

**Item 4b**                      **11/01060/CB3**

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

**Ward**                         **Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods**

**Proposal**                    **The creation of a 21 plot allotment site with 5 car parking spaces and associated hard standing, drainage, fencing and pathways.**

**Location**                    **Land between Carr Road and Manor Road and South Of 83 Manor Road Clayton-le-Woods Lancashire**

**Applicant**                    **Parks and Open Spaces - People And Places Directorate CBC**

**Consultation expiry:** **11 January 2012**

**Application expiry:**    **31 January 2012**

### **Proposal**

1. This application seeks the development of a 21 plot allotment site with 5 car parking spaces and associated hard standing, drainage, fencing and pathways.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that the application be approved.

### **Main Issues**

3. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
  - Principle of the development
  - Background information
  - Impact on the neighbours
  - Design
  - Ecology
  - Flood Risk
  - Traffic and Transport
  - Public Right of Way
  - Drainage and Sewers

### **Representations**

4. Parish Council – responded to say it had no comments.
5. Dr Sarah Manchester, Senior Planning Officer (Ecology) at Lancashire County Council has commented to say that she is aware of Pennine Ecological, the company that prepared the Habitat Assessment for the applicants, and has seen reports from them in the past. She states that, although she cannot comment on this particular report as she has not had an opportunity to read it, “They appear to be experienced ecological consultants who carry out work to a reasonable standard”.

### Support

6. One comment supporting the application has been received from a resident of Manor Road.

The Head teacher of Manor Road Primary School commented that she and the school

governors support the proposal. They have no concerns with regard to traffic and consider that having allotments on what is now waste land would make a positive contribution to the local area around the school. The school has its own small allotment area and would welcome the opportunities to work with the local allotment tenants to develop the school's allotments further; allow children to develop links with local people and gain a better understanding of healthy living and eating and also sustainability.

### Objections

7. Six objections to the proposal have been received. The objections raised concerns mainly about drainage, amenity, security, traffic, parking and waste issues. A summary of comments: -

#### Drainage

- Surface water from school site and footpath flows onto the site
- Carr Road and Preston Road gardens flood
- Ditches need reinstating
- Site will not be connected to external drainage system
- A main drain connection is needed
- There is an on-going issue with the main water drain at Fiddlers Lane
- Proposed bund inappropriate
- What will happen to water that won't fit into the proposed pond?
- The Council re-surfacing work on Carr Road was a slap-dash cowboy job so no confidence that the drainage works proposed would be done well
- Concerns that the drainage will be inadequate and consequent impact on the environment and property at 83 Manor Road
- A tenancy exists on the site that may preclude the proposed drainage works

#### Highway / Traffic / Parking

- Manor Road is a small cul-de-sac with only one access and a school at the end of it
- The Highway Authority has recognised the potential for vehicular / pedestrian conflict by setting low speed limits and installing speed humps
- Traffic, car parking, congestion and road safety problems are likely to arise as users will arrive by car, especially for children as there is a playground, fields and a school on Manor Road
- Manor Road is narrow and already congested at peak school hours
- Five parking spaces will be inadequate
- House drives are already blocked by school users and this will be made worse due to inadequate parking provision
- Cars and property have already been damaged by reckless manoeuvring of vehicles. This will get worse
- Carr Lane access to Fiddlers Lane needs widening

#### Security / Anti-social behaviour

- Will allow easier access for potential intruders to residential area?
- Fencing should be higher than 1.2m. 2.3m suggested.
- Security will be compromised at 83 Manor Road
- Teenagers have set fires on the site last year and anti-social behaviour is likely to be a problem with allotments being wrecked

## Amenity

- Privacy and peaceful enjoyment will be compromised at 83 Manor Road that immediately adjoins the site
- Construction works will cause disturbance be potentially hazardous
- Other Council allotment sites are a disgrace, for example, Whittle-le-Woods, which has been left to rack and ruin and is need of urgent clean-up.
- Noise from cars, general goings-on, equipment use and lights on the allotments will cause disturbance at 83 Manor Road which was bought because it was end-of-plot and has retired residents
- Fencing and sheds could cause overshadowing at 83 Manor Road and be unsightly, especially if palisade metal type security fencing

## Other points

- No waste management, collection or storage
- Any log / coal / produce burning and compost heaps could produce a formidable stench that will impact on residents
- There could be encroachment onto Carr Lane
- What evidence is there of local demand for the allotments from local neighbourhood residents?
- Most homes in the area have reasonably sized gardens that could be used for cultivation purposes
- Have other uses been considered for the site, for example, recreational and school use?

One of the objectors to the proposal submitted further comments and suggestions for changes to the proposed scheme as follows: -

- “..the layout does in fact indicate that the ditch that I have been concerned about appears to be unaffected by any ground work. It is apparent also that the attractive and wildlife friendly hedgerow will also be retained. If this is the case, then I would like to put forward an idea that could resolve some of the issues related to the habitat.
- I would like to suggest that the existing ditch be made deeper to accommodate an open infill to help water to percolate and dissipate.
- Along with this I suggest that the existing ditch be made into a 'T' formation whereby water could gather in the existing 'north/south' aspect along with a new ditch along the edge of the footpath following an east/west direction. This ditch would also have a sub-strata to cope with water management. By doing this the water restrictive nature of the footpath constructed in 2007 could be lessened. I feel that a more effective means of handling water would be achieved and the outlined plan would augment the soak-away. However it is unclear what happens to water after it enters the soak-away chamber that is shown on other planning drawings. This idea might mean that the pond would not be needed.”

Andy Brown, the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Manager, responded to the above suggestions to say that he is not qualified to comment on the likelihood of their effectiveness and stating that “Our design has been put together by an industry leading hydrologist (for info he put together the drainage/flooding solutions for the Trafford Centre). When you consider the scale of our requirement against his previous works I have no reason to suspect that his proposal is anything other than the best solution to our problem. I am also conscious that to

go back to our hydrologist will incur greater cost. Given that I have a limited budget to provide allotments I am reluctant to do so”.

### **Previous Public Consultation**

8. Consultations were undertaken with Ward Councillors and Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council in July 2010 and a report submitted to Executive Committee in August 2010. Following this, on 23 August 2010, letters and plans were delivered to the 28 houses closest to the site, Manor Road Primary School and the Community Centre. Various responses expressing concerns, objections or support were received. All respondents were replied to explaining how issues that had been raised were to be addressed in the design, on 20 September 2010.
9. Additional consultations were undertaken with Lancashire County Council Highways, the Police, utility companies and Sport England. All comments received have been used to ensure the design addresses issues raised.

### **Site Description**

The site is located in the residential area of Clayton-le-Woods. It has an area of 0.35 hectares and presently consists of two small fields divided by mature hedgerow. Other hedgerows and individual trees run along its southern and eastern boundaries. Carr Road runs adjacent to its eastern boundary; residential gardens adjoin its northern boundary and to the west it is open to the pavement on Manor Road.

Access to the site is from Manor Road, which is a no-through road leading to Manor Road Primary School. The road is residential and houses along it have driveways. Traffic flow is not generally restricted.

The proposed site layout would consist of a hard standing car parking area with 21, approximately 100sq metre, plots accessed from 1.2 metre wide footpaths. There would be a central pond and land drains as required, which would essentially form a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs), and the site would be contoured to ensure that water would run towards the pond. Post and wire and metal palisade fencing and hedges would form the boundaries and separate the plots. Bird and bat boxes would be installed on appropriate trees.

The site would be designed to be accessible by all people.

### **Assessment**

#### Principle of the development

The Deliver the Allotment project is a key project within the Council's Corporate Strategy 2011/13. It is intended to bring benefits such as increasing satisfaction with neighbourhoods as places to live and increasing the number of residents taking part in moderate physical activity.

The proposal also supports the objectives set down in the Council's Health and wellbeing; Climate Change and Community Cohesion Strategies.

Chorley Council has a duty under The Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908 to provide sufficient allotments according to demand. Clayton-le-Woods, Adlington and Chorley have been identified as key areas for allotment creation. There are currently 34 people on the waiting list from the vicinity of the proposed site in Clayton-le-Woods. A recent survey also

established that there is interest locally in Community Food Growing (CFG) as an alternative to traditional allotment plots.

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation sets out various Planning Objectives that open spaces (including allotments) could help achieve. Some of these objectives that are particularly relevant to allotments include: -

- **supporting an urban renaissance** – through forming part of local networks of green spaces that contribute to making attractive urban environments.
- **promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion – through** bringing people together, providing opportunities for social interaction and potentially becoming focal points for community activities.
- **health and well being** – through exercise and interaction with others.

#### Impact on the neighbours

10. The site is presently unmanaged and has a neglected appearance. Under the proposal, the boundaries of the site would be better defined, with fencing and hedgerows forming the boundaries of the site. Gaps in the existing hedges would be filled where necessary in order to increase screening to the side boundaries.
11. The fencing would be 1.2 to 1.4 metre high stock proof post and wire type or metal palisade to match that surrounding the school grounds. The site would be gated with metal gates to match the fencing.
12. The car parking area will be MOT Type 1 topped with brown/grey gritstone to blend into the landscape and match the paths.
13. All allotment holders will have to sign a tenancy agreement specifying conditions of use. The agreement requires that all plots and structures be kept in good repair and regular inspections would be carried out to ensure that restrictions are being adhered to.
14. The tenancy agreement stipulates that no buildings or structures will be allowed on the site without the consent of the Council. Sheds and greenhouses will be limited in terms of size, materials, standard of construction and location and a maximum of a single shed and a greenhouse would be permitted on a plot.
15. No concerns with regard to smells have been raised at any of the Council's existing allotment sites. The facilities at, and the management of, the site will address composting and waste needs.
16. Due to the fact that the site would have a structured and managed appearance, visual amenity would, arguably, be improved. The fact that it will have a clear use and be obviously owned and managed would be likely to deter use of the site for anti-social or inadvertently disruptive uses.

#### Ecology

17. An independent Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Assessment of the site was undertaken by Pennine Ecological in June 2010, to record species and habitats present; assess their ecological value and define any impacts that allotment use would be likely to generate. The main habitats present are improved grassland, dense Bramble scrub and Hawthorne hedge. No measurable negative impacts on biodiversity are forecast. Recommendations made in the survey that were intended to preserve existing features of

value and to enhance biodiversity have been included in the design. The construction of the pond, additional planting and installation of bird boxes will provide opportunities for enhancing the site for wildlife.

### Flood Risk

18. The facilities to be provided do not require the use of any mains services.
19. The site presently floods periodically due to its low lying nature; water draining into the site from adjoining land; and the fact that over many years the ditch that runs behind properties on Manor Road, previously providing surface water run-off capacity, has been blocked or built over.
20. In order to address this flooding issue a hydrological study was commissioned in October 2011. A flood risk assessment was prepared and a drainage scheme designed. The proposed pond is designed to accommodate all surface water run off during a 1 in 30 year rainfall event plus an allowance for climate change. Any rainfall in excess of such a level would pond the allotments for a short duration. The site will be re-contoured to ensure that all water sheds towards the attenuation pond. This should also prevent flooding of neighbouring land. A bund will be created along the Carr Road side of the existing ditch near the centre of the site to control surface water run-off into and from the ditch. The ditch will be cleaned out and re-sectioned and a 100mm diameter pipe installed to connect the ditch with the attenuation pond. Flows from existing land drains and watercourses will be incorporated into the land drainage system.

### Traffic and Transport

21. The plots on the site will be allocated mainly to people on the top of the allotment waiting list from Clayton-le-Woods. This will mean that people will generally have the option of walking or cycling to the site and won't be reliant on cars.
22. The Council owns several other allotment sites and has experience of how many parking spaces are needed relative to plots. The proposed car parking provision at Manor Road equates to one space per four plots. This is a higher level of provision than at Crosse Hall allotments (70 plots), where there is one space per six plots (11 spaces) and capacity has proved to be sufficient. Monitoring at Crosse Hall has shown that there are generally no more than three cars present on weekdays and ten at weekends.

### Security

23. The police have been consulted with regards to security issues. The fencing and gating to be installed are intended to deter unauthorised entry and damage.

### **Overall Conclusion**

24. Allotments provide an excellent opportunity for local people to grow fruit and vegetables, socialise and get exercise. As evidenced by the consultation response from the Head teacher of Manor Road Primary School, the proposed development will open up opportunities that would be likely to benefit community cohesion, education and health and wellbeing.
25. Allotments also offer environmental benefits in terms of biodiversity enrichment and carbon reduction through minimising the carbon footprint of food.
26. The concerns raised by objectors mainly relate to amenity, flooding, traffic and security issues. From the comments contained in the responses it is clear that the site in its present

state already generates considerable flooding problems. There have also been issues with anti-social behaviour, including fire setting.

27. It is considered that there is no evidence that the proposed development would add to the any existing traffic problems as the plots would be allocated to local residents and adequate additional car parking provision would be provided. The present traffic problems raised appear to be mainly school-run generated.
28. Existing problems with flooding on, and immediately around, the site should be at least alleviated and potentially completely eradicated by the proposed drainage measures to be incorporated into the site, thereby resolving a major, and long-standing, matter of concern for local residents.
29. The site will inevitably be used for some form of public amenity space; it is allocated in the Local Plan for use as play space. Of all such potential uses, allotments are likely to be one of the least intrusive in terms of neighbourhood amenity. The site is presently open, unmanaged and neglected. The proposed allotments would transform the site into a managed, secured and, at least some of the time, occupied space which is likely to be beneficial in terms security and visual amenity.
30. The proposal, whilst contributing towards the satisfaction of the Council's legal responsibility to ensure adequate allotment provision, also offers an opportunity to progress towards the achievement of strategic objectives set down in several of the Council's strategies.

## **Planning Policies**

### National Planning Policies:

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

### Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

Policies:

Policy LT13.26 applies to the western part of the site that adjoins Manor Road, identifying it for use as play space.

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

HW1.26 continues the Local Plan Review allocation as playspace

## **Planning History**

The site history of the property is as follows:

- |  |                         |  |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Ref:</b> 01/00098/CTY   | <b>Decision:</b> PERLCC | <b>Decision Date:</b> 14 March 2001    |
| <b>Description:</b> Demolish existing demountable two classroom block and construct classroom extension with shallow pitched felt roof to match school building,   |                         |  |
| <b>Ref:</b> 02/00672/LCC   | <b>Decision:</b> PERMIT | <b>Decision Date:</b> 5 September 2002 |
| <b>Description:</b> Extension to provide new staff room, enlarged entrance foyer and disabled access to first floor classrooms,  |                         |  |
| <b>Ref:</b> 98/00462/FUL   | <b>Decision:</b> PERFPP | <b>Decision Date:</b> 17 August 1998   |
| <b>Description:</b> Single-storey rear store room extension,   |                         |  |
| <b>Ref:</b> 06/00008/LCC   | <b>Decision:</b> PERMIT | <b>Decision Date:</b> 14 February 2006 |
| <b>Description:</b> Extension to classroom   |                         |  |
| <b>Ref:</b> 07/00259/FUL   | <b>Decision:</b> WDN    | <b>Decision Date:</b> 27 June 2007     |
| <b>Description:</b> Proposed erection of 2.4m high powder coated galvanised steel fence to school and adjacent boundary to front and side of school, erection of timber post and rail fence 1.2m high and formation of 2 metre wide tarmac footpath and access gates |                         |  |
| <b>Ref:</b> 07/00799/FUL   | <b>Decision:</b> PERFPP | <b>Decision Date:</b> 6 August 2007    |

**Description:** Proposed erection of 2.4m high powder coated galvanised steel fence to school and adjacent boundary to front and side of school, erection of timber post and rail fence 1.2m high and formation of 1.7 metre wide tarmac footpath and access gates

**Ref:** 10/00829/CTY **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 14 October 2010

**Description:** Replacement of existing fence with a 2.4m high weld security mesh fencing

**Ref:** 10/01111/CTY **Decision:** PERMIT **Decision Date:** 19 January 2011

**Description:** Installation of new 2.4 metre high security fencing to front and rear of school

**Ref:** 11/01060/CB3 **Decision:** PCO **Decision Date:**

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**Description:** The creation of a 21 plot allotment site with 5 car parking spaces and associated hard standing, drainage, fencing and pathways.

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission  
Conditions**

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 shall be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Design and Access Statement submitted with the application, and with the following plans received on 29 November 2011; -  
Drawing 3 – Allotment Construction Details  
Drawing 4 – Proposed Drainage Works  
*Reason: for the purposes of clarity.*