

Item 3d **14/01157/FULMAJ**

Case Officer **Paul Whittingham**

Ward **Eccleston And Mawdesley**

Proposal **The erection of 18 affordable homes with associated parking, landscaping and access.**

Location **Land West Of 77 Doctors Lane Eccleston**

Applicant **Partner Construction**

Consultation expiry: **4 March 2015**

Decision due by: **12th February 2015**

Recommendation
That the application is refused

Representations

Eccleston Parish Council - Object on the following grounds:-

- The application is contrary to Policy HS8: Rural Affordable Housing – Rural Exception Sites of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026. The proposed number of dwellings exceeds the 10 units quoted as a maximum for purposes of development management (para 5.40).
- lack of a demonstrable local need for affordable housing.

In total 42 representations have been received which are summarised below

Objection

Total No. received: 42

- Land is within the Green Belt and the NPPF and the letter to the Planning Inspectorate from Nic Bowles dated 3 March 14 highlighted the importance of the Green Belt and “we were always very clear that we would maintain key protections for the countryside and, in particular, for the Green Belt”. The development will erode green fields to build houses and would be a major extension into the Green Belt and would encourage further such development.
- Prime Minister says local people should decide and therefore this application should be refused. Money seems to be more important than the views of constituents, our voice never seems to be heard.
- The development is changing a small village into a town.
- The application would add to an unfairly high concentration in Eccleston of the type of development especially when other major developments are taken into account. Another development of affordable housing is unnecessary and unwelcome.
- Affordable starter homes are inappropriate on a green field at the edge of the village and would clash with the character of the area.
- Whilst in favour of affordable homes for local young people, why build on farm land.
- There are other brownfield sites eg Windmill that should be used first. Should concentrate on brownfield sites.
- How many short-sighted decisions will our planners make before they totally destroy the local environment.
- Any consent will open the gate for the rest of the field to be developed.
- The developer should be honest about the true intentions for the rest of the field.
- Eccleston is identified within the CLCS to be suitable for limited growth and Policy HS8 only refers to development being appropriate where there are no alternative sites.
- There is an impact upon the character and appearance by reason of scale, size & massing resulting in a strident feature in the locality. This would reduce the openness of the area and result in harm to the intrinsic character of the area.
- Rural Housing Needs survey identifies a need for 22 units per annum and there are lots of affordable homes being provided
- The traffic infrastructure and roads cannot cope, the position of the proposed access opposite Banner Close and volume of traffic at school times is dangerous and there is a need for greater traffic calming and a reduced speed limit and improvements to footways if the application goes forward.
- The proposed junction is 10meters from the junction opposite at Banner Close and does not meet the standards in the LCC document Residential Road design guide.
- The proposed development will impact on both schools and doctors which are full and 200 new properties within the whole of Eccleston, an increase

of 14% will result in the need for 50 primary school places and 18 homes will make this worse.

- There is a tree being removed and also part of a hedgerow.
- There will be an impact on the wildlife including Barn Owl's and bats
- There will be an impact on properties nearby including noise, light and overlooking.

Consultees

Consultee	Summary of Comments received
LCC Highways	No objections – the comments of the Highway Authority will be dealt with within the body of the report
Ecology	No objections subject to tree remaining and conditions
United Utilities	No objections subject to conditions and the foul sewerage being drained on a separate system with surface water being restricted to existing runoff rates.
CBC Waste & Contaminated Land Officer	No objection subject to conditions
CBC Tree Officer	Object to removal of Oak tree but other works are acceptable
Police Architectural Liaison Officer	No objections and recommend that the development is built to “secure by design” standards, that the design provides appropriate access to the field that would be left and that a bat survey is undertaken.

The Development Plan

1. The development plan comprises the saved policies of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003 and the Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy.
2. The starting point for assessment of the application is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that states if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003

3. The 2003 Local Plan Review and the 2012 Adopted Core Strategy comprise the statutory development plan relevant to the application. The Framework confirms that for 12 months from the day of publication of the Framework (27th March 2012), decision-takers may continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the Framework. The Local Plan Policies were adopted in 2003 and saved by the Secretary of State in 2007 which was in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Framework also confirms that from the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans. The emerging plan is later in this report.
4. The relevant policies of the Local Plan are as follows:
 - GN5 - Building Design and Retaining Existing Landscape Features and Natural Habitats
 - DC1- Green Belt
 - EP4 - Species Protection
 - EP9 - Trees and Woodlands
 - EP12 – Environmental Improvements
 - EP17- Water Resources and Quality
 - EP18 – Surface Water Run Off
 - TR1 – Major Development – Tests for Accessibility & Sustainability
 - TR4 – Highway Development Control Criteria

Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy 2012

5. The following Core Strategy Policies are of relevance to this application:
 - **Policy MP** clarifies the operational relationship between the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the Framework. Planning policies that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise taking into account Policy MP a) and b).
 - **Policy 1** Locating Growth
 - **Policy 22** Biodiversity and Geiodiversity
 - **Policy 29** Water Management
 - **Policy 31:** Agricultural Land

Emerging Policy Considerations *Emerging Local Plan 2012-2026*

6. The Inspector has issued her Partial Report on her findings into the soundness of the emerging Chorley Local Plan which is a material consideration in the assessment of any planning application.

7. In summary, the plan is considered to be legally compliant. In relation to soundness, the plan is considered sound, with the exception of matters relating to Gypsies & Travellers.
8. Paragraph 18 of the Partial Report states: "For the avoidance of doubt, the Plan may not be adopted until it has been changed in accordance with all of the main modifications set out in the Appendix to this partial report and any which may be specified in the Appendix of my forthcoming supplementary report. However, because of the very advanced stage in the examination process that the main modifications set out in the attached Appendix have reached, significant weight should be attached to all policies and proposals of the Plan that are amended accordingly, where necessary, except for matters relating to Gypsies and Travellers."
9. The Council accepted the Inspectors modifications for Development Control purposes at its Executive Committee on 21st November 2013 and as such the Policies can be afforded significant weight subject to the main modifications.
10. The following emerging Local Plan Policies are of relevance to this application:
 - BNE10: Trees
 - BNE11: Species Protection
 - HS8: Rural Affordable Housing – Rural Exception Sites

Assessment

Background Information

11. The application site is currently laid to grass and is used for agriculture. The application site has a field gate with access from Doctors Lane and the surroundings to the site consist of detached houses on Chaucer Close to the east and a Cricket field to the west. To the north of Doctors lane are detached houses fronting Doctors Lane and within a Cul-de-Sac, Banner Close.

Principle of the Development

12. This proposal is located in the Green Belt adjacent to the settlement of Eccleston. Eccleston is not identified as a location where growth and investment should be concentrated in Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 1. Within Chorley most growth is directed to Chorley Town and Buckshaw Village and then some growth is directed to the Borough's six Urban Local Service Centres. Eccleston is identified as a Rural Local Service Centre where limited growth and investment to help meet local housing needs and to support the provision of services to the wider area is encouraged. However, this proposal is not located within the Eccleston settlement boundary. It is located in the Green Belt adjacent to the settlement.
13. The Council's emerging Local Plan is at a very advanced stage and in accordance with the Inspector's Partial Report, its policies, except for matters on Gypsies and Travellers, can be given significant weight.
14. Paragraph 47 of the Framework states that to boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the Framework.
15. In the October 2013 Partial Report, the emerging Local Plan Inspector considers whether the Plan allocates sufficient land in the right locations and to accord with the requirements of the Core Strategy and with paragraph 47 of the Framework. She concludes in paragraph 111 that it is unnecessary to allocate any additional or 'alternative' housing sites to make the Plan sound. She further concludes that incorporating the main modifications the Plan allocates sufficient housing land in the right locations to accord with the Core Strategy and to accord with paragraph 47 of the Framework. The Inspector was aware of the 2011 Rural Housing Needs Study and the fact that it identifies a

shortfall of affordable properties in rural areas over the period 2011 – 2016. However, she took the view that it was not necessary to allocate any additional land to meet housing needs and that the Council's approach accorded with the requirements of the Framework.

16. In terms of Eccleston, the Inspector expressly considers alternative site AL18, east of Tincklers Lane (BNE3.7) in her report, which was suggested for housing development by landowners. This is a large site (of approximately 5.6ha in total but which could be split into smaller parcels) that is slightly to the north- west of the application site. This land was safeguarded for future development needs in the 2003 adopted Local Plan, so was not Green Belt, unlike the application site. The Inspector was aware of the findings of the Rural Housing Needs study and Core Strategy Policy 8, which requires 35% affordable housing on sites of appropriate size in rural areas. However, in the Partial Report the Inspector concludes that Eccleston is a Rural Local Service Centre where only limited growth is encouraged by the Core Strategy and that three housing sites are allocated in Eccleston by the Plan. She states that there is no necessity to allocate site AL18 to provide additional housing supply in Eccleston. Consequently the site has not been allocated for housing in the emerging Local Plan and remains designated as Safeguarded Land.
17. Therefore, the Inspector expressly considered whether additional land was needed to provide additional housing supply in Eccleston, which would have included a proportion of affordable housing. Site AL18 was not in the Green Belt (unlike the application site) but she concludes that there is no necessity to allocate any additional land. She takes the view that the Council allocates sufficient housing land in the right locations to accord with paragraph 47 of the Framework.
18. The emerging Local Plan does incorporate a modest element of windfall housing in its identified housing supply and includes policies that are supportive of new housing in principle, provided that it is of an appropriate scale and in the right locations. This enables market and affordable housing to come forward on sites that are not allocated, provided that proposals accord with other Local and national policies.
19. The application site is in the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, but an exception is limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan. Therefore, national policy restricts new built housing development in the Green Belt, unless it is limited in nature and meets local community needs under a policy set out in the Local Plan.
20. Policy HS8 of the emerging Local Plan is Chorley's rural exception site policy. This states that a limited number of dwellings exclusively to meet a local need for affordable housing may be allowed adjoining a number of settlements, including Eccleston, providing the following criteria are met:
 - a) There is no suitable site available within the village;
 - b) The scale and nature of the development would be in character with the settlement;
 - c) The development would significantly contribute to the solution of a local housing problem that cannot be solved in any other way;
 - d) The occupancy of the dwellings would be limited to people with a close local connection and who are unable to afford market housing;
 - e) The development is managed by a Registered Provider or similar body.

The supporting text for the policy states that in Chorley rural exception sites are considered to be sites outside of the village boundaries, but which adjoin the village built-up area. This site is outside of the Eccleston settlement boundary, but adjoins the village built-up area, so accords with this provision.

21. There is no definition of 'limited' in the Framework, but the supporting text to Policy HS8 states that for the purposes of development management a limited number of dwellings is considered to be a maximum of ten units. This proposal is for 18 units, so does not

accord with this provision. Therefore, this proposal is not considered to be limited in nature under the policy set out in the emerging Chorley Local Plan. It is therefore contrary to the Framework and is inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. This proposal is not consistent with policy on the Green Belt in the Framework.

22. The criteria in policy HS8 are considered in turn.

a) There is no suitable site available within the village: The applicants have undertaken a sequential site assessment and state that there is no suitable site available in the settlement. However, there is non-Green Belt land designated as safeguarded for future development needs on the edge of Eccleston. The Council received site suggestions for housing on safeguarded land at Tincklers Lane and land south of Parr Lane as part of the emerging Local Plan process. These landowners put forward non-Green Belt land for housing development, which would have been subject to Core Strategy housing affordable housing requirements. However, the Local Plan Inspector considered but rejected the allocation of safeguarded land for housing in Eccleston on the basis that there was no necessity to provide additional housing supply in the settlement. There are also currently sites within the settlement that are actively delivering affordable housing (HS1.50, Carrington Centre and HS1.51, Sagar House).

b) The scale and nature of the development would not be in character with the settlement: This development is for 18 units. Applications for a greater number of units have been approved at the Carrington Centre and Sagar House in Eccleston in recent years. However, these sites were in the settlement boundary and both contained significant elements of previously developed land. Eccleston is only identified for limited housing growth. This application is of a scale that is considered greater than that considered appropriate for rural exception sites in the emerging Chorley Local Plan, which specifies a maximum of 10 units. The application site is in the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. This application is for 18 units, which would have a significant impact upon the openness of the Green Belt in this location and would lead to encroachment into the countryside, so would conflict with one of the purposes of the Green Belt.

c) The development would significantly contribute to the solution of a local housing problem that cannot be solved in any other way: The applicants refer to the 2011 Rural Housing Needs study which indicates an affordable housing requirement of 22 dwellings annually in Eccleston Parish over the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. However, they do not supplement this with any more up-to-date evidence about the need in Eccleston, or appear to have undertaken dialogue with the Council's Strategic Housing Team to get their views on current need within the locality. Information on the recent take-up of affordable housing developed in Eccleston would also be useful. If 18 affordable units are built in Eccleston, will there be local people who will take up all 18 units? Rural Exception sites are not a preferred location for rural affordable housing; they are located in the Green Belt and should only be developed if they would significantly contribute to the solution of a local housing problem that cannot be solved in any other way and all of the other criteria in policy HS7 are satisfied. Further evidence on the extent of the local housing problem should have been supplied to justify this development and have not.

Affordable housing has been developed/is being developed in Eccleston without resorting to Green Belt development, including at the former Sagar House site and at the Carrington Centre. Therefore, affordable homes are actively being delivered in the settlement, without resorting to Green Belt development. It is concluded that the housing market in Eccleston has not failed to deliver market housing and affordable housing such that a rural exception site is required in order to deliver affordable housing that cannot be delivered in any other way.

d) The occupancy of the dwellings would be limited to people with a close local connection and who are unable to afford market housing: The applicants state the houses will be allocated to local people in need according to a 'cascade' approach, with priority

given to those currently or recently residing in the Parish, to eligible individuals with close employment links to the Parish and if no applicants qualify priority to eligible families and individuals who have a local connection to adjoining parishes. If there are still vacant properties then they may be allocated to other eligible individuals in housing need. However, whilst this would ensure that people with a close local connection get 'priority', it also leaves potential for people without any connections to Ecclestone to secure houses, if not enough 'priority' residents are secured to reside in all 18 dwellings. In these circumstances, residents without any local connection could end up living in these houses and the homes would effectively be meeting general affordable need as opposed to those with a close local connection as required by the Local Plan..

Rural exception sites in the Green Belt are not identified to meet general affordable housing need; this would be contrary to national policy in the Framework which states that only limited affordable housing development for local community needs (under policies set out in the Local Plan) is appropriate. It would also be contrary to local planning policy in policy HS8 which states that such dwellings should be exclusively to meet a local need for affordable housing. The Affordable Housing SPD confirms that a rural exception site policy should seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents, or who have an existing family or employment connection. Rural Exception sites are not a preferred location for rural affordable housing; they are located in the Green Belt and should only be developed if they would significantly contribute to the solution of a local housing problem that cannot be solved in any other way.

e) The development is managed by a Registered Provider or similar body: The applicants state that the dwellings will be constructed by Partner Construction, who work with Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing schemes and that the homes would be acquired and managed by an affordable housing partner of Chorley BC. Therefore, providing this takes place, this should accord with the policy however there is no confirmation from an RP that they will manage the housing in the future.

23. Will the development preserve the openness of the greenbelt? Whilst the test for sites such as this relates to preserving openness it is important to note that the framework contains no specific definition of 'openness'. It is considered that there is an impact to openness simply because buildings/structures exist and openness generally means the absence of development.
24. The development of 18 units on this site will impact on openness. As such the proposal falls to be considered inappropriate development. Consequently, the tests of paragraph 88 of the Framework are engaged. In this case very special circumstances need to be demonstrated which outweigh the harm the development will have to the green belt.
25. In summary, this proposal is not limited in nature and is considered to be contrary to national policy on Green Belt development and Local Plan policy HS8 on rural exception sites for the reasons as stated above.

Visual Impact

26. The proposals result in encroachment of built development into the Green Belt and as such the visual impact of the development is a key consideration.
27. It has been established in case law that openness and visual impact are different concepts in terms of Green Belt Policy. However they can relate to each other and as such the visual impact is a material consideration. In *Heath & Hampsted Society v LB of Camden* [2007] EWHC 977, the difference between openness and visual impact was explained as follows:

21. Paragraph 3.6 is concerned with the size of the replacement dwelling, not with its visual impact. There are good reasons why the relevant test for replacement dwellings in

the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land is one of size rather than visual impact. The essential characteristic of Green Belts and Metropolitan Open Land is their openness ... The extent to which that openness is, or is not, visible from public vantage points and the extent to which a new building in the Green Belt would be visually intrusive are a separate issue...

The fact that a materially larger (in terms in footprint, floor space or building volume) replacement dwelling is more concealed from public view than a smaller but more prominent existing dwelling does not mean that the replacement dwelling is appropriate development in the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.

22. The loss of openness (ie unbuilt on land) within the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land is of itself harmful to the underlying policy objective. If the replacement dwelling is more visually intrusive there will be further harm in addition to the harm by reason of inappropriateness, which will have to be outweighed by those special circumstances if planning permission is to be granted (paragraph 3.15 of PPG 2, above). If the materially larger replacement dwelling is less visually intrusive than the existing dwelling then that would be a factor which could be taken into consideration when deciding whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness was outweighed by very special circumstances.

28. . When interpreting paragraph 89 of the Framework the Judge in *Timmins v Gedling BC and Westerleigh Group Limited* [2014] analysed the relationship between openness and visual impact. He held inter alia:

74. Any construction harms openness quite irrespective of its impact in terms of its obtrusiveness or its aesthetic attractions or qualities. A beautiful building is still an affront to openness, simply because it exists. The same applies to a building this is camouflaged or rendered unobtrusive by felicitous landscaping.

29. In this case the Judge concluded that:

78. In short it seems to me that there are three points which arise from the above analysis. First, there is a clear conceptual distinction between openness and visual impact. Secondly, it is therefore wrong in principle to arrive at a specific conclusion as to openness by reference to visual impact. Thirdly, when considering however whether a development in the Green Belt which adversely impacts upon openness can be justified by very special circumstances it is not wrong to take account of the visual impact of a development as one, inter alia, of the considerations that form part of the overall weighing exercise.

30. As the development falls to be considered inappropriate development the landscape/visual impact of the proposed development is a key material consideration in terms of the overall balance of harm.

31. The application site and proposed development will be visible from the following receptors:

1. Properties and the street frontage of Doctors Lane along the south side of Southport Road (east of Lydiate Lane) and from the Cricket field to the west.

32. No mitigation measures have been proposed, however the amended plans do retain a tree fronting Doctors Lane and there is also the potential to retain the existing hedge fronting Doctors Lane and this could be covered by condition. The boundary to the west with the Cricket field is an existing sparse hedge line that is within the boundary of the cricket field and so would not provide mitigation to this development. The rear boundaries adjacent to the cricket field show a 1.8 metre rear fence which would be a solid boundary

feature. The harm by reason of the visual impact of the development is most pronounced on the west with limited potential for mitigation to be imposed by condition and limited scope to amend the development layout to introduce additional landscaping that would mitigate the visual impact of the development.

33. In respect of visual impact it can be concluded that the impact is of moderate significance for the visual receptors to the west.

Impact on the neighbours

34. The layout shows that 2 pairs of semi-detached houses will front Doctors Lane but be accessed from the rear with the other proposed properties all facing onto the access road that will serve it. This would result in the rear elevation of plots 5 to 11 facing towards the rear garden of number 77 Doctors Lane. However this is a long garden that separates this site from properties on Chaucer Close and would not therefore result in overlooking to this property.
35. The plots 12 to 18 would have a rear boundary with the cricket field and would not overlook any neighbours.

Design and Layout

36. The scheme proposes a mixture of semi-detached and blocks of 3 houses. The properties on plots 1 to 4 and all nearest Doctors Lane will be semi-detached that front Doctors Lane and this layout is considered appropriate. The houses and the rest of the plots will be two-storey houses that face onto the cul-de-sac, this layout is considered appropriate.
37. In-curtilage parking is provided for each of the properties and each has a rear garden.
38. The proposed design and layout is therefore considered acceptable in this respect.

Traffic and Transport

39. The applicant proposes to alter the existing field access opposite 80 Doctors Lane into a simple priority junction arrangement with the C192 Doctors Lane for use as the site access. The access will have visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m with 6.0m corner radii to assist safe transition of vehicles in and out of the site. It is considered that the geometry of the access is in line with the recommendations on the Manual for Streets and the Highways officer, having visited the site has confirmed that the existing mature trees on both sides of the access are not within the access visibility splay and should not result in sightlines being obscured when the access is brought into use.
40. As regards a concern expressed by a resident of the area and detailed within the objections above, regarding the proposed access being too close to the existing junction of Doctors Lane and Banners Close, that considering the local context, the proposed access is not out of character with the rest of the area. The greater section of Doctors Lane is subject to 30mph speed limit and built up on both sides with mix of residential and local facilities and has a high place function, e.g. direct frontage accesses and on-street parking.
41. This therefore means that the proposed access must be designed in line with the appropriate parts of the Manual for Streets 1 and 2. The Lancashire County Council document 'Residential Road Design Guide' cited by the resident has long been outdated and replaced by the Manual for Streets. As such, while it is appreciated that a minimum junction spacing of 40m is specified in the Residential Road Design Guide, this is no longer an essential requirement under current guidance. The Manual for Streets (MfS1&2) are now the nationally recognised government guidance used predominantly for design, construction and maintenance of new residential streets and for existing residential streets subject to redesign. The Manuals place high priority on meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users to encourage growth in these modes of travel. In addition to the MfS1&2, the County Council uses its own guidance

called 'Creating Civilised Streets' and the 'Specification for Construction of Estate Roads'. The proposed development including the site access arrangement are therefore required to accord with the MfS1&2 and the above LCC documents, but not the Residential Road Design Guide which is no longer in use. The Manual for Streets require the need for provision of additional junctions on existing roads to be assessed in the round, considering a wide range of factors such as need for access at particular locations, the impact on the size of development blocks, the potential for interaction between adjacent junctions and the consequent effects on user delay and road safety.

42. It is concluded that, although the additional traffic to be generated by the proposed development will result in higher flows on the surrounding highway network, any impact as a result of this increased flows should not adversely affect the operation of the local highway network. LCC, as the Highway Authority therefore have no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions.

Ecology

43. The main ecological issues arising from the proposal include impacts on a mature Oak tree and hedgerows (Habitat of Principal Importance). It seems reasonably unlikely that the proposals would result in other adverse impacts including on amphibians (including Great Crested Newt) or bats.
44. Conditions are proposed having regard to the amended proposal to retain the tree as part of the development and in order to make the development acceptable.

Open Space

45. Policies HS4A and HS4B of the emerging Local Plan cover open space and playing pitch requirements in new housing developments. They set out on-site provision and/or financial contributions for off-site provision or improvements
46. In relation to amenity greenspace the emerging Local Plan Policy HS4A sets a standard of 0.73 hectares per 1,000 population. There is currently a deficit of provision in the Ecclestone and Mawdesley ward in relation to this standard; a contribution towards new provision in the ward is therefore required from this development. The amount required is £140 per dwelling.
47. In relation to provision for children/young people Policy HS4A sets a standard of 0.08 hectares per 1,000 population. There is currently a surplus of provision in the Ecclestone and Mawdesley ward in relation to this standard; a contribution towards new provision in the settlement is therefore not required from this development. The site is also not within the accessibility catchment (800m) of any areas of provision for children/young people that are identified as being low quality and/or low value in the Open Space Study. A contribution towards improvements is therefore also not required from this development.
48. There is no requirement to provide a new park or garden on-site within this development using the standards and there are no parks/gardens within the accessibility catchment (1,000m) of this site identified as being low quality and/or low value in the Open Space Study, therefore a contribution towards improving existing provision is not required.
49. There is no requirement to provide new natural/semi natural greenspace on-site within this development and there are no areas of natural/semi-natural greenspace within the accessibility catchment (800m) of this site identified as being low quality and/or low value in the Open Space Study, therefore a contribution towards improving existing provision is not required.
50. There is no requirement to provide allotment provision on site within this development. The site is within the accessibility catchment (10 minutes' drive time) of a proposed new allotment site at Station Road, Croston (HW5.4). A contribution towards new allotment provision is therefore required from this development. The amount required is £15 per dwelling..

51. A Playing Pitch Strategy was published in June 2012 which identifies a Borough wide deficit of playing pitches but states that the majority of this deficit can be met by improving existing pitches. A financial contribution towards the improvement of existing playing pitches is therefore required from this development. The Playing Pitch Strategy includes an Action Plan which identifies sites that need improvements. The amount required is £1,599 per dwelling..

52. The total financial contribution required from this development is therefore £31,572.

CIL

53. The development will be CIL liable, however as the development is for affordable housing then the development can be registered as being exempt from CIL liability.

Sustainability

54. The applicant in this instance has proposed to develop the scheme to Code level 3 which is inconsistent with Policy 27 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy which requires all new dwellings built after 2014 to be built to Code level 4 and after 2016 to be built to Code Level 6.

Scheme Viability

55. The applicant in submitting the supporting evidence for this application has submitted a Viability Assessment for the development of the scheme. The submitted assessment is an assessment based on applications submitted by a Registered Provider however the applicant is not a Registered Provider and would sell the site to the Registered Provider at a level that with a grant from the HCA that the scheme would have a break-even point of less than 30 years and provide for a positive 'Net Present Value'(NPV).

56. This RP style assessment of viability does state that a scheme of 10 units would not break even within 30 years and would not have a positive NPV.

57. The applicant has been asked for a revised assessment of viability that relates to the circumstance of this application and whilst one has been received it is evaluated and the conclusions and assessment will be reported on the addendum.

Overall Conclusion.

58. The proposal is contrary to Policy 1 criterion (f) of the Core Strategy as it is not considered it would meet local need. It is inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it does not meet any of the exceptions set out in Paragraph 89 of the Framework and further harm would be caused to the openness of the Green Belt. It is not considered there are very special circumstances that would outweigh the harm. At a local policy level the proposal would be contrary to Policy HS8 of the emerging Local Plan 2012-2026. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

Planning Policies

59. 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 Borough Local Plan Review 2003 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposals has had regard to guidance contained with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the development plan and the emerging Local Plan 2012-2026. The specific policies/ guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

