site would be level with minimal gradients, whilst DDA access would be provided at all units. There would also be disabled parking bays.
- 37. k) the buildings are designed, laid out and landscaped to maximise the energy conservation potential of any development, and to minimise the risk of crime;
  In order to comply with Building Regulations Part L2'A' requirements certain elements may also be required to be implemented to reduce Carbon Emissions.
- 38. I) the proposal will not result in surface water, drainage or sewerage related pollution problems; and

The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy in support of the proposed development. This has been assessed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (Lancashire County Council) and is covered in more detail below.

- 39. m) the proposal incorporates measures which help to prevent crime and promote community safety.
  - The site is enclosed by other land uses and the railway line, and shares no interface with any public land with access to the public highway via an unadopted road. It is the intention to retain the existing site boundaries, however, it is noted that new fencing and gates may be required at the entrance to the site to ensure adequate security. In order to ensure an adequate visual appearance it is recommended that details of fences, boundaries and gates are secured by condition.
- 40. The Chorley Local Plan acknowledges that not all allocated employment sites will cater for all employment uses, especially small businesses or the self-employed. The proposed units are small in scale and, therefore, ideally suited to small businesses. The valuable contribution these types of uses make to the local economy is recognised for the jobs created and investment in the area. However, this recognition has to be balanced against protecting existing public and residential amenity, especially in residential areas and policy

EP4 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 reflects this supporting small scale employment development in areas where housing is the principal land use, provided there would be no detriment to the amenity of the area in terms of scale, character, noise, nuisance, disturbance, environment and car parking. These matters have been covered to some extending in the assessment of policy EP3 above, and further assessment in relation to these factors is set out below.

# Design and impact on the character of the area

- 41. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free standing structures, provided that the proposal does not have a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding area by virtue of its density, siting, layout, building to plot ratio, height, scale and massing, design, orientation and use of materials.
- 42. The application site is located off Rawlinson Lane, via Mercer Court, and is a long narrow strip of land between the railway to the east and existing residential development to the west. The site does not occupy a prominent position and the proposed buildings on the site would only be visible via glimpses from distance. As such any development of the site would have a limited visual impact on the broader character of the area.
- 43. The proposed development comprises seven buildings set out in a linear arrangement along an access drive that terminates in a turning head. The buildings themselves would be of a traditional domestic design style and scale reflective of surrounding residential development. Given that the site is hard surfaced, has been used as a site compound for Network Rail and has been used sporadically for outdoor storage in the past, the proposed development would improve the appearance of the site. The buildings themselves comprise features such as pitched roofs, gables, brick detailing, and areas of glazing. These would provide a domestic aesthetic and a level of interest beyond that normally associated with industrial and business units. It is noted that there are a range of property types in the area, and the use of a traditional design style is compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
- 44. The layout of the development would follow a linear pattern reflective of the site and would make an efficient use of the land, allowing for parking and manoeuvring, whilst providing an adequate stand off from the operational railway land. The site has been used for storage and railway maintenance purposes for some time and the use for light industrial businesses would be compatible in the context of the area.
- 45. Overall, the layout and design of the proposed development is considered acceptable and appropriate to the existing surrounding development and is in accordance with policy 17 of the Core Strategy and policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 2026.

## Impact on neighbour amenity

- 46. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free-standing structures, provided that, the development would not cause harm to any neighbouring property by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing or by creating overbearing impacts.
- 47. The proposed buildings would be laid out in a linear pattern running along a north south axis. There would be windows and entrance doors in the western elevations and large roller shutter doors in the northern and southern elevations. The access road would run to the west of the buildings adjacent to rear gardens at Kings Lea.
- 48. The dwellings at nos. 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 and 17 Kings Lea are positioned closest to the site and their rear gardens bound the site. The proposed buildings would be positioned to the east of these existing dwellings, at approximately 4m from the garden boundaries. Given the positioning of these dwellings at an angle to the proposed buildings and the maximum ridge heights of 6.2m and eaves heights of 2.7m, the degree of separation is such that there would be no adverse impact on light or outlook given the design and scale of the proposed buildings.

- 49. It is noted that the tops of the buildings would be visible from the garden areas and that vehicles would pass to the rear of these gardens during working hours. The scale of the development is such that vehicle movements would be relatively limited, and commensurate with that of a residential site, given the light industrial classification and scale of the units. As such any noise and disruption associated with the vehicle movements would not be so disruptive as to have a significantly detrimental impact on residential amenity. The use of the units themselves has been covered earlier in the report, however, it must be considered that the light industrial use class is defined on the basis that it is compatible with residential areas, and that noise and odours should not form part of such uses and would be subject to enforcement action if this did form part of the working practices of businesses located in the units. It is also noted that there would be some benefits of the proposal in terms of shielding noise from the railway reaching properties at Kings Lea.
- 50. There are two properties on Mercer Court that are not within the ownership of the applicant. These are at the junction of the Mercer Court and Rawlinson Lane, and are located some considerable distance from the position of the proposed units themselves. The main impact that would be experienced by the occupies of these properties would be from vehicles visiting the site. The scale of the development is such that vehicle movements would be relatively limited, and commensurate with that of a residential site, given the light industrial classification and scale of the units. As such any the noise and disruption associated with the vehicle movements on the occupiers of these dwellings would not be so disruptive as to have a significantly detrimental impact on residential amenity
- 51. The proposed buildings would be located approximately 25m from residential dwellings and gardens to the east of the site, whilst the railway lies between these properties and the application site. Given the degree of separation and scale of development there would be no impact on the amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings from the presence of the buildings themselves. In relation to noise impacts from the use of the buildings, such uses are compatible with residential uses by definition, whilst the vehicle movements would have a negligible impact given the degree of separation and intervening buildings and railway.
- 52. It is noted that there is a history of complaints from local residents concerning night time noise, fumes from diesel generators and excess light, which were received by the Environmental Health section in July 2017. These complaints concern the use of the site by Network Rail as a depot and line access point in connection with the rail electrification works, although it is understood that the site was used by Network Rail for this purpose for some time prior to July 2017. Network Rail has a right of access to the track in the proposed development area to carry out operational works to the railway.
- 53. Although some concerns have been raised with regards to further disturbance if the proposed development is approved and implemented it is noted that the development of the site would prevent the ongoing use of the land as a depot and storage area, which has caused a number of problems for local residents in the past.
- 54. It is recommended that a Construction Method Statement is required prior to the commencement of any construction, given the narrow nature of the site, proximity of neighbouring dwellings and history of noise complaints. This would address concerns regarding the impact on amenity form the construction activities.
- 55. Overall, it is not considered that there would be any unacceptable degree of harm to the amenity of any nearby neighbouring occupiers and the development is considered to comply with policies EP3, EP4 and BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 -2026.

#### Highway safety

56. The application site extends from Mercer Court on the western edge of the Blackpool/Manchester Airport railway to the south boundary of 60 Westhoughton Road. It is the same site that was granted planning permission under reference 18/00191/FUL for a residential development of 7 dwellings comprising 2 and 3 bedroomed dwellings, but which is yet to be implemented.

- 57. The current proposal is for light industrial development comprising 7 individual buildings arranged in a similar layout to the approved residential dwellings. The previously approved 5.0m wide site access road is retained, but with the soft landscaped areas replaced with hard-paving in the current development.
- 58. The applicant proposes a total of 37no. parking spaces including 9no. spaces for the disabled. LCC Highways have assessed the development and consider that this is an acceptable level of parking. There are two proposed cycle storage shelters located north and south of Units 1 and 14, which are noted.
- 59. In the previously approved residential development, the need for alterations to realign the existing junction of Rawlinson Lane and Mercer Court for improved visibility and safety was identified. A scheme drawing by Croft, referenced 2433-F01 (Sep 18) was, therefore, approved for implementation, however, as the current proposal seeks light industrial use, which may involve more HGV movements than the approved residential development, it is not considered the scheme approved for the residential development would be suitable and adequate for commercial traffic.
- 60. On this basis, the applicant was required to submit a scheme proposal of improvement works for the junction to ensure safe access in and out of the site. LCC Highways have confirmed that the latest amended drawing submitted by the applicant relating to the improvement works at Rawlinson Lane/Mercer Court, drawing no. SCP/200770/SK01 rev. B (20.07.21) is acceptable.
- 61. The drawing shows that the junction would be realigned by cutting back the existing brick wall and extending the footway on the south side of Rawlinson Lane into Mercer Court. The footway extension on the east side of Mercer Court would be 2.0m wide for at least 10m and then narrowed into a hard strip to accommodate lighting provision. On the west side, the footway would be 1.8m wide and extended for the full length of Mercer Court. The footways should be clearly delineated from the carriageway with raised kerbs. Dropped kerbs and tactile pavings would be provided on Mercer Court to facilitate crossing at the junction, however, as Mercer Court is unadopted and currently privately maintained, installation of the crossing and its subsequent maintenance is the applicant's responsibility.
- 62. Works to realign the junction would require the existing footway on the south side of Rawlinson Lane to be reduced in length on the east of the junction, whilst that on the west is extended eastwards to ensure the access is provided to 5.5m width with 6.0m corner radii. The works within the adopted highway would be carried out through an appropriate agreement with LCC as the local highway authority with all costs borne by the applicant, including the cost of relocating the existing utility chamber and lamp column on the east of the junction if considered necessary to allow safe access and egress of Mercer Court.
- 63. Overall, LCC Highways as the local highway authority for the area consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle subject to the submission and implementation of a scheme for the construction of the site access and the off-site works of highway improvement.

## Drainage

- 64. Policy 29 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy requires appraising, managing and reducing flood risk in all new developments, avoiding inappropriate development in flood risk areas. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted in support of the proposed development prepared by CTC Infrastructure Limited.
- 65. The application site is a low lying strip of land that has been hard surfaced and currently has a low level of permeability. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest risk and is identified as land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%). Eller Brook passes under the site and beneath the Preston to Bolton railway line midway along the length of the site in culvert. The watercourse at Eller Brook flows to the west to ultimately discharge into the River Yarrow approx. 1.7 km from the site.

The site falls towards the position of Eller Brook into which surface water runoff from the site currently discharges.

- 66. Surface water (including the risk of sewers and culverted watercourses surcharging) poses the highest risk of more frequent flooding. Surface water drainage from new developments is critical in reducing the risk of localised flooding. The Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates a low risk to the site from surface water flooding in the vicinity of the Eller Brook where it crosses under the site in culvert. The mapping identifies that should surface water flooding occur then the flood depth is expected to be below 300mm. There is no record of the site flooding, and as such the risk is low from sewer flooding and pluvial runoff.
- 67. The site falls within a region characterised by slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage that is not conducive to infiltration. Surface water runoff from the existing site discharges into the watercourse at Eller Brook. It is, therefore, intended that new surface water drainage would be constructed, and appropriately sized, to take all surface water runoff from the buildings roofs, access road and hardstanding areas, and be controlled to pre-development runoff rates prior to discharge into Eller Brook. Attenuation would be provided for rainfall events up to the 100 year critical rain storm plus 30% on stored volumes.
- 68. This would reflect the existing scenario and there would, therefore, be no change to the flood risk upstream or downstream of this location. It is intended that foul sewage from the site would be collected by a piped system and discharged into the public sewer.
- 69. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is the responsible 'risk management authority' for managing 'local' flood risk, which refers to flood risk from surface water, groundwater or from ordinary watercourses. The LLFA have reviewed the FRA submitted in support of the proposal and raise no objection subject to conditions requiring details of a final surface water sustainable drainage strategy for the site, details of how surface water and pollution prevention would be managed during the construction phase, and a Verification Report and Operation and Maintenance Plan for the lifetime of the development. The LLFA consider that further investigations into the potential for infiltration need to be explored. They also note that the Environment Agency maps detailing areas susceptible to surface water flooding show that there is in fact a substantial surface water flow path from the railway line, across the northern end of the site and along Eller Brook itself. These flow paths should be considered and accounted for within the final drainage strategy, which would be scrutinised by the LLFA to ensure its suitability.
- 70. A number of concerns have been raised from residents occupying properties to the west of the site with regards to surface water drainage issues on their own land and the impact of the proposed development in relation to water draining off their land and onto the application site. It would appear that there are historic issues of waterlogging and the pooling of water on land the rear of dwellings facing Westhoughton Road. It is not considered that the proposed development would exacerbate the waterlogging issues experienced on the land and gardens to the west of the site and the proposed development cannot be required to address existing surface water run-off and waterlogging issues arising on land within separate ownership that is not associated with the application site.

# Ecology

- 71. The application site comprises extensive areas of hard standing and recently re-vegetated land following previous uses. There is little in the way of semi-natural habitat present and the potential of the site to support any specially protected species is low. The site may be used by more common species moving along the adjacent railway line or associated with nearby gardens, although this use is likely to be transient or for minor foraging activity.
- 72. An ecological survey, carried out by Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd dated May 2021 was submitted in support of the proposed development and has been reviewed by the Council's ecology advisors Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU). GMEU have confirmed that the

- survey work was completed by suitably qualified ecologists and appears to have followed best practice guidelines. The findings of the report are therefore accepted.
- 73. Based on the report and the submitted plans, GMEU confirm that the site has no nature conservation designation, legal or otherwise, and no negative impacts on any such sites are anticipated as a result of the proposal. The predominant habitats on the site is hardstanding with areas of woodland, scrub and ephemeral vegetation also present around the perimeter of the site.
- 74. An existing structure on the site (breeze block shed) had no features with potential to support roosting bats, and one tree was identified with low potential to support roosting bats, which it is not necessary to remove as part of the proposed development. Any external lighting would need to be designed in consideration of nocturnal animals such as bats. Buildings and vegetation on the site are, however, suitable for nesting birds, and the nests of all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Therefore, building demolition and site clearance including tree and vegetation removal should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season (March August inclusive) unless it can otherwise be demonstrated that no active bird nests are present.
- 75. No other evidence of protected species was found on the site, however, there is potential that the site would support species such as hedgehog. As a precaution to prevent the harm of species such as hedgehog, which may occur in the area, the reasonable precautions identified in section 8.11 of the ecology report should be followed during any work on site.
- 76. Invasive species (rhododendron and Himalayan balsam) were recorded on the site, which are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, which makes it an offence to spread these species in the wild. As such no site clearance or vegetation removal should be undertaken until a method statement for the control and prevention of spread of invasive species has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Once agreed the method statement should be followed in full.
- 77. Removal of the woodland/scrub habitat should be kept to a minimum and all retained trees should be protected from any adverse impacts of the proposed development in line with best practice arboriculture advice. Where trees cannot be retained, compensatory planting should be required within a suitable landscaping scheme. Enhancements for biodiversity should be delivered through the scheme and can include provision of bat and bird boxes (either integrated into the new buildings or put up in retained trees on the site). The ecology report provides details of other measures which are also appropriate and these should be secured through the planning process and incorporated into the scheme where possible, in line with the principles of the Framework.
- 78. It is not, therefore, considered that the site has substantive nature conservation importance and it is noted that Greater Manchester Ecology Unit do not object to the proposed development on nature conservation grounds. There development is, therefore, considered to comply with policy BNE 9 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 2026.

# Employment and skills provision

- 79. The Central Lancashire Employment Skills Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in September 2017. The SPD introduces Employment Skills Statements and provides clarity as to how this requirement relates to the relevant policies set out in the Core Strategy and Local Plan as well as the guidance set out in the Framework. The SPD goes on to state that one of Central Lancashire's priorities is to encourage economic growth within Central Lancashire that benefits the people and businesses in the three boroughs. The SPD seeks to;
  - increase employment opportunities by helping local businesses to improve, grow and take on more staff
  - help businesses to find suitable staff and suppliers, especially local ones
  - improve the skills of local people to enable them to take advantage of the resulting employment opportunities

- help businesses already located in Central Lancashire to grow and attract new businesses into the area
- 80. The SPD requires development over certain thresholds to be accompanied by an Employment and Skills Statement to ensure the right skills and employment opportunities are provided at the right time. This is to the benefit of both the developer and local population and covers the following areas:
  - Creation of apprenticeships/new entrants/graduates/traineeships
  - Recruitment through Job Hub and Jobcentre plus and other local employment vehicles.
  - Work trials and interview guarantees
  - Vocational training (NVQ)
  - Work experience (14-16 years, 16-19 years and 19+ years) (5 working days minimum)
  - Links with schools, colleges and university
  - Use of local suppliers
  - Supervisor Training
  - Management and Leadership Training
  - In house training schemes
  - Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Cards
  - Support with transport, childcare and work equipment
  - Community based projects
- 81. A condition is recommended requiring an employment and skills plan.

# Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

82. The Chorley CIL Infrastructure Charging Schedule provides a specific amount for development. The CIL Charging Schedule was adopted on 16 July 2013 and charging commenced on 1 September 2013. The proposed development would be a CIL liable development and any charge would be subject to indexation in accordance with the Council's Charging Schedule.

# Other matters raised

- 83. The noise assessment is outdated and needs revisiting: The initial noise report that was submitted did not address the impacts of the proposed development and, therefore, a more relevant noise assessment was requested and submitted.
- 84. No need for new business units: There is no maximum limit on the number of business and commercial units that can be provided in an area, or on a boroughwide basis.
- 85. Presence of harmful substances: This is not a planning matter. It is noted that the uses applied for are light industrial and so major industrial processing would not take place.
- 86. The fire risk to the new units: This is not a planning matter.
- 87. Increased criminal activity: There is no evidence to suggest that the redevelopment of the site would lead to increased crime.
- 88. Reduced house values: This is not a planning matter.
- 89. Inaccurate site plans: The plans are to an accurate and recognised scale.

# CONCLUSION

90. The proposed development would contribute to economic growth within Chorley and is considered to be acceptable in principle. There would be no unacceptable detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or on the appearance of the site and character of the area. In addition there would be no unacceptable impact on the highway network, ecology or drainage. On the basis of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE**

**Ref**: 14/00907/NOT **Decision**: PERTEL **Decision Date**: 22 August 2014 **Description**: Notification of intention to install network rail communications equipment

Ref: 18/00191/FUL Decision: PERFPP Decision Date: 30 May 2019

**Description:** Erection of 7no. dwellings and associated works

**RELEVANT POLICIES:** In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

# Suggested conditions

No.	Condition			
1.	The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.  Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.			
2.	The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans below:			
	Title	Plan Ref	Received On	
	Location Plan	2025-PL01 Rev.B	17 November 2020	
	Block Plan	2025-PL-06 Rev.B	05 March 2021	
	Proposed Site Plan	2025-PL-03 Rev.D	05 March 2021	
	Units 1&2, 5&6, 9&10, 13&14 Floor Plans and Elevations	2025-PL-07 Rev.A	08 March 2021	
	Units 3&4, 11&12 Floor Plans and Elevations	2025-PL-08 Rev.A	08 March 2021	
	Units 7&8 Floor Plans and Elevations	2025-PL-09 Rev.A	08 March 2021	
	PROPOSED ACCESS ARRANGEMENT & VISIBILITY SPLAYS	SCP/200770/SK01 Rev.B	20 July 2021	
	Reason: For the avoidance of dou	ubt and in the interests	of proper planning.	
3.	The buildings and associated units hereby approved shall be used for Class E(g) purposes and for no other purpose of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order).			
	Reason: To define the developme occupiers.	ent and to protect the ar	menity of neighbouring	
4.	Prior to the erection of the superstructures of the buildings hereby approved samples of all external facing and roofing materials (notwithstanding any details shown on previously submitted plan(s) and specification) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be undertaken			

	strictly in accordance with the details as approved.	
	Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality.	
5.	Prior to the erection of the superstructures of the buildings hereby approved, full details of the alignment, height and appearance of all fences and walls to be erected to the site boundaries (notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plan(s)) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No building shall be occupied or land used pursuant to this permission before all walls and fences have been erected in accordance with the approved details. Fences and walls shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.	
	Reason: To ensure a visually satisfactory form of development and to protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby property.	
6.	Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced full details of existing and proposed ground levels and proposed building finished floor levels (all relative to ground levels adjoining the site) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plan(s). The development shall be carried out strictly in conformity with the approved details.	
	Reason: To protect the appearance of the locality and in the interests of the amenities of local residents.	
7.	No goods, plant or material shall be deposited or stored in the open or displayed for sale in the open on the site.	
	Reason: In order to protect the amenities of the area, and to maintain adequate parking areas.	
8.	The units hereby approved shall operate with doors closed at all times other than for access and egress or during loading and unloading.	
	Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents from undue noise.	
9.	No building hereby approved shall be occupied until the noise attenuation measures as set out in Table 6 of the Noise Assessment dated 09 December 2020 produced by Martec Environmental Consultants Ltd. have been installed in full, and such measures shall be retained in perpetuity.	
	Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents from undue noise.	
10.	No source of external illumination shall be installed on the development hereby permitted, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.	
	Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents from undue light pollution and in relation to the impact on nocturnal mammals.	
11.	The light industrial business units hereby permitted shall only operate between 08:00 and 18:00 hours on Mondays to Fridays, 08:00 and 13:00 hours on Saturdays and not on Sundays or Bank or other National Public Holidays.	
	Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area and adjoining and nearby residential properties.	
12.	Deliveries, servicing and collections to and from the units hereby permitted, including waste collections, shall not take place outside the following hours: 08:00 to 18:00 - Monday to Friday.	

08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays Where exceptional circumstances require deliveries/servicing/collections to take place outside these stated hours, full written permission will firstly be sought from the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of nearby residential accommodation. 13. A scheme for the landscaping of the development and its surroundings shall be submitted prior to the erection of any of the superstructures of the buildings hereby approved. These details shall include all existing trees and hedgerows on the land; detail any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; indicate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted. their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded, paved or hard landscaped; and detail any changes of ground level or landform, proposed finished levels, means of enclosure, minor artefacts and structures. The scheme should include a landscaping/habitat creation and management plan which should aim to contribute to targets specified in the UK and Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plans. The landscaping scheme must take into account the needs of great crested newts and the advice provided in the ERAP ecological survey and assessment report, in particular the creation of a new pond and amphibian hibernacula on the site. Landscaping proposals should comprise only native plant communities appropriate to the natural area. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details within the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is carried out to mitigate the impact of the development and secure a high quality design. 14. No works to trees and shrubs or vegetation or buildings clearance shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and written confirmation provided that no active bird nests are present which has been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: Nesting birds are a protected species. 15. During the construction period, all trees to be retained shall be protected in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012 or any subsequent amendment to the British Standards. Reason: To safeguard the trees to be retained. 16. Prior to any earthworks being carried out a method statement detailing eradication and/or control and/or avoidance measures for Rhododendron shrubs and Himalayan Balsam shall be supplied to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to thereafter and

implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning

No development shall commence until an Employment and Skills Plan that is

Reason: Due to the presence of invasive plant species.

Authority.

17.

tailored to the development and will set out the employment skills opportunities for the construction phase of the development has been submitted to and approved by the council as Local Planning Authority (unless otherwise agreed in writing by the council). The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Employment and Skills Plan (in the interests of delivering local employment and skills training opportunities in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 15: Skills and Economic Inclusion).

Reason: In the interests of delivering local employment and skills training opportunities as per the Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 15: Skills and Economic Inclusion and the Central Lancashire Employment Skills Supplementary Planning Document September 2017. No Employment and Skills Plan was submitted with the application.

18. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the principles set out within the flood risk assessment drainage strategy (February 2018, CTC Infrastructure Limited). The measures shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation of any dwelling and in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory sustainable drainage facilities are provided to serve the site in accordance with the Paragraphs 163 and 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

19. No development shall commence in any phase until a detailed, final surface water sustainable drainage strategy for the site has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

The detailed sustainable drainage strategy shall be based upon the site-specific flood risk assessment submitted and sustainable drainage principles and requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems and no. 3 surface water shall be allowed to discharge to the public foul sewer(s), directly or indirectly.

Those details shall include, as a minimum:

- a) Sustainable drainage calculations for peak flow control and volume control (1 in
- 1, 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 + 40% climate change), with allowance for urban creep.
- b) Final sustainable drainage plans appropriately labelled to include, as a minimum:
- i. Plan identifying areas contributing to the drainage network, including surface water flows from outside the curtilage as necessary;
- ii. Sustainable drainage system layout showing all pipe and structure references, dimensions, design levels;
- iii. Details of all sustainable drainage components, including landscape drawings showing topography and slope gradient as appropriate:
- iv. Flood water exceedance routes in accordance with Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems:
- v. Finished Floor Levels (FFL) in AOD with adjacent ground levels for all sides of each plot to confirm minimum 150mm+ difference for FFL.
- c) Measures taken to manage the quality of the surface water runoff to prevent pollution, protects groundwater and surface waters, and delivers suitably clean water to sustainable drainage components;
- d) Evidence of an assessment of the site conditions to include site investigation and test results to confirm infiltrations rates and groundwater levels in accordance with industry guidance.

The sustainable drainage strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory sustainable drainage facilities are provided to serve the site in accordance with the Paragraphs 163 and 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

20. No development shall commence until details of how surface water and pollution prevention will be managed during each construction phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Those details shall include for each phase, as a minimum:

- a) Measures taken to ensure surface water flows are retained on-site during construction phase(s) and, if surface water flows are to be discharged, they are done so at a restricted rate to be agreed with the Lancashire County Council LLFA.
- b) Measures taken to prevent siltation and pollutants from the site into any receiving groundwater and/or surface waters, including watercourses, with reference to published guidance.4

The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

#### Reasons:

- 1. To ensure the development is served by satisfactory arrangements for the disposal of surface water during each construction phase(s) so it does not pose an undue flood risk on site or elsewhere;
- 2. To ensure that any pollution arising from the development as a result of the construction works does not adversely impact on existing or proposed ecological or geomorphic condition of water bodies.
- 21. No building on any phase (or within an agreed implementation schedule) of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a Verification Report and Operation and Maintenance Plan for the lifetime of the development, pertaining to the surface water drainage system and prepared by a suitably competent person, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The Verification Report must demonstrate that the sustainable drainage system has been constructed as per the agreed scheme (or detail any minor variations), and contain information and evidence (including photographs) of details and locations (including national grid reference) of inlets, outlets and control structures; landscape plans; full as built drawings; information pertinent to the installation of those items identified on the critical drainage assets drawing; and, the submission of an final 'operation and maintenance manual' for the sustainable drainage scheme as constructed.

Details of appropriate operational, maintenance and access requirements for each sustainable drainage component are to be provided, with reference to published guidance, through an appropriate Operation and Maintenance Plan for the lifetime of the development as constructed. This shall include arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, and/or management and maintenance by a Management Company and any means of access for maintenance and easements, where applicable. Thereafter the drainage system shall be retained, managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that flood risks from development to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those risks to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development as constructed is compliant with and subsequently maintained pursuant to the

	requirements of Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
22.	Before any of the light industrial units hereby approved are brought into use, the associated car parking and vehicle manoeuvring areas identified on the approved plans shall have been surfaced, drained and marked out all in accordance with the approved plan. The car parking and vehicle manoeuvring areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of and manoeuvring of vehicles.  Reason: To ensure adequate on site provision of car parking and manoeuvring areas.
23.	Before any of the light industrial units hereby approved are brought into use,
23.	provision for cycle parking, in accordance with the approved plans shall have been provided in all respects and made available for use, and shall thereafter be retained.
	Reason: To ensure adequate on site provision for cycle parking.
24.	No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:  i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors  ii. hours of operation (including delivers) during construction  iii. loading and unloading of plant and materials  iv. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development  v. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate  vi. wheel washing facilities  vii. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction  viii. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works  ix. arrangements for staff and visitor parking throughout the duration of the development works.  Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to protect the amenities of the nearby residents.
25.	No part of the development hereby approved shall commence until a scheme for the construction of the site access and the off-site works of highway improvement has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.  Reason: In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority and Highway Authority that
	the final details of the highway scheme/works are acceptable before work commences on site.
26.	No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied or opened for trading until the approved scheme for the construction of the site access and the off-site works of highway improvement has been constructed and completed in accordance with the scheme details.
	Reason: In order that the traffic generated by the development does not exacerbate unsatisfactory highway conditions in advance of the completion of the highway scheme/works.