

APPLICATION REPORT – 16/00926/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 31 October 2016

Ward: Pennine

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Rehabilitation centre, comprising pool complex, gym and therapy building, seventeen accommodation cabins, car park, access road, running (sprint) track and associated plant.

Location: Land 100M East Of Wheelton House Brinscall Mill Road Wheelton

Case Officer: Mrs Helen Lowe

Authorising Officer:

Applicant: Ms Ann Nikolakis

Agent: John Welbank

Consultation expiry: 1 December 2016

Decision due by: 10 February 2017

RECOMMENDATION

1. The application is recommended for refusal.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. The application site consists of a mixture of rough grassland and woodland. The site was formally used by the MOD historically and two open reservoirs are still present on the site. Brinscall Brook runs through the site.
3. Land levels vary across the site, with the western and central most parts of the site being flatter and the site generally rising towards the northern end.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4. The application proposes the erection a rehabilitation centre to provide care for people in the following clinical areas:
 - Physical rehabilitation following acute trauma
 - Sports injury
 - Dementia treatment
 - Alzheimer treatment
5. The facilities on site would comprise:
 - A two storey gym/therapy building
 - A two storey pool building
 - Parking area with 31 parking spaces (plus four disabled spaces)
 - Seventeen single storey log cabins (with associated car parking)
 - A running track, measuring approximately 9m by 74m
 - An access road off Brinscall Mill Road,

- Two treatment plant buildings.

CONSTRAINTS

Parish

SSSI Impact Risk Zones

Ward

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

Ref: 14/00097/FULMAJ Decision: WDN Decision Date: 19 February 2014

Description: Erection of a sport and military rehabilitation centre including the modification of the two existing water tanks to provide a 50m swimming pool, the creation of an athletics track, on-site accommodation and associated parking areas.

Ref: 15/00838/SCE Decision: PESCEZ Decision Date: 9 September 2015

Description: Request for Screening Opinion Pursuant to Regulation 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 for a rehabilitation centre incorporating therapy building and gym, swimming pool and facilities block, 17 Log Cabins, Running Track and associated parking

REPRESENTATIONS

- Thirteen letters of objection have been received. They make the following comments:
 - The development is unsuitable for the area;
 - The access is already a cause for concern, without worsening the problems by allowing the development of a 'hotel' with leisure facilities on site;
 - Building this massive development would cause a tremendous strain on the already weak infrastructure of the area;
 - Details within the proposal are misleading, e.g. there is no bus service;
 - The road is single track and dangerous;
 - Many people come to the area of Heapey and White Coppice to walk on the peaceful and quiet paths this development would certainly worsen the area in that respect.
 - Road junctions are completely unsuitable for the volume of traffic that uses the road at the present time, without the introduction of more.
 - The development would cause the destruction of wildlife;
 - This development will significantly increase the traffic flow that uses Chapel Lane, Tithe Barn Lane and Brinscall Mill Road;
 - The "green" transport plan put forward by the applicant grossly understates the increase traffic flow that this development will attract;
 - If open to the public the traffic it would generate will be considerable and the location does not facilitate good access.
 - the ensuing development will change the character of Heapey and White Coppice forever. It will damage the natural habitat with unsuitable buildings, traffic, noise and light pollution.
 - Local residents have not been consulted (by the applicant);
 - The impact on the Grade II listed buildings would be at very least moderate;
 - Brinscall Mill Road is in a very poor state of repair;
 - There is no basic infrastructure to support any sizeable business, other than farming and country pursuits. There is not even a Broadband facility here.
 - No details of proposed screening have been provided;
 - Can long term viability be guaranteed?
 - The number of heavy vehicles required to develop the site;
 - The principle of development does not comply with the development plan;
 - It will lead to an unsustainable development;
 - It is unclear what the intended access arrangements are;
 - the site boundaries do not go right up to Brinscall Mill Road, which is unadopted. Primrose Holdings are currently in dialogue with the land registry regarding

registration of this land, which we consider falls within our ownership. Any plans to widen/improve or add passing places would therefore fall on land out of the applicants ownership;

- A wider, more comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be needed for a development of this size;
- The sequential test has not been carried out in enough detail;
- The location of the proposed rehabilitation centre is contrary to local plan Policy BNE2 which limits development in the countryside. Development can only therefore be granted where other material considerations outweigh this. However, there are also other adverse effects to add into the balance;
- There is no evidence of need for this facility;
- The land did flood in December 2015;

7. Five letters of support have been received. They make the following comments:

- This is a much needed centre for ex local service personnel and other people who have medical conditions who need the right level of care;
- This means they can be treated in the community rather than having to travel hundreds of miles;
- The current site is an eyesore and very rundown;
- There is very little support at present for Alzheimer's sufferers in the area;
- The increase in traffic will be minimal, Chapel Lane has plenty of space for the type and volume of traffic on this route.
- The development will have a positive effect on local employment prospects;
- The environment it will be set in will make a great learning environment;

CONSULTATIONS

Wheulton Parish Council No concerns about the building, except for ensuring screening is included and eco-friendly methods to help the buildings blend in, such as sedum roofs. Express major concerns about the access to the development. It would raise major disruption for local residents and there are already traffic issues with traffic on Chapel Lane.

CPRE (Lancashire Branch) No comments received

Lancashire Highway Services No comments received

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit Based on the information within the ecological appraisal, the site support habitats of high ecological value, mainly semi-natural broadleaved woodland and acid grassland both of which are identified as Biodiversity Habitats. The assessment of the impacts on these habitats is lacking. The appraisal states that the woodland "should be retained and protected under the proposal" but this has not been followed through in the design of the scheme. It is therefore recommended that the application be refused in its current form.

Overall the proposals will involve the loss of a significant number of trees together with the loss of woodland and grassland habitats. There is a small amount of tree planting shown on the tree removal plans but no information appears to have been included on the species to be planted. Overall there appears to be no compensation for the loss the woodland and grassland habitats.

Following receipt of further comments from the agent for the application, the GMEU have advised that their comments remain unchanged.

Planning Policy The proposal is located outside areas where growth and investment should be concentrated, and is not small in scale, and is therefore contrary to Policy 1 of the Core Strategy. The proposal represents inappropriate development which will harm the open and rural character of the location. The proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policy BNE10: Trees. The impact assessment has demonstrated that there are no equivalent facilities within or around Chorley, and that there is unlikely to be an impact on the main town centre uses if the development were to come forward. It is not considered that the proposal is in alignment with the visions identified within the West Pennine Moors Management Plan (2010-2020).

Conservation Officer No comments received

Lead Local Flood Authority No comments received

Chorley Council Tree Officer The tree stock within the planned development area is comprised of a mixture of native species. Trees predominately self-set examples of pioneer species of birch, willow, alder, oak.

Due to the nature of the proposed development it is likely that a number of trees will require removal. Trees which are likely to require removal are not of highly significant individual or collective value. Low quality trees of very limited merit, a number with defects.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment recommendations indicate minimal tree removal for the planned development. Self-set trees of low quality to be removed.

Recommend removal of minimal tree numbers. Planned replanting programme put in place.

United Utilities No objection, subject to the imposition of a number of recommended conditions.

Ramblers' Association (Chorley Branch) PROW Wheelton 3 lies on the lane to the west of the proposed development. The proposed Rehabilitation Centre would use this lane as it's access route for vehicular traffic. It is essential that the safety of walkers along PROW Wheelton 3 is not compromised by this development.

PROW Wheelton 3 and PROW Heapey 17 both run along the edge of the proposed site. These PROWs currently enjoy a pleasant rural environment and we do not want that rural environment to be spoilt.

Lancashire County Council Public Rights Of Way No comments received.

Environment Agency No objection in principal to the proposed development subject to the inclusion of conditions

HSE The site is within an explosive Safeguarding Zone. Further comments are awaited.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principal of the development

Open Countryside

8. The application site is located within an area of open countryside as identified in the Local Plan. Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan sets out the types of development that can be carried out within these areas. Development will be permitted provided that:
 - a) It is needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area;
 - b) It involves the rehabilitation and re-use of existing rural buildings where their form, bulk and general design are appropriate to the character of the surrounding countryside.
9. Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, including all of the various elements involved, the scheme does not fall to be considered as uses appropriate to a rural area and as such the proposals are contrary to policy BNE2.
10. There is an existing reservoir on the site with its associated hard engineering elements, however it is considered that the erection of two large new buildings, the creation of a significant area of hardstanding (to be used for a variety of purposes), erection of log cabins and formation of a running track would have a significantly greater impact on the openness and character of this rural area than the current reservoir does.

11. The Council has published a Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document which sets out the Council's approach to development in rural areas. Whilst the SPD does acknowledge that rural recreational development, which involves the restoration of damaged land, (which it may be possible to demonstrate in respect of part of this site) should be considered prior to the development of new facilities, this is only applicable where the scheme would not require new buildings in the countryside which would not be applicable in this case.
12. The SPD advises that applicants should consider the scale and intensity of use of a proposed scheme, ensuring that activities which attract relatively large numbers of people are readily accessible by public transport, and located within or as close to existing settlements as possible. The accessibility of the site is discussed further below.
13. Although elements of the proposals could be considered to be outdoor sport and recreation which can be considered as appropriate development within rural areas, it is not considered that the majority of the development proposed falls within this definition, and the scale of the proposals would result in a development which does not fall within the above criteria.
14. The applicant has put forward the following justifications for the proposals:
 - i) Rural Location: The rural location on the edge of the West Pennine Moors is a critical component within the rehabilitation process. The supporting sequential test demonstrates that there are no other alternatives within the District.
 - ii) Appropriate Scale of Associated Development: Although the two main structures are large they meet the functional needs of the proposal. A large pool area is critical for different groups to be able to work at the same time. Other facilities including treatment centre, gym and communal dining areas are the minimum size required for the numbers of patients and staff proposed. The lodges are located to the north of the site. The design aims to cluster the lodges but keep sufficient space between buildings to maintain sufficient tree screening.
 - iii) Minimum impact on the openness of the Countryside: Every effort has been made to use both existing landform and tree cover to screen the development. Although the two main buildings are large the location, screening and use of natural materials will mitigate impact.
 - iv) Transport Impact: The site is only 2.5km from the centre of Chorley. To access the site a short length of rural road will have to be used. To improve connections to the public transport network the business will implement a Green Travel Plan that will encourage staff to travel by foot, bike or private minibus. Patients themselves will also be encouraged to use the private minibus. This will provide a direct link to Chorley railway station.
15. The supporting statement acknowledges that the scale and nature of the development are beyond what would normally be considered appropriate development. They consider that a functional need for the facility has been demonstrated, there are no other equivalent facilities in the District or the north west, therefore the proposal meets the exception test. The accompanying sequential assessment demonstrates that there are no other alternative sites locally that would meet the function needs of the business (this is discussed further below).

Sequential assessment

16. The Framework is clear that the preference for the location for recreational development is within town centre locations. As the proposals are outside of the town centre and over 2,500 square metres it is required to show evidence of sequential testing showing that all town centre options have been thoroughly addressed before considering less central sites. Once it has been demonstrated that there are no suitable town centre sites, preference will then be given first to edge of centre and then to out of centre sites and these should be examined before sites outside the urban area are considered.
17. The applicant has provided a Sequential Test and Impact Assessment in support of the application. A series of sites have been considered as potential alternative locations for the

proposed development, comprised of allocated sites, sites on the market and other greenfield sites.

18. It is confirmed that the three Local Plan listed sites are allocated for employment use (EP1.1, EP1.6 and EP1.12) and are being brought forward for B-class employment uses, and would not be suitable for the proposed use.
19. In relation to the site located at Back House Farm; it is confirmed that the location of this within the green belt would not be supported.
20. In relation to the assessment of other greenfield sites:
 - Site 1 is largely comprised of site EP1.1 referred to above,
 - Site 2 is part of EP1.3 which is an employment allocation and the remainder of the site is allocated as Green Belt, and
 - Site 3 is currently in use as the Mormon temple and associated curtilage, and the remainder of the site is identified as BNE4 – Area of separation.It is therefore confirmed that no sequentially preferable sites have been included within the sequential test.
21. The impact assessment has demonstrated that there are no equivalent facilities within or around Chorley, and that there is unlikely to be an impact on the main town centre uses if the development were to come forward. It is also agreed that the disaggregation of the uses would result in reduced viability.

Sustainable development

22. The golden thread running through the Framework is sustainable development. Policy 1 of the Adopted Core Strategy confirms that growth and investment will be focussed on well-located brownfield sites and the Strategic Location of Central Preston, the Key Service Centres of Chorley and Leyland and the other main urban areas in South Ribble, whilst protecting the character of suburban and rural areas. Some Greenfield development will be required on the fringes of the main urban areas. To promote vibrant local communities and support services, an appropriate scale of growth and investment will be encouraged in identified Local Service Centres, providing it is in keeping with their local character and setting, and at certain other key locations outside the main urban areas. The Policy confirms that growth and investment will be concentrated in Chorley Town (as a key service centre), some growth and investment at Adlington, Clayton Brook/Green, Clayton-le-Woods (Lancaster Lane), Coppull, Euxton and Whittle-le-Woods (as Urban Local Service Centres).
23. Limited growth and investment will be encouraged at the following Rural Local Service Centres to help meet local housing and employment needs and to support the provision of services to the wider area: Brinscall / Withnell, Eccleston and Longton. This site is however outside the defined boundary of Brinscall/ Withnell.
24. Policy 1 does confirm that in other places (smaller villages, substantially built up frontages and Major Developed Sites) development will typically be small scale and limited to appropriate infilling, conversion of buildings and proposals to meet local need, unless there are exceptional reasons for larger scale redevelopment schemes. The proposal would not meet any of these exceptions.
25. It is noted that the development will provide 20 new jobs which clearly is a positive consideration in respect of the local economy. The Rural Development SPD confirms that it is important that employment opportunities exist in rural areas firstly, to enable local people to access employment close to where they live, secondly, to help avoid excessive levels of commuting to urban areas and thirdly to ensure that local communities remain vibrant and sustainable. However it does confirm that employment development proposals should be conveniently located in relation to the surrounding road network, provide a safe access, be adequately serviced or can be serviced at a reasonable cost which would need to be

demonstrated in respect of this site. Similar job creation would be facilitated if this development was located elsewhere within the Borough.

26. It is not considered that the site is readily accessible by modes of transport other than the private car. The nearest bus stop that appears to be in use (according to information on the Lancashire county council website) is on Heapey Road and served only by a school bus service. There are no bus services along Brinscall Mill Road and given the lack of footpaths along the road access on foot to the closest bus stop is severely restricted.
27. A Transport Statement and Draft Green Travel Plan has been submitted in support of the application, however the Planning Policy section have advised that it is not considered that the anticipated level of public transport usage accurately reflects the needs of those target users of the centre, particularly those with restricted mobility or diminished responsibility (through dementia and Alzheimer's disease). The applicant considers that the travel plan is based upon the best estimate of likely use at his stage of development. It is a new venture where the final mix of clients will change over time, dependent upon demand.

Landscape and Visual Impact

28. Landscape character is the physical make up and condition of the landscape itself. It arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects. Visual amenity is the way in which the site is seen and appreciated; views to and from the site and, their direction, character and sensitivity to change.
29. Policy 21 of the Core Strategy requires that new development be well integrated into existing settlement patterns, appropriate to the landscape character type and designation within which it is situated and contribute positively to its conservation, enhancement or restoration or the creation of appropriate new features. However, the application is not supported by a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and it is, therefore, difficult to properly assess any potential impact from either a local or wider landscape perspective.
30. A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment would normally be prepared in accordance with the most recent national and local character assessment guidelines and would determine the landscape sensitivity, landscape value and landscape quality. This would then establish a baseline position and the change to the site itself would be assessed following the implementation and establishment of mitigation measures, such as enhanced landscaping.
31. It is clear that some significant effects on the landscape and visual amenity, as a result of the proposed development, are inevitable. The judgement to be made is whether or not the significant effects identified are adverse, and if so, whether or not they are acceptable.
32. The proposal would introduce a number of incongruous elements into the rural landscape, and although it is acknowledged that efforts have been made to design the scheme in sympathy with existing land levels, it is considered that the proposed gym and pool building would be readily visible from outside of the site, along Brinscall Mill Road (which is also a public right of way) in particular. It is clear that the proposed scheme would involve the substantial shift in land use from unmanaged agricultural land to built form with probable detriment to the site and its surroundings.
33. It is accepted that the proposal could retain features which are attractive, such as existing vegetation, but the change to the broader landscape (beyond the development site), particularly that within the visual envelope of the site, would be significant and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is considered that from a landscape and visual impact perspective, development of the site will have a harmful impact on its surroundings and will have a negative impact upon the landscape.

Highway Safety

34. The application site is accessed via an unadopted narrow Lane. A new pedestrian access into the site from the junction of Brinscall Mill Road and Chapel Lane is proposed. The vehicular access to the site would be located approximately 130m north east of the junction of Chapel Lane and Brinscall Mill Road.

35. Comments from LCC Highways are awaited; however there are a number of concerns with regards to the proposals. The access to the site is a narrow single track road, with limited passing places. Roads leading to Brinscall Mill Road (such as Chapel Lane and Tithe Barn Lane) are also narrow, country lanes. The proposal would cater for up to 60 residents and 20 staff, up to eight of whom would be resident on site. Given the scale of the development and it's remote it is considered that the site would generate a significant number of vehicle movements, many by people likely to be unfamiliar with the local road network.
36. The Framework is clear that development should only be prevented or refused in transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Subject to the receipt of comments from LCC Highways it is considered that given the nature of the location and roads leading to the site, that unacceptable harm to highway safety is likely to arise from a development of this size and scale, and the proposal is therefore contrary to policies ST3 and BNE1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology

37. The applicant has submitted an Ecological Appraisal in support of the application. The appraisal comprises a Phase 1 Habitat survey of the site; a survey and assessment of all habitats for statutorily protected species; an evaluation of the ecological significance of the site, identification of development constraints and any mitigation and enhancement measures that may be required and identification of any further surveys or precautionary assessments that may be required. The report concludes that although bats are known to occur in the local area, there was no conclusive evidence of protected species regularly occurring on the site. A number of mitigation measures are proposed. It also states that the protection of trees on the site boundary and landscaping will promise structural diversity on the canopy and at ground level and will encourage a wider variety of wildlife.
38. The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) has advised that the assessment of the impacts of the proposals on the habitat within the sites is inadequate. The proposals would involve the loss of a significant number of trees, together with woodland and grassland habitats. A small amount of tree planting is shown on the tree removal plans, but there is no information on the species to be planted. Overall there is no compensation for the loss of the woodland and grassland habitats. The applicant has responded to confirm that compensatory tree planting will be included, and that they would be happy to agree to a landscaping condition. They have also queried why the Ecologist's states that the site supports habitats of high ecological value.
39. The Ecologist has confirmed that the evidence provided within the reports submitted supports the description of the habitats as being of high ecological value, and that the impact on the woodland areas is not just on the trees alone, but includes for example the ground flora. The mitigation proposed is limited and overall there is no compensation for the loss of the habitats present.
40. The Framework states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the natural environment, including moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature. Core planning principles in The Framework state that planning decisions should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
41. The Framework goes on to state that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks Planning decisions should address the integration of new development into the natural environment and opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

42. Policy BNE9 of the Local Plan sets out how development should safeguard biodiversity. Any adverse impacts on biodiversity should be avoided, and if unavoidable should be reduced or appropriately mitigated and/or compensated. Policy BNE11 states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on a priority species, unless the benefits of the development outweigh the need to maintain the population of the species in situ.
43. Taking into consideration the comments made by GMEU it is considered that to date the applicant has not fully demonstrated that the proposals would safeguard biodiversity and in particular that the habitats within the sites would not be adversely affected by the proposals.

Trees

44. The application would necessitate the removal of a large number of trees (approximately 140) from the application site, particularly in the mid part of the site. The Council's Tree Officer has confirmed that the trees to be removed are principally of low importance. Some replacement tree planting is proposed, along the north west boundary. The loss of the trees may not cause any significant impact in terms of the character of the landscape, however as discussed above it has not been fully demonstrated that the loss of the woodland as a whole would not have an unacceptable impact upon the ecology of the site.

Flood risk

45. Part of the application site is within flood zone 3, predominantly the area adjacent to the brook running through the site. The flood zone does not extend over the whole of the site, the lodges to be used as accommodation, would be located in Flood Zone 1. It is also proposed to set the floor levels of the other buildings above the flood levels to mitigate the risk of flooding. The environment Agency have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposals.

Heritage Asset

46. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings adjacent to the north western boundary of the site: Wheelton House and the barn to the rear. These properties have been recently renovated. Lower House Fold Farmhouse to the north of the site is also Grade II listed. A heritage assessment has been provided with the application. Applications affecting a heritage asset will be granted where they sustain conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of a heritage asset and the surrounding historic environment. There are no designated heritage assets within the application site boundary. A heritage assessment has been provided with the application. The report concludes that there is very little potential for the site to contain any significant buried archaeological remains. It also states that the proposed development would not alter the contribution of the setting of the adjacent listed building's significance. In accordance with the Framework the proposed scheme would have 'less than substantial harm' and thus, in heritage terms, the 'benefits outweigh the impacts'. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in this respect.

Sustainable Resources

47. Policy 27 of the Adopted Core Strategy requires the minimum energy efficiency standards for all other new buildings will be 'Very Good' (or where possible, in urban areas, 'Excellent') according to the Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). A number of other criteria are also required to be met. The applicant has provided an Energy Resource Conservation Statement with the application showing how the proposal aims to meet the criteria of policy 27. This would be secured by condition should the proposal be granted.

EIA

48. The development falls to be considered Schedule 2 development under column 1, part 12c of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 as Holiday villages and hotel complexes outside urban areas and associated developments. However as the proposal involves the creation of

a rehabilitation centre with all of the proposed elements intrinsically linked to the main use as a rehabilitation centre and as such part 12c is not applicable. A screening opinion was therefore issued in 2015 confirming that an EIA is not required to support the planning application.

CONCLUSION

49. In conclusion, the impact of the proposals on this rural area is one of the key considerations in respect of the proposed development of this site. Most of the elements of the proposals fall to be considered inappropriate development in accordance with Policy BNE2 of the Local Plan and as such the proposals need to be fully justified in respect of why such a facility needs to be located here.
50. A significant concern in respect of this site is the sustainability impact of creating an isolated facility which is primarily car orientated within this rural area. The Framework sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development including ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and by contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.
51. While the sequential assessment has demonstrated that there are no equivalent facilities within or around Chorley, and that there is unlikely to be an impact on the main town centre uses if the development were likely to come forward, the site is in an isolated rural location; that is inaccessible by modes of transport other than the private car and that has not been identified for growth in either the Core Strategy or The Local Plan. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to policy BNE2 of the Local Plan.
52. Furthermore, the application has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact upon the habitats of high ecological value within the site; nor that the site would not have a harmful impact on its surroundings and a negative impact upon the landscape. Significant concerns remain with regard to highway safety. The proposal is accordingly recommended for refusal for the following reasons:
 1. The proposed development would be located within the Open Countryside (as defined by the Local Plan). The proposal does not fall within any of the types of development identified in policy BNE2 as being acceptable in the Open Countryside. Insufficient reasons have been put forward to justify an exception to this policy.
 2. The application cannot be fully assessed due to the provision of insufficient information in respect of the ecological impacts of the scheme. In particular further clarification is required on impacts of the proposals on the habitats of high ecological value that have been identified in the supporting information. No information on any proposed compensation for the loss of the habitats has been provided. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy BNE9 of the Local Plan.
 3. The proposed development would be harmful to the visual amenity and character of the local area, by reason of the size, scale, incongruous appearance and inappropriate nature of the proposals. Additionally, inadequate information has been provided to demonstrate that the visual impact of the proposals can be adequately mitigated.
 4. By reason of the remote and inaccessible nature of the application site, the proposal would give rise to an unacceptable degree of vehicle movements that would be both harmful to the rural character of the area and highway safety. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy ST3, BNE1 of the Local plan and the Framework.

RELEVANT POLICIES: In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and

adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/ guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.