

<b>Item</b>	<b>11/00238/FULMAJ</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Caron Taylor</b>
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Euxton South</b>
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Proposed redevelopment of Washington Hall Fire Training Centre (part outline and part full application). Outline for the redevelopment of the whole site including long term master plan and full application for proposed road widening, construction of a new urban search and rescue (USAR) building and fleet garage and stores facility.</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>International Fire Training Centre Washington Hall West Way Euxton Chorley</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Lancashire Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b>

**Consultation expiry: 27 April 2011**

**Application expiry: 17 June 2011**

#### **Proposal**

1. The application is for the proposed redevelopment of Washington Hall Fire Training Centre (part outline and part full application). The application site will remain in the ownership and be used by the Fire Service but the facilities will be redeveloped in line with the changes to the commercial market for training, as well as to provide consolidation of services and facilities which are required by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. The application includes a long-term Masterplan and contains their vision for the site over the next 10 – 15 years.
2. The application is unusual in that it is a hybrid application that applies for the majority of the redevelopment in outline only, but applies for full planning permission for other aspects.
3. As submitted, the outline element of the application scheme reserves all matters apart from siting (however the improved access is covered by the full part of the application). The split between the outline and full elements of the proposal are as follows:
4. **New buildings (for full detailed approval at this stage):**
  - Widening of existing access road into the site -the existing access road will be widened to allow a dedicated exit lane to be formed for emergency vehicles based at the already permitted Chorley Fire Station and the proposed Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) building;
  - Urban Search and Rescue Building (USAR) - This building will provide the capability to form part of a national response to major emergencies i.e. major flooding and transport incidents;
  - Fleet Garage and Stores - This building will provide garaging and workshop facilities for the fire appliances used on site and for spare tenders for other stations within the district.
5. **New buildings (indicated within the Masterplan for outline approval for siting only at this stage, but with indicative scale parameters provided):**
  - Fire Station Accommodation Block (2 storey) - This building will be used to provide overnight accommodation for fire fighters at the new Chorley Fire Station when on duty through the night and when limited response times have to be met;
  - Central Offices/new Headquarters/Classrooms/Catering (3 storey). This building will become the main headquarters and training centre building for both Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and for Washington hall, including catering, administration and classroom facilities;
  - Accommodation Block (2 storey) - This building will provide sleeping accommodation and a

learning resource base for trainees while based on site with en-suite bedrooms and classrooms facilities;

- Indoor Training Centre (2 storey) - The training building will be used for fire fighter training during wet weather conditions. The building will also double up as an indoor sports facility and assembly hall which can be used by both the fire service and by the local community.

If the Masterplan were permitted in outline, then the site would be developed in phases and detailed reserved matters applications submitted for each part.

#### 6. Existing Building to be retained within the Development Site:

- Astley House - This existing building provides classroom and locker / shower facilities for trainee fire fighters using the nearby training props. The internal facilities are to be remodelled and modernised to include facilities for both male and female trainee fire fighters;
- Fire House - This is a key training building to teach and assess fire fighters when using breathing apparatus in a smoke and fire-filled building. The fire house is to be retained as existing;
- Alf Ramsey House - A small single storey building providing classroom facilities for fire fighters using the adjacent training props storage. This building is to remain as exists.

#### Recommendation

7. It is recommended that this application is granted conditional planning approval subject to a 10 year condition relating to the outline part of the application in which reserved matters applications must be submitted.

#### Main Issues

8. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on the neighbours
- Design
- Trees and Landscape
- Ecology
- Flood Risk
- Traffic, Transport and Parking
- Contamination and Coal Mines
- Drainage and Sewers
- Planning Contributions

#### Representations

9. One letter of representation has been received from a resident on The Farthings. They state their house is very near to the entrance of the site being considered in the above application and they are concerned about the noise emergency vehicles might make when going out on call. Presumably they will use sirens. If planning permission is granted, therefore, they would like assurance that restrictions will be put on noise caused during the night.

10. To respond to this letter, the application now under consideration does not propose a new fire station building, but rather is for the training and ancillary accommodation that is required by the fire service. A new fire station was approved on the site by outline permission 07/00902/OUTMAJ (renewed by permission ref: 09/00404/OUTMAJ) and associated reserved matters application ref: 10/00348/REMAJ and these applications considered the issue of sirens and the possible impact on residential properties.

#### Consultations

##### 11. Chorley Council Planning Policy

Policies DC1 and DC6 apply in the adopted Local Plan Review. The site is included within Policy DC6 as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. Policy DC6 (iii) covers the Washington Hall Fire Training and Forensic Science Establishments. PPG2 allows for the redevelopment of such sites providing strict safeguards are met and the openness of the Green Belt is maintained.

12. The site Masterplan and phasing plans for years 10-15 years are welcomed. It is noted the overall floor areas of buildings on site will be reduced as all the new buildings will be fit for purpose and more efficiently used. The continuation of the site as an employer is supported.
13. The Community Consultation with the parish council and neighbouring residents is also welcomed.
14. The adopted Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Document (2009) says all planning applications for non-residential units of 500 sq metres or more must be accompanied by an Energy Efficiency/Resource Conservation Statement and demonstrates that the requirements for the criteria (a) to (e) are met. The applicant has demonstrated how this can be achieved through a number of options and provides enough information for this proposal.
15. **Lancashire County Council (Ecology)**  
Have asked for further information before determination of the application which the agent is looking into. An update of the ecology issues will be placed on the Committee addendum.
16. **The Environment Agency**  
See body of report under Flood Risk.
17. **Chorley's Head of Economic Development**  
Supports the application and the long term use of this site.
18. **United Utilities**  
Have no objection to the proposal.
19. **Lancashire County Council (Highways)**  
Whilst having no over-riding highway objection to the principle of the proposed redevelopment in terms of both the outline and full planning stages, they have concerns regarding the proposed access junction improvements, as they are concerned the traffic island on the widened access road will not accommodate a left turn out for servicing and large based vehicles. Whilst the vehicle swept path for the emergency lane has been shown they have not proven the turning manoeuvres for all other vehicles at the access. However, LCC Highways consider that an acceptable junction layout with West Way can be achieved and as this does not impact on any residential properties this can be secured through a condition to ensure an acceptable scheme can be agreed with them.
20. **Chorley's Waste & Contaminated Land Officer**  
Has no objection to the outline planning application for redevelopment of the whole site, subject to any applications for future developments on site [reserved matters applications] being accompanied by a detailed site investigation report on that particular area/phase, as recommended by Sub Surface NW in their report No.5204 Ground Investigation at Service Training Centre (STC), West Way (April 2009). The applicant should also refer to the Recommendations as detailed in Section 4.4 of the above report.
21. An example of a detailed investigation report for a particular area of the site appears to have been submitted under 11/00238/FULMAJ - namely the Combined Phase 1/Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Investigation For Site At Washington Hall, Chorley Ref 10/5904 (April 2010). They state they have reviewed the CC Geotechnical Limited report and are satisfied with the conclusions made, for this particular area of the site (North area).
22. **Chorley's Urban Design Manager**  
Welcomes the master planning approach taken by this applicant as it will ensure the proper planning of the site.
23. They state the applicant has covered all the design principles they would expect to see in such a proposal thoroughly and satisfactorily in the Design and Access Statement. The functional, contemporary design approach is capable, subject to the agreement of materials, of being high quality and in keeping with the sensitive green belt location.

24. They welcome the sustainability measures and recommend that Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems are considered for the hard surfaces and that such systems inform a potentially wider choice of surface materials – currently tarmac and paving.

**25. Lancashire County Council (Planning Contributions)**

Lancashire County Council Highways have asked for a number of transport contributions including monies to upgrade the two existing bus stops on West Way so they have shelters (£16,000), £100,000 towards improved pedestrian and cycling facilities in the area is also requested. On top of this a further £50,000 is requested divided up as follows: £25,000 to enable the existing footway (south of the access) from the roundabout up to the site entrance to be improved to provide a 3.0m wide shared cycle/pedestrian route, which would enable cyclists to continue their travel along the route without having to join West Way before turning into the access a further 200m ahead. £25,000 is requested to provide a new 3m shared footway cycle route along the north side of the access to enable continuation of the route up to Chancery Road to maintain a link. This would concur with the shared cycle/pedestrian route across the road on the opposite side of the road, and would also abode well with the long term aspirations to provide a cycle/pedestrian link along this side of the road between Southport Rd and Euxton Lane. £6,000 is also requested by LCC Travel Planning team to provide a range of services as described in the Planning Obligations in Lancashire paper dated September 2008.

**Applicants Case**

26. The Washington Hall site has developed as an international Fire Service Training Centre over a 60 year period, since the Second World War. The current site includes both training props, along with support facilities, including offices, teaching areas, stores and sleeping accommodation for trainees while based on the site. The former American Air Base site has developed, in part in an ad-hoc and piecemeal fashion and has grown to include a large number of buildings accommodating a variety of uses, many of differing ages (ranging from 1945 to mid 1970s) and of differing types of construction – all of which are partially obsolete and no longer fit for purpose. As well as the wide variety of buildings, the site also includes a large number of training ‘props’ which are regularly used as part of the training of fire fighters and are an essential part of the training facilities at Washington Hall.

27. The somewhat ad hoc juxtaposition of the training props and administrative/support facilities, has resulted in a site which is essentially unplanned and now needs to be redeveloped so that it can face the challenges of an ever more constrained commercial market for training, as well as to provide consolidation of services and facilities which are required by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. A more planned approach is now required so that the phased demolition of worn out and obsolete buildings along with the construction of new, high quality buildings, can be carried out in a much more considered way, so that the end result is a site which not only satisfies the needs of Washington Hall as an International Training Centre, but also provides a site which makes a real contribution to the well being and enjoyment for those who have to visit and work there.

**Assessment**

28. The site comprises around 26 acres of land is bounded on the South East by West Way which leads onto Euxton Lane and on the North West side by Washington Lane. The site is within Green Belt and has mature trees on much of its perimeter restricting views into the site.

29. The Forensic Science Service building (scheduled for closure) shares the main access road into the site and is positioned to the southwest of the Fire Service buildings. The site is not within the ownership of the applicant and is outside the boundary of this application.

Principle of the development

30. National Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts sets out the criteria for the redevelopment of Major Development Sites (allocated as such in Local Plans) in the Green Belt.

31. Policy DC1 of the Local Plan reiterates national PPG2 which sets out the types of development that are appropriate development in the Green Belt. This includes criterion (g): the re-use,

infilling or redevelopment of Major Developed Sites in accordance with policy DC6.

32. The site (along with the Forensic Science Service building) is allocated in the Local Plan as a Major Developed Site under policy DC6. This policy reiterates the criteria set out in PPG2 and states that the re-use, infilling or redevelopment of major developed sites in the Green Belt will be permitted providing all the following criteria are met:
- (a) the proposal does not have a materially greater impact than the existing use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
  - (b) the development is in scale and keeping with the main features of the landscape and has regard to the need to integrate the development with its surroundings, and will not be of significant detriment to features of historical or ecological importance;
  - (c) the development does not exceed the height of the existing buildings;  
and in the case of infill:
  - (d) the proposal does not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site, result in a significant additional impact on the surrounding countryside or give rise to off-site infrastructure requirements;  
in the case of redevelopment:
  - (e) the proposal contributes to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;
  - (f) the appearance of the site as a whole is maintained or enhanced and that all proposals, including those for partial redevelopment, are put forward in the context of a comprehensive long term plan for the site as a whole;
  - (g) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction if this is appropriate;
  - (h) the new buildings do not occupy a larger area than the buildings they replace nor result in a significant additional impact on the surrounding countryside.
33. Considering the proposal in terms of policy DC6 it is not considered that the proposal has a materially greater impact than the existing use of the openness of the Green Belt, particularly as the largest proposed building (which does not exceed the height of those existing) is brought into the centre of the site, further away from the periphery of the Major Developed Site allocation and the application is therefore considered to comply with criterion (a). In terms of (b) it is considered the development will integrate better than the site as exists as it will have been planned as a whole rather than on an ad hoc basis as at present. In addition the spacing of the buildings will give a more open feel to the site. There are no historic features on site and the scheme has been planned around the landscape features. In terms of criterion (c) the development does not exceed the height of the existing buildings on the site. Criterion (d) of Policy DC6 does not apply to this application as it is not for infill.
34. Criteria (e) to (h) of the policy apply to redevelopment. Criterion (e) is not directly relevant to the application as the site is not to be redeveloped for a new use. In relation to criterion (f) the application has been put forward in the form of a comprehensive long term Masterplan for the site, which ensures that the aspirations of the Fire Service for the site in the long term are in line with the allocation of the site under policy DC6. In addition it is considered the proposal will enhance the appearance of the site as the design and layout of the buildings have been done on a comprehensive basis, drawing the various elements of the site together. Criterion (g) does not apply in this case. In terms of criterion (h) the principle of redevelopment of the site requires an assessment of the impact on the Green Belt of the proposal compared to the impact of the existing built development. A full itinerary detailing the volume of the existing and proposed buildings on the site accompanies the application and concludes that there will be approximately a 15% increase in building volume.
35. The applicant has put forward justification for the increase in volume on the site and how the proposal complies with Policy DC6. The applicant states that the scale of the proposed buildings is consistent with the existing development within the Washington Hall site: there currently exists within the site, large scale three storey blocks and none of the proposed buildings will be greater in height or scale than these. In addition, the proposed Masterplan seeks to open up the site, which will reduce the apparent scale of the development as the space between buildings is increased. It is envisaged that the creation of a more open site will seek to reduce the apparent scale of the development – with the planned arrangement of car

parking areas and planted spaces creating views out of the site to the open areas beyond. Furthermore, the taller buildings have been located near to the centre of the site and away from the site boundaries. This further reinforces the sense of openness and is in keeping with Green Belt policy - including the avoidance of any additional impact on the surrounding countryside. The planned arrangement of new / replacement trees together with the removal of large banks of existing conifer trees will further reinforce the sense of openness of the site. The largest proposed building within the site is the three-storey Headquarters and Training Centre building. This is no higher than the existing buildings on the existing site and has been located within the centre of the site, as it has the most prominence and is pivotal as a central resource facility within the Washington Hall site.

36. The detailed application also includes the creation of a new staff car park to the east of the Fleet Garage and Stores building, sufficient for 144 vehicles. The existing site has an extensive amount of hard standing and the application is accompanied by plan showing a full survey of all the existing hard standing on the site. The area where the car park will be positioned is current hard standing, being on a mixture of the footprint of existing buildings and existing areas of hard standing. Its use as a car park is likely to have less impact on the Green Belt than the existing buildings that occupy this area. It is therefore considered the proposal complies with criterion (h) of Policy DC6.
37. A new Community Fires Station already has planning permission to be constructed on the site and part of the current application is for full planning to widen the existing access road into the site by approximately 4m to allow a dedicated emergency egress lane for fire appliances. Footpaths will also be provided beyond it on either side of the widened access road to allow safe pedestrian access into the site, there are no footpaths here at present. Like the rest of the site the road is in the Green Belt, however the part of the road to be widened is not within the Major Developed Site allocation to which Policy DC6 applies. The access widening therefore falls to be considered under PPG2 and policy DC1. It is not an appropriate use of the Green Belt under these policies and therefore very special circumstances need to be demonstrated that outweigh the harm by reason of its inappropriateness and any other harm, if it is to be permitted.
38. The applicant has put forward a case that the proposed road widening will allow emergency vehicles to access West Way without being delayed by other site traffic queuing to leave the site at peak times. Although the current junction operates with spare capacity, there are occasional short queues of vehicles waiting to turn out of the site at peak times. To ensure that there is no delay to fire service vehicles on emergency call-outs, a short emergency lane will be created on the eastern side of the carriageway and an island will be created to physically separate the normal traffic and the fire engine lanes. In terms of Green Belt the current access is single lane entering and exiting the site. It is considered the widening of this road to allow an unimpeded exit for emergency vehicles is a very special circumstance that outweighs the normal presumptions against such development in policy terms. The road widening is not being done the full length of the access road, but only what is necessary - a section approximately 67m back from the T-junction with West Way which will filter out to the side of the existing road out of the site. This aspect is therefore considered acceptable in terms of the Green Belt.
39. Overall it is not considered that the new buildings (those applied for in full and the parameters given for the buildings applied for in outline only) will result in a significant additional impact on the surrounding countryside and the widening is deemed acceptable in the Green Belt. The redevelopment of the site is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

#### Design

40. A site Masterplan has been developed to respond to the short, medium and long term needs of the Washington Hall site, including the considered design of the buildings, the external spaces (between and around buildings) and the layout of the road and pedestrian ways throughout the site. The existing landscape features including ponds and trees have also been considered during the planning of the site.
41. The arrangement of the key components of the site wide Masterplan have been guided by both the requirements of the Washington Hall brief and also by the phasing of both the demolition of

existing facilities and the construction of new ones. For example, buildings will need to be demolished to free up areas of site to allow new facilities to be built, whilst at the same time buildings have to be retained (for use by the training centre) until new facilities can be constructed. In addition there are buildings and training facilities which are still current and hence being retained on the site, still essential to the training provision at Washington Hall, as well as being features which are worth keeping both from a visual aspect as well as from an ecological perspective – such as a group of mature trees or the 2 pond features.

42. As has been noted, historically the site has developed on an ad hoc basis with buildings (some of which are temporary portacabin type structures), being located within any available and often small areas of undeveloped site. This has led to an unplanned layout of buildings and facilities on the site, many of which are not positioned close to other related buildings. The benefit of the Masterplan is that the site can now be developed through the next 10 – 15 years in a more considered way. The site has been opened up by using areas of car parking as well as utilising an improved road network to navigate around the site both via vehicles and on foot.
43. The overall long-term design strategy is looked upon favourable for those parts of the site applied for in outline. The parts of the scheme for which full permission is now sought are discussed below.
44. It is advised the USAR building will provide the capability for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to form part of a nationwide response team for major emergencies involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear events, search and rescue, major flooding incidents and major transport incidents. The building will form a base for the storage and maintenance of the vehicles and equipment which are required for the fire service to fulfil its role in connection with USAR and will be positioned immediately north of the new Chorley Fire Station for which full planning approval has already been granted. The applicant states that the USAR building essentially forms an adjunct to the new Fire Station and as such needs to be located directly adjacent to it. The building will accommodate 3 fire appliances, 3 fire fighting pods and other equipment in a garage type building. A workshop is also proposed to allow the vehicles and pods to be serviced and a store room for spare/replacement equipment to be stored within the building as well as toilets and a small mess room for the staff. Ancillary accommodation including a small plant room and dog kennel (for the daytime housing of search and rescue dogs) is located to the rear of the building off a covered yard area. There are also some small stores which are accessible from outside the building which can be used during training outside. It will be accessed off the main feeder road with roller shutter doors giving access to the internal bays, with a service apron being provided at the front and a small service / training yard being provide to the rear.
45. The proposed building is portal framed with a covered area to the rear for washing vehicles. It is utilitarian in design but its materials reference the adjacent Fire Station to draw the two together, by the use of facing brickwork at low level, with feature lightweight smooth cladding panels and profiled plastisol profiled metal sheeting to the upper walls and roof. The doors, windows and rainwater goods will be powder coated aluminium. The floor size of the building is approximately 32m x 21m (including the outdoor covered area and it is 7.5m at its highways point.
46. The Fleet Garage and Stores building is also applied for in full and will provide garaging and workshop facilities for fire appliances used on the site and as spare tenders for other stations within the district. It will also provide storage for equipment which is used on the training centre site, as well as some equipment repair/maintenance and support for equipment used by fire stations within Lancashire. The applicant states the location of the building has been chosen so that it is close to Astley House and the fire training areas to which it is essentially dedicated. It will have a dual pitched roof with a canopy forming a covered area to the rear and the materials will be from the same palette as the USAR building. It is accepted that the nature of the use of the building dictates a utilitarian form and like the USAR building it is portal framed with a covered area to the rear for washing the appliances.
47. The design of both these building is considered acceptable and although utilitarian the architect has added design elements such as canopies and used a materials palette that breaks up their

massing as well as draws the design of the two buildings together with the previously approved new fire station and therefore the site as a whole.

#### Impact on the neighbours

48. There are significant residential estates to the South East (Astley Village) and South West (Euxton) of the Washington Hall site, however the site is totally screened from these housing areas and from West Way due to the significant tree belt between the road and the active part of the site. The only change visible from West Way will be the widening of the existing access to introduce a lane for emergency vehicles with associated traffic island and new pedestrian footpaths. The proposed buildings on the site will not be higher than those that exist and therefore it is not considered that the proposal will have a detrimental impact on these properties.
49. Washington Lane bounds the site to the north/north west and is rural in nature. There is an access from the site on to Washington Lane, however this is an emergency access only and will remain as such. It has been clarified with the Fire Service that this will not be widened and will remain as exists. There are sporadic properties on Washington Lane the nearest of which is Holly Cottage. The proposed Fleet Garage and Stores (which is applied for in full) would be the nearest building to this property. There are mature trees on the boundary of the site nearest this property but there would be views of the fleet garage in the winter months from this property. The fleet garage is a substantial size (having a floor size of 66m x 21m) needed due to the nature of its use. It will have a dual pitch roof 7.8m to the ridge and 6.4m to eaves with a canopy providing an outdoor covered area to the rear. There would be approximately 36m from the building to the nearest part of the garden of Holly Cottage and approximately 50m to the property itself. It is considered that this distance combined with the vegetation to be retained on the boundary means the relationship with this property is considered acceptable.
50. Prospect House on Washington Lane also bounds with the Washington Hall site but this part of the site is not included within the red edge of the application and is to remain as existing, therefore it is not considered the proposal impacts on this property or the properties opposite, such as Spout House Farm and Lower Spout House Farm.
51. Overall it is considered the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on neighbour amenity.

#### Trees and Landscape

52. The application is accompanied by a tree survey in line with the British Standard 5837:2005 *Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations*.
53. The site has a considerable mix of broadleaf tree species of differing age ranges, including a number of mature trees situated close to the northern and southern site boundaries. These generally comprise mature trees of high value and are specified in the survey.
54. The Masterplan for the site considers trees and landscaping as a whole for the site, as well as showing existing retained trees, new shrub, hedge and tree planting is indicated. Where possible mature trees have been retained within the site but due to the extent of the redevelopment and the need to rationalise the ad hoc layout of the existing buildings, and to create links within the existing road layout, the loss of some trees is proposed. 35 individual trees are to be removed within the development site (15 of which are in category C - low quality and value) with 25 retained. 6 groups of trees are to be removed (4 of which are category C) and 7 retained. However, 150 new trees are proposed as part of the development to enhance the setting of the new buildings but also to ensure that tree cover remains on this site for the future, with the aim that as the mature trees of the original development begin to go in to decline, over the next twenty to thirty years, the new tree stock will already be established and ready to develop and replace them. Large banks of existing conifer trees are also to be removed to give a greater sense of openness to the site.
55. Although the redevelopment of the site does involve the loss of trees, this has to be balanced against the long-term landscaping proposals for the site are proposed as part of a Masterplan which will ensure tree cover remains at the site in the long term. The application is therefore considered to comply with Policy EP9 of the Local Plan.



### Ecology

56. The application is accompanied by ecological survey. As specified above, the County Ecologist had asked for further information in relation to Great Crested Newts which the applicant has supplied and further comments in relation to this will be placed on the addendum. They advise that subject to this being received then the application is acceptable subject to conditions.

### Flood Risk

57. Although the site is not in a Flood Risk Zone identified by the Environment Agency, due to the size of the site a Flood Risk Assessment is required under PPS25 Development and Flood Risk. The Environment Agency originally objected to the application as the submitted Flood Risk Assessment did not comply with the requirements of PPS25 Development and Flood Risk. They then received further information from the agents and now state that the additional information addresses their previous concerns regarding the proposed drainage scheme and overland flow exceedence events, and they therefore withdraw their objection subject to the inclusion of conditions relating to 1) investigations for ground contamination 2) water quality. The application is therefore considered acceptable in relation to PPS25 subject to imposition of these conditions.

### Traffic, Transport and Parking

58. The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement. There are currently 70 staff based on site. In addition there are 28,000 students and 1,500 other visitors to the site each year. Following completion of the redevelopment there will be up to 300 staff on site due to the relocation of vehicle maintenance and administrative staff from other sites elsewhere in Lancashire and the new fire station. The number of students will however reduce to 23,000 per year.

59. Lancashire County Council Highways have no over-riding highway objection to the principle of the proposed redevelopment in terms of both the outline and full planning stages. However, they have concerns regarding the proposed access junction improvements, as they are concerned the traffic island on the widened access road will not accommodate a left turn out for servicing and large based vehicles. Whilst the vehicle swept path for the emergency lane has been shown they have not proven the turning manoeuvres for all other vehicles at the access. However, LCC Highways consider that an acceptable junction layout with West Way can be achieved and negotiations are on going with them as to the final layout of the junction with West Way. As the layout of this junction this does not impact on any residential properties this can be secured through a condition to ensure an acceptable scheme can be agreed with LCC.

60. The parking proposed at the site is also partly covered by the full application and partly indicative on the outline part of the application. The full application includes a car park with 144 spaces adjacent to the Fleet Garage and Stores for staff use. LCC Highways have no objection to the level of parking provided to be approved in full at this stage, however they do comment that the overall level of parking provision in the long term will need to be agreed with the Council as the site is redeveloped, as indicatively 369 spaces are show on the overall Masterplan, which they consider is over provision form the number of users and will not therefore promote sustainable travel.

61. It is considered that the parking level shown for the part of the redevelopment seeking full approval by this application is acceptable, however it is agreed that the overall parking provision for the site will need to be carefully considered as part of the long-term redevelopment of the site each time a reserved matters application comes in for future phases, and it can be controlled at that time, to ensure there is not an over or under provision of spaces.

62. LCC Highways also comment that the provision of disabled, cycling and motorcycle parking facilities are not mentioned at this time in any detail as the facilities are considered to be more appropriately located on the proposed central car parks (that will be subject of future phases). Future reserved matters applications for the central area of the site will therefore need to consider that these types of parking are provided in sufficient numbers.

63. A Travel Plan will also be controlled by a condition that will be worded so it responds to the phased nature of the development.

#### Contamination and Coal Mines

64. A ground investigation report accompanies the application, and in line with the advice of the Council's Contaminated Land Officer and the Environment Agency conditions will be applied to ensure reserved matters applications include a detailed investigation report on that phase as recommended by the investigation report and that further investigations are carried out in the areas the subject of this application for full planning permission.

#### Drainage and Sewers

65. United Utilities have no objection to the application, however the Environment Agency recommend a condition requiring a scheme for the disposal of foul and surface waters to be submitted and approved to ensure a satisfactory means of drainage is provided.

#### Planning Contributions

66. LCC Highways have asked for a total of £172,000 in planning contributions. Planning contributions are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. In line with Circular 05/05 the Secretary of State's policy requires, amongst other factors, that planning obligations are only sought where they meet *all* of the following tests:

- (i) relevant to planning;
- (ii) necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- (iii) directly related to the proposed development;
- (iv) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- (v) reasonable in all other respects.

67. LCC Highways have however, stated that the contributions requested (other than for the Travel Plan) are desirable. It is not considered that the contributions are therefore necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms and the request therefore fails to meet the tests set out in the Circular.

68. In terms of the Travel Plan contribution Chorley have not signed up to the Planning Obligations in Lancashire Paper and although a condition will be imposed regarding the requirement for a Travel Plan, it is not considered a payment of £6000 to LCC for this purposes is justified.

#### Phasing

69. There is a need to ensure that Washington Hall, as a training facility, is able to remain fully operational during any redevelopment of the site and therefore phasing of the works has been carefully considered. It is accepted that to ensure continuity of accommodation as the site will remain in use throughout the redevelopment that some of the buildings can only be demolished once new facilities have been built or that at least temporary accommodation can be provided on site. It is therefore accepted that during the construction period there may be additional buildings on the site, but in the long terms these will be removed once replacement accommodation has been built. The phasing and demolition of the development have been shown a plan and can be controlled by condition to protect the Green Belt in the long term.

#### **Overall Conclusion**

70. The redevelopment of the site is considered acceptable in the Green Belt in relation to PPG2 and Local Plan Policies DC1 and DC6. It is also considered that the proposal contributes to the aims of Chorley to be a prosperous Borough and secures Washington Hall as an employment site in the long-term. PPS4 encourages Planning Authorities to take a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development. The aspects for which planning permission is sought for in full are considered acceptable in terms of scale, siting, appearance, neighbour amenity and highway safety. The other aspects for which outline permission is sought (specifying siting) are considered acceptable in principle, the details of which will be submitted in phases through reserved matters applications.

## **Other Matters**

### Public Consultation

71. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service prepared a letter/leaflet which was distributed to local properties regarding the future development proposals for the Washington Hall site and to inform the site neighbours of a forthcoming Community Open Evening where the long-term vision for the site could be viewed. A Community Open Evening/Public Consultation was held on the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> March at Lancaster House within the Washington Hall site and 18 local residents took the opportunity to view the detailed proposals and to ask questions of Fire Service representatives and the design team regarding the detailed proposals for the site. The applicant advises that proposals were well received by all 18 attendees and no adverse feedback was raised either during the session or since that event.

### Sustainability

72. The application is accompanied by an Energy Efficiency and Resource Conservation Statement. The USAR building and Fleet Garage and Stores will both be constructed to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'very good' in line with Policy SR1 of the adopted Sustainable Resources Development Plan Document. The applicant has also looked at how criteria (a) to (e) of policy SR1 will be met including how a 15% reduction in carbon emissions can be achieved through the use of low carbon energy sources. As it has been demonstrated that the aims of this policy can be achieved it is considered that a condition can be applied relating to full details being provided of how the 15% renewable will be achieved on the full part of the application. A condition will also be imposed requiring the reserved matters applications to provide details of how each future phase will meet the policy. However as any outline permission granted will be a 10 year permission it will be conditioned that the reserved matters shall show how the reserved matters phases meet the policies in place at that time, as the policy position in this respect is likely to have developed.

### Time Limit for Implementation of Permission

73. Normally outline planning permissions are granted so that an applicant has three years to submit reserved matters, and a further two years for implementation following final approval of the last of the reserved matters. However, the Council has discretion to impose different time limits, if there are good planning reasons for doing so. In this case it is considered that as the application includes a 10-15year Masterplan of the site to ensure that the aims of the Fire Service are acceptable in Green Belt terms in the long run, that there are good planning reasons to extend the normal default time limit from three years to ten years. Therefore if Members were to approve this application they would be agreeing to an extended time limit condition being implemented.

## **Planning Policies**

### National Planning Policies:

PPG2, PPS4, PPS9, PPG13, PPS25

### Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

Policies: DC1, DC6, EP4, EP9, EM2

### Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Design Guide

### Chorley's Local Development Framework

- Policy SR1: Incorporating Sustainable Resources into New Development
- Sustainable Resources Development Plan Document
- Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Document

### Joint Core Strategy

Policy 10 relates to Employment Premises and Sites. It states that all existing employment premises and sites or land and premises last used for employment use will be protected for employment use, the continuing use of the site for employment purposes it therefore supported by this policy.

## Sites for Chorley- Issues and Options Discussion Paper December 2010

The Lancashire Fire and Rescue Training Establishment, had been suggested as a potential site for residential development. However, the site has not been carried forward in the Issues and Options Discussion Paper, because it is not considered to be a site that is in conformity with Policy 1 of the Core Strategy on locating growth. This site is located in the Green Belt and is not in one of the specified growth settlements, although it is adjacent to Chorley Town, which is identified.

### **Planning History**

**The site has a very long planning history. The most recent applications on the site are listed below (not including telecommunications developments).**

**96/00714/FUL** Creation of new car park, Permitted, 18 December 1996

**99/00268/FU** Temporary single storey bedroom block with en-suite facilities to accommodate 24 people, Permitted, 30 July 1999

**01/00043/FUL** Retrospective application of siting of 12 tonne LPG storage vessel and construction of base. PRRRTF 7 March 2001

**01/00979/FUL** Single storey training facility building, Permitted, 17 January 2002

**07/00902/OUTMAJ** Outline application for the erection of new community fire station, Permitted, 15 October 2007

**07/00914/FUL** Construction of urban search and rescue training unit, Permitted, 9 October 2007

**09/00404/OUTMAJ** Outline application for the erection of a new community fire station and vehicle appliance facility (renewal of permission 07/00902/OUTMAJ). Permitted, 19 August 2009

**10/00348/REMAJ** Reserved matters application for the erection of a new community fire station and vehicle appliance facilities, Permitted, 9 August 2010

**10/01044/DIS** Application to discharge conditions attached to planning permission nos. 09/00404/OUTMAJ and 10/00348/REMAJ which permitted the erection of a community fire station, Conditions Discharged, 16 February 2011

### **Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission Conditions**

1. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until full details of the junction between the proposed service road and the highway have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until that junction has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy No. TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*

---

