

**Item 4g**                    **11/01062/FUL**

**Case Officer**            **Mr Adrian Morgan**

**Ward**                      **Chorley South West**

**Proposal**                **Erection of a single storey community centre on playing fields adjacent to Lakeland Gardens**

**Location**                **Land East Of And Adjacent To 99 Lakeland Gardens Chorley Lancashire**

**Applicant**                **Redrow Homes/Taylor Wimpey**

**Consultation expiry: 4 January 2012**

**Application expiry: 26 January 2012**

**1. Proposal**

Erection of a single storey community centre on playing fields adjacent to Lakeland Gardens

**2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that this application is approved.

**3. Main Issues**

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

- Principle of the development
- Impact on the neighbours
- Design
- Traffic and Transport

**4. Representations**

9 representations expressing objections to the proposal have been received. The various objections received expressed concerns relating to the following issues: -

- The community centre should be sited, where originally proposed, on the Gillibrand development
- The centre would be better sited at Southlands School
- The centre would be better sited 75m further north
- Car parking, traffic and road safety problems would be generated
- Vandalism and anti-social behaviour would be generated
- Residential amenity would be undermined by noise and disturbances, including for elderly and disabled residents who live close to the site
- Vulnerable local residents could be victimised by young users of the centre
- The building would be situated too close to the road
- Local children presently play on the site and this is an important local green leisure area
- The building itself would be higher than neighbouring bungalows and have an unattractive appearance
- The pedestrian link across the fields between the open land near Lakeland Gardens and that near the Gillibrand area will be lost
- 99 Lakeland Gardens would be overlooked
- The centre would be used most by the residents of the social housing rather than the private, potentially creating a clash of interests between the two groups

**5. Consultations**

- Chorley Leisure services

- Chorley Design Advice
- Coal Authority

## **6. Assessment**

### Background Information

7. The Gillibrand housing development is subject to a Development Agreement between the developers and the Council. The Development Agreement covers various matters, most of which were addressed out as the development advanced. One matter that remains to be implemented is the provision of a community centre. The Agreement included a design and specification for a community centre as well as an indication of approximately where it would be located, plus a commuted sum for its on-going maintenance and repair.
8. Since the Development Agreement was signed the design of the proposed centre has been updated and it has also become clear that the type of community centre now needed would not fit well on the original site. An alternative location has been sought that would better accommodate a modern community building and that would be more central and so closer to the long established wider community as well as to the Gillibrand housing estate.
9. The Gillibrand Officer Working Group with representatives of the two house builders, considered various locations. Two potential locations were identified, the site to which this application relates and another at Burgh Wood Way.
10. Community consultations were then undertaken to establish local views on location preference. Residents were also asked to express any interest in joining a group to oversee for the centre; on potential activities they would like to see in such a facility, and about any concerns they might have. There was a good response to the consultation both in terms of number of respondents and the comments that were made including many constructive suggestions for activities.

### Previous Public Consultation

11. The proposal represents the culmination of several years of public consultation of which the local community has been encouraged to be an integral part. At least two alternative sites have been the subject of detailed consultation. Through robust debate and assessment of detailed criteria the current proposal has manifested as the preferred option.
12. In terms of the choice between the two locations, the application site was by far the most popular, being favoured by 78% of households. The response rate from the Gillibrand housing estate was higher than the remainder of the consultation area (the "Lakes and Peaks").
13. Most of the Gillibrand residents supported the application site (which is furthest away from them). A significant number of residents nearest to the application site favoured the Burgh Wood Way location. Notwithstanding this there was sufficient widespread support to pursue locating the centre where proposed.
14. A report recommending negotiations to amend the Development Agreement in order to site the community centre at the proposed location and to seek planning permission for the proposal was approved by the Executive Cabinet on 22 February 2007.

### Principle of the development

15. The Council's Local Plan Review policy PS2 relates to proposals to build community centres. The policy supports the provision of such facilities provided that the following four criteria are met:
  - a. the use of the site would be compatible with the surrounding land use
  - b. the site is located in close proximity to the population it is intended to serve and has safe and convenient pedestrian access with nearby residential areas;
  - c. the site has adequate road access and its development would not give rise to unsatisfactory traffic, parking or environmental conditions;

- d. the site is well served by the public transport network.

It is considered that the proposal satisfies the four PS2 criteria.

#### Location

16. The ideal location for a community centre is close to the centre of the residential area that accommodates the community that the facility is intended to serve. The site in question is easily accessible to residents of both the housing estates that it will serve. The proposed site also has the advantage of immediately adjoining the playing fields that will be used for the sports activities related to the changing facilities within the centre.

#### Impact on the neighbours

17. The presence of the centre would inevitably generate an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic as a result of its user's comings and goings. This additional activity which would have the potential to create some noise disturbance in the immediate area, however, the fact that playing fields extend out both eastwards and westwards from the site means that relatively few residential properties are actually situated immediately adjacent to the location of the proposed building. Any community centre, or other facilities such as schools, shops, playgrounds, etc. that can offer great benefits to communities, will always also be accompanied by some disturbance. Provided the facility is adequately managed, the potential benefits of such uses in residential areas are generally considered to outweigh any disadvantages.

#### Design

18. The new community centre would have approximately 240 square meters of internal floor space. The construction would be single storey with a pitched roof. The plan form is rectilinear in shape and approximately 10m x 28m. Eaves height would be adequate to ensure that mixed use activities associated with a community building are achievable within the internal spaces of the development.
19. The proposed siting and orientation has been determined to take account of the below-ground constraints and to take advantage of surveillance from the nearby CCTV tower.
20. The proposed positioning allows for a clear separation between the nearest homes. Areas around both the community building and the car park would incorporate soft and hard landscaping intended to ensure a pleasant and integrated feel for the development. A private rear garden area would align with the gardens of the adjacent bungalows. The gable wall has been left void of window openings to protect the privacy of the adjacent residence.
21. The site is relatively flat and will allow level access to the building from both the adjacent playing fields and the pedestrian and vehicular access off Lakeside Gardens. In line with current DDA requirements access into the building will be ambulant and wheelchair accessible. Disabled changing & WC facilities will be provided. All internal doorways, light and power switches and general facilities will be designed with disabled users in mind.
22. Disabled parking spaces are provided close to the facility and shall be full identified so that use is restricted. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving will show clear routes for users of wheelchairs.

#### Security

23. The proposed building would be designed to meet Secure By Design standards. The proposed orientation of the building is intended to ensure that maximum benefit is taken of the nearby CCTV facilities. The site is also overlooked from housing along both its northern and southern boundaries, ensuring considerable natural surveillance.

#### Traffic and Transport

24. The proposed site is close to public transport routes and undue traffic or parking problems are not expected to be generated as the homes of many of the centre's likely users would be within walking distance. The site has also been designed to provide 16 supplemental on-site parking spaces. Vehicular access would be positioned so as to minimise disturbance on Lakeland Gardens and facilitate safe access and egress for road users. The car park would

be rectangular in shape, offering efficient use of space and providing adequate turning facilities so that vehicles can enter and leave in a forward gear necessitating the need for awkward reversing manoeuvres within the public highway.

### Contamination and Coal Mines

25. Ground investigations have since been undertaken to establish that the site is physically suitable for the facility. The proposed orientation of the building takes account of the underlying ground constraints.

### **Other Matters**

26. A pedestrian link between the fields at the east and west of the site will be retained at the northern edge of the site, at the bottom of Ennerdale Road.

27. Ample open play space for local children will be retained around the site.

### **Overall Conclusion**

28. A proposal to seek planning permission for a community centre on the proposed site was approved by the Council's Executive Cabinet on 22 February 2007.

29. The proposal complies with Policy PS2 of the Chorley Local Plan Review.

30. The proposed community centre is intended to provide a facility for the benefit of the local community. Local groups, teams and clubs will be encouraged to make use of the space and it is hoped that the development will act as a catalyst in bringing local people together and providing for all.

31. Groups using the facility may vary but such centres are typically used for play groups; pensioner's gatherings; support group meetings and by sports teams. It is assumed that the facility will accommodate daytime and evening uses and be available for sports on both Saturday and Sunday. It is proposed to limit the hours of use to reasonable operating times throughout the week and weekend periods.

32. Although the provision of facilities such as the proposed community centre can present certain challenges for communities, ultimately they are intended to benefit local residents and contribute to addressing inadequacies in service provision and problems in the localities in which they are sited. It is hoped that the proposed centre, through the opportunities that it will provide to take part in constructive activities and for local people to meet in a well managed, non-biased, venue, will help alleviate some of the issues that have been raised as concerns by some of the consultation respondents, for example, those related to youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

### **Planning Policies**

#### Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

Policies: PS2

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Design Guide

### **Planning History**

**Ref:** 11/01061/FUL **Decision:** REC **Decision Date:**

**Description:** Erection of a single storey community centre

**Ref:** 11/01062/FUL **Decision:** INSFEE **Decision Date:**

**Description:** Erection of a single storey community centre on playing fields adjacent to Lakeland Gardens

**Recommendation: Approve  
Conditions**

1. The development must be constructed in accordance with the approved plans & documents listed below: -

<b>Plan Ref.</b>	<b>Received On:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
0162 01	2/12/11	Proposed Site Plan
0162 02	2/12/11	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
0162 03	2/12/11	Proposed Elevations
0162 04	2/12/11	Proposed Elevations
4122.01	2/12/11	Landscape Proposals
Design & Access Statement	2/12/11	

*Reason: To define the permission and in the interests of the proper development of the site.*

2. The use hereby permitted shall be restricted to the hours between  
08:00 to 22:00 Mondays to Fridays  
08:00 to 20:00 Saturdays  
08:00 to 18:00 Sundays

*Reason: To safeguard the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Policy Nos. EM2, SP6 and EP7 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.*