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FAO: Robert Major, Preston City Council Planning Department

Barton Parish Council would like to submit an objection to planning application reference 06/2019/0866 for Outline planning permission seeking approval for access only for up to 125no. dwellings (all other matters reserved) which has been submitted by Story Homes on land to the north of Jepps Lane, Barton, Preston.

Our **objection** is based on the following:

Highways, Traffic and Road Safety Issues

Barton Parish Council continue to work closely with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to develop a strategy for the A6 to make the road safer for all users and to recognise the increase in the volume of traffic that the current and proposed significant housing developments in Barton, Broughton, Whittingham and Catterall are bringing along the A6.

LCC have acknowledged that the funding is not available at present to deliver the strategy needed to ensure the A6 has the capacity to support proposed development, and is appropriately furnished to cope with the increase in traffic. With Wyre Council not registered for CIL, this means that as Catterall and Bilsborrow both see increases in housing, no contribution is made to LCC towards improvements to the highway. This in turn places additional pressure on both Barton Parish Council and Broughton Parish Council to raise precepts and additional funding to provide the infrastructure required to cope with the additional traffic along the A6 corridor. The ability to raise this funding at Parish level is not considered possible or sustainable long term.

Whilst there is no formal plan uploaded onto the Council's website, the Parish Council note that the proposed location of the access to the site is indicated within the Design and Access Statement. The proposed access to the site is sited directly opposite the vehicular entrance to the property Oakfield on Jepps Lane. Whilst the Parish Council expect that the occupiers of this property will raise their own objections, we wish to note that a new and likely busy junction so close to this and other existing vehicular access points will undoubtedly cause harm to these occupiers, as well as causing issues for those leaving the junction from this new development onto this stretch of Jepps Lane. The Parish Council do not consider that the position of this access has been thought through thoroughly and that this proposed location

could have **severe impacts** on vehicular traffic on Jepps Lane through the access/egress of vehicles onto the new site.

Putting the matter of the actual access to one side, whilst the Transport Statement suggests that the junction of Jepps Lane and A6 will not be 'severely' affected by the traffic from this new development, we question whether the current junction is suitable for the volume of traffic expected, and question whether improvements are needed for such a volume of potential new traffic.

We note the lack of response from LCC Highways to the current application for outline permission at present, and as this application is a major application for 125no dwellings with a proposed access that will direct the vast majority of the traffic towards the A6, we would expect a full written response from LCC Highways and reserve the right to comment again once these have been received and uploaded to the application file.

At this point we would also like to make reference to LCC's highways comments below recently made in relation to the proposed development at Land at Cardwell Farm for which we believe you are also the case officer and we also believe to be relevant in the consideration of the application submitted by Story Homes and relevant to our objection.

The application site is not allocated for development within the current Preston Local Plan. This means that the transport impacts of developing the site have not been assessed alongside the remainder of the Local Plan. Consequently, LCC would expect the developers transport assessment to demonstrate that the cumulative impacts of the proposed development will not have a severe impact on the existing and proposed highway infrastructure, specifically the function of A6 corridor/Broughton Bypass and the M55 Junction 1.

Currently the congestion (queuing and vehicle delay) from the M55 junction often extends onto the mainline of both the M55 and the M6 beyond. On the local network queuing and delay extends over a number of corridors within Preston creating a level of localised severe congestion, at times gridlock. The scale of development planned (Local Plans/committed), which will impact in the A6 corridor and in particular at M55 junction 1, from the adjacent districts of Wyre, Fylde, Ribble Valley and Preston is unprecedented. With this it is not unreasonable that the highway authority has ongoing concerns. Any level of additional traffic at this location, whether from one proposal, or multiple developments (cumulative impacts) is a concern to the county council.

LCC updated its own M55 junction 1 traffic model on 30th Jan 2019. The position following this update was that LCC's own cumulative assessment analysis of the A6 corridor has shown there would be potential future capacity for the cumulative developments (for developments submitted/approved at 30 Jan 2019) with the consideration and the impact on the wider network at critical congestion pinch points such as the M55 Junction 1. However, the junction was at, or close to capacity and there was no indication of spare capacity for additional development over that planned.

For clarity, the county council has identified a number of mitigation measures and modelled the benefits of those which influence M55 junction 1.

The modelling undertaken took into account the revised traffic growth forecasts and the following improvement schemes:

additional approach lanes as a result of Broughton Bypass (now constructed), additional approach lanes to the junction from the M55 slip roads (funding secured from development - not yet delivered), the positive benefits at the M55 junction 1, with traffic redistribution as a result of: M55 junction 2 and Preston Western Distributor Road (not yet delivered by LCC under the City Deal) 4 Durton Lane Link (secured by development and under construction)

The county council updated modelling also required the use of the latest outputs from the Central Lancashire Transport Model (an area wide strategic model) being updated by consultants Jacobs. These outputs were provided in early January 2019. The CLTM outputs provide critical information on the redistribution effects at M55 junction 1 of proposed infrastructure changes such as Preston Western Distributor and D'urton Lane Link. The latest CLTM outputs indicate greater benefits to the future operation of M55 junction 1 (compared to the previous strategic modelling results) and this is one of a number of factors influencing the latest county council updated modelling of the junction. The updated junction model has been undertaken using standard proprietary software, LinSig.

*Since this 30th Jan 2019 update there have been several applications that impact on this junction/corridor and **without the inclusion of current applications submitted since 30th Jan 2019 in the LCC model there is no certainty that this and further development can be accommodated and will not contribute to the cumulative impacts on the M55 junction 1.***

*It is expected that the LCC junction model can be run before the end of this month with the inclusion of the current application. Subject to the outcome of the modelling exercise it may demonstrate that there will be spare capacity at on the A6 at M55 J1, **but at present LCC cannot support the principle of this development and its traffic impacts on the A6 corridor.***

Unsustainable Location

The proposed development would be contrary to the hierarchy of locations for focussing growth and investment at urban, brownfield and allocated sites and lead to an unplanned and inappropriate expansion of a rural village which, by reason of its low accessibility to local employment areas, shops and services, would fail to achieve the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The proposal would fail to focus development at an appropriate location contrary to Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012), Policy EN1 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies) (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Preston Local Plan 2012-2016 does not allocate any sites for housing development in rural areas, either within or adjacent to the villages listed in paragraph 4.25, which includes Barton. The Preston Local Plan at paragraph 4.25 notes that Barton is a village which is not identified in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy as a Rural Local Service Centre and therefore there are no significant growth aspirations for it. **To allocate sites for housing in Barton would contradict the settlement hierarchy** established in the central core strategy, which states that

development in villages will be typically small scale. This development is clearly not small scale.

This proposal fails to focus development in an appropriate location and is contrary to Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy which suggests that growth and investment be concentrated in the northern suburbs of Preston focussing on local centres. Paragraph 4.27 of the Preston Local Plan comments on CS Policy 1(f) stating: "Limiting the scale of development within these villages serves to abide by the principles of sustainable development. Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 1 establishes a hierarchy of settlements within the Central Lancashire area based on size, accessibility, and range of services available. Villages appear at the bottom of this hierarchy as they are often small, are not situated in the most sustainable locations and cannot offer a wide range of services to residents."

Both the Core Strategy and Preston Local Policy accept that locations which fall under Policy 1(f) have limited services and are not the most sustainable locations for development.

The proposed development is not small scale in the context of Barton village, as it would deliver up to 125no. Residential units in the existing village, nor would it constitute redevelopment, conversion or development that meets a local need. **Therefore, the proposed development is contrary to CS Policy 1.**

The scheme is clearly contrary to Policy and should be considered unsustainable development.

Consideration against the NPPF and Sustainable Development

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development is broadly defined in the Framework as having three dimensions; namely economic, social and environmental. Our comments in relation to these dimension are as follows:

Economic

Whilst the proposal will increase housing land supply north of Preston, we do not consider this to be a positive benefit. The level of building in this area is unprecedented and not required. What would benefit the area economically is the provision of additional services to support the growing parish of Barton. We fail to see the benefits of this proposed development to the local economy. The applicant has provided no additional information that they support the employment of local contractors or support the employment of local people and apprentices. As we have seen first hand, developments of this scale cause disruption including recent issues in Barton with damage to road surfacing and sewerage.

Social

The proposal results in the creation of further development beyond the existing village boundary on an agricultural field. There are extremely limited services in Barton with all other services in nearby villages beyond an acceptable walking distance. The proposal offers no new services nor provision for anything new, and with an already increased number of housing in the area (following recent decisions to grant housing in the Parish) this proposal offers no social benefits. This site is yet another example of a poorly located site for housing in an already saturated area of north Preston.

Environmental

The site is not subject to any statutory ecological designations or Heritage assets, and it is not within an area at risk of flooding as defined by the Environment Agency. Very little, if any, suggestion of any mitigation measures to protect and enhance the site or any habitats on it have been made. A decision on a Tree Preservation Order on a number of trees on the site is due and we reserve the right to comment again once this has been made.

We note the lack of response from the Council's Ecologist to the current application for outline permission at present, and as this application is a major application for 125no dwellings on greenfield land, we would expect a full written response and reserve the right to comment again once these have been received and uploaded to the application file.

Lack of infrastructure

Investment in infrastructure in Barton has not increased or improved in line with planning permissions granted in recent years for large housing developments in Barton. Preston City Council and Wyre Council in granting planning permission have not supported the Parish to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the growing village. Whilst it is acknowledged that Barton Parish Council is in receipt of CIL funding, the Parish Council alone with its CIL money and Precept cannot provide the necessary infrastructure going forward to support these housing developments in the volume and timescales in which they progress.

No pressure is applied to developers to support and fund infrastructure for the developments that they propose and this includes provision for suitable and relevant new open space, contributions to existing open space and direct contributions to the infrastructure needs of our local schools (outside the requirements of CIL which is not ringfenced for investment in our parish)

Unacceptable Visual and Landscape Impacts

It is the Parish Council's opinion that the proposed development would lead to the **substantial loss** of a tract of open countryside outside the defined settlement boundary for Barton Village, creating a **major** sprawl of development into the countryside away from the main built up village. This development, by virtue of its scale, would **significantly** detract from the rural character of the village and the surrounding rural landscape to the detriment of the local area. This would be clearly contrary to Policies 13 and 21 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) and the NPPF.

A **Landscape and Visual Appraisal** has been submitted with this application for consideration by Preston City Council. Given the significant change in topology on the site and the likely visual impact of the scheme on long and short range views of the locality, in particular those from the public right of way that runs close to the site, the Parish Council are pleased that Preston CC ensured the applicant provided as much information as possible to allow a thorough assessment.

The Parish Council wish to raise the following key conclusions from this landscape and visual appraisal that are of **most concern**;

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS CONCLUSION

In overall terms in relation to landscape effects, the development of the appraisal site would give rise to a Moderate landscape effect in respect of landscape character.

Barton Parish Council response: The site is located to the eastern edge of the settlement of Barton, Preston, and is currently identified as Open Countryside (EN1) within the Preston City Local Plan 2012-2026. The appraisal suggests that due to the recent residential redevelopment of a farmstead to the immediate north of the site this has effectively extended the Rural Settlement Boundary (AD1) of Barton. This gives a **false account** of the actual development here as an existing barn has been converted to a dwelling, nothing more. To then suggest that the proposed development of the site would essentially comprise infilling of the existing settlement edge to create a logical and well-considered new built edge to Barton is **considered to be outlandish at best**. In Landscape terms, the proposed development is considered to give rise to Major and Moderate effects, and in Visual terms a combination of Slight, Moderate and Major effects. We are only asked to consider matters of **ACCESS as part of this application so to suggest that a robust and carefully considered landscaping scheme serves to integrate the scheme into the wider landscape setting**, surely provides a false account of what the Local Authority can consider?

As the applicant suggest that **only by the introduction of a carefully considered landscaping scheme can the impacts be lessened then Preston City Council MUST ask for matters of 'landscaping' to be submitted with this application for consideration**. In fact, to truly consider the impact of this proposal, the Parish Council suggest that a **Full Application must be submitted which will enable a full and true assessment to be made**. At present, we consider that there are significant adverse impacts in landscape or visual terms which should see this planning permission refused.

Comments have been provided on this application by Preston City Council's own **Parks and Street Scene (Landscape) department**, including the acknowledgement that he does have concerns over the development of this site which is located in open countryside. His further comments suggest that only by the submission of an acceptable landscaping scheme can the proposal development be acceptable (in his view). This supports the Parish Council's view that **insufficient** information has been submitted to enable the Local Authority the clarity it needs to carefully assess the **ACTUAL** impact of this scheme.

IMPACT ON RESIDENTS OF PROPERTIES

Therefore in overall terms, the most significant visual effects will be upon residents of a limited number of properties along the immediate site boundaries, particularly those along Green Drive to the west of the site. Using Table 10 at Appendix 1, the overall significance of effect on these residents is rated Major/ Moderate. However, proposed planting to this sensitive boundary will act to screen and filter these views, and help to assimilate the proposals into the surrounding context. In light of this mitigation planting, the overall visual impact upon the

most sensitive residential receptors is therefore considered to be Moderate – bringing about some change to the existing view, but not resulting in a significant or unacceptable environmental effect.

Barton Parish Council response: The Parish Council still considers that a Moderate environmental and visual effect is unacceptable to residents despite this being used by Story Homes as a positive for their application. Planting alone will not remove the effect of this development or assimilate the proposals into the surrounding context as the surrounding context to the site includes agricultural land and open countryside.

Through the consultation process carried out with Story Homes the Parish Council expressed its concern for all residents adjacent to the proposed development site including South Grove as we believe the residents on Green Drive not to be the only residents to be impacted by the proposal. At this stage without access to full plans including house types, layout and size of dwellings we do not believe that Story Homes are in a position to demonstrate or evidence that only a moderate effect on residents will be seen and therefore this statement cannot be used in defence of their application at this stage.

IMPACT ON USERS OF THE PROW

Public Rights of Way generally as visual receptors are considered to be of High sensitivity and susceptibility. The overall significance of visual effect on users of PRow in immediate proximity to the site along footpath LA/6-3/1 is therefore considered to be Major/ Moderate – however when taking into account the mitigation facilitated by carefully considered and appropriate landscaping scheme, comprising the retention of existing boundary vegetation, supplementary native planting and public open space to key sensitive boundaries, it is considered that the overall significance of effect is reduced to Moderate – entailing some change to the existing view, but not comprising a significant or unacceptable environmental effect.

Barton Parish Council Response: As this application is for access only with all other matters reserved without a full application being submitted we do not believe that the above statement is relevant or can be used in support of this application as full details of the mitigation proposed are not included or being considered at this stage. If Story Homes wish for the above statement to be taken into account in consideration of the application then we believe that full landscaping plans would be required.

Once again we make reference to Preston City Council's own **Parks and Street Scene (Landscape) department**, which suggest that only by the submission of an acceptable landscaping scheme can the proposal development be acceptable (in their view). This supports the Parish Council's view that **insufficient** information has been submitted to enable the Local Authority the clarity it needs to carefully assess the **ACTUAL** impact of this scheme.

Barton Parish Council whilst understanding that public rights of way are important, do not consider this to be a major concern at this stage as much bigger concerns about the

development proposed and its substantial impact on our village are evident as shown in this objection.

Consideration of the Barton Village Neighbourhood Plan

The Barton Village Neighbourhood Plan Group are in the process of producing a neighbourhood plan for Barton and this application is counterproductive to the establishment of a Plan which seeks to provide residents with a voice in the future of their village. The speed and volume in which housing applications are currently being submitted to Preston City Council does not allow sufficient time for the plan to be developed and as such prevents the voice of the community being heard and considered in the determination of planning applications.

Barton Parish Council has recently invested substantial public funding into ensuring the successful and robust completion of its neighbourhood plan in consultation with experienced planning consultants and we would appreciate the support of Preston City Council in recognising this when determining this application and allowing the parish council further time to complete its plan before the village has no choices left to it.

Unacceptable increase in housing numbers

Housing numbers in the village will increase by 100% in the next few years if all applications proposed and already approved are realised. As work continues on the Barton Neighbourhood Plan, we wonder whether this hard work and time offered by volunteers will be worthwhile if unplanned and speculative development continues to come forward above that allocated within the current Local Plan.

Lack of Information

Given the application is a Major Development, the Parish Council are concerned that the full suite of documents required by Preston City Council's own Validation Checklist have not been supplied.

Proposed Access Plan - Whilst a 'Proposed Access Plan' is highlighted in the 'Design Access' section of the Design and Access Statement, there is no formal plan uploaded onto the Council's website. Without a clear and formal plan indicating the proposed access for the site, the Parish Council question how this can have been validated.

CIL Form - The CIL Form uploaded on the Council's website appears to be incomplete.

We would also like to make reference to planning application number **06/2018/1297 - Outline application for up to 95no. dwellings with access off Garstang Road (access only)**

This application was refused for the following reason,

1. The proposed development would be contrary to the hierarchy of locations for focussing growth and investment at urban, brownfield and allocated sites and would lead to an unplanned and inappropriate expansion of a rural village. The proposal would therefore fail

to focus development at an appropriate location contrary to Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, Policy EN1 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies, Policy RES1 of the Broughton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016-2026 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Parish Council would urge the Council to refuse this application for the same reason.

The Case Officer assessed the scheme against the NPPF and noted as follows,

"The Framework provides the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives: the 'economic objective', the 'social objective', and the 'environmental objective'. However the Framework further provides that these objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies in the Framework; they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged....."

.....So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the Framework sets out a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' and for decision taking this means: c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless: i) The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole....."

....Whilst the local circumstances of the site's accessibility have been taken into consideration, those circumstances alone are not sufficient to allow development that conflicts with the development plan, including the neighbourhood plan, that meets the criteria set out in Paragraph 14 of the Framework. Such conflict significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits, as provided for by Paragraph 14 and Paragraph 11d)ii) of the Framework. If planning permission was granted the proposed development would lead to an unplanned and inappropriate expansion of a rural village contrary to Policy 1 of the Core Strategy, Policy EN1 of the Local Plan and Policy RES1 of the BNDP. It is considered that the adverse impacts of allowing the development contrary to policies contained within the development plan significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. As such, and in accordance with Paragraph 11d)ii) of the Framework, the proposal is recommended for refusal."

Conclusion

The proposed development would be contrary to the hierarchy of locations for focussing growth and investment at urban, brownfield and allocated sites and lead to an unplanned and inappropriate expansion of a rural village which by reason of its low accessibility to local

employment areas, shops and services, would fail to achieve the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The proposed development would also lead to the substantial loss of a tract of open countryside outside the defined settlement boundary for Barton village, creating a sprawl of development into the countryside away from the main built-up village which would significantly detract from the rural character of the village and the surrounding rural landscape. The proposal would therefore fail to focus development at an appropriate location contrary to Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012), Policy EN1 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies) (2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as being contrary to Policies 13 and 21 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recent Appeal Decision

We would also draw attention to a recent Appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate, APP/N4205/W/18/3210299, that relates to a proposed development of up to 300 residential dwellings with access and associated works on Land off Victoria Road, Bond Close and Mayfair, Horwich, Lancashire. As background, the Local Authority (Bolton MBC) could not demonstrate a 5yr supply of housing (between 2.99 and 3.36 years).

The key paragraphs are as follows, and we have highlighted key views taken by the Inspector that we consider relevant to this proposal when considering the weight that can be given to impacts on land allocated / protected within the Local Plan as being within Open Countryside, or similar.

19. Drawing these considerations together, it seems to me that with regard to the issues of landscape and visual impact, there is no single conclusion that can be applied to the whole of the appeal site. To the southwest of a line roughly connecting the existing houses at Mayfair and Buckingham Avenue, the appeal site is relatively well contained by the adjoining development, and by the topography, and the woodlands within the site and along Nellie's Clough. This includes most of the Golf Course and the southern part of the North Field. Although the North Field as a whole has some visual continuity with the open countryside, this southern part also relates closely to the Golf Course and the urban area. On balance therefore, I consider that development could be accommodated to the south-west of a notional Mayfair-Buckingham Avenue dividing line without undue harm to the area's character or appearance.

20. However, in the case of the remainder of the appeal site, my conclusion is quite different. This area comprises approximately the southern half of the South Field and the northern half of the upper fairway. Housing in these areas would extend beyond the adjoining development on either side, and in the case of the South Field, it would not be contained within any established boundary. Such development would intrude into the foreground and middle ground of the views obtained from the three main surrounding public footpaths. It would detract from the sense of remoteness and tranquillity experienced on those paths. It would also erode the distinctive rural character of this part of Horwich's countryside fringe.

21. Although layout is a reserved matter, all of the various illustrative plans have included substantial amounts of development in this north-eastern part of the site, and there is nothing to suggest that 300 dwellings could be accommodated on the site without encroaching into this area. I accept that a new landscaped buffer zone could be created, with dense planting,

and some dwellings could be restricted to single-storey. However, none of these measures would change the fact that development in this part of the site would result in a particularly sensitive tract of countryside being encroached upon and partly urbanised. To my mind, development as now proposed, extending beyond Mayfair and Buckingham Avenue, would be unsympathetic and harmful to the character and appearance of this part of the countryside, and to the setting of the town.

22. In coming to my conclusion on this issue, I acknowledge that the appeal site has a relatively limited visual envelope, and therefore the development's landscape and visual impacts would be confined to quite a localised area. Furthermore, the views that would be adversely affected are in some cases seen only from short sections of the relevant footpaths, rather than their whole length. But nevertheless, on any walk involving one or more of the paths that I have identified, the development would be seen from a variety of different angles and viewpoints, and this would increase its visual presence. Consequently, for the reasons that I have explained, I consider that the degree of harm caused within the local area, to the landscape and to visual amenity, would be substantial.

23. It is acknowledged by the Council that, if the present shortfall in the 5-year land supply is to be made good, it is probable that development will have to be permitted on some of the sites currently designated as POL (Protected Open Land) or OPOL (Other Protected Open Land). As the appellants point out, such sites all tend to be located on the edges of the Borough's urban areas, where similar issues of landscape and visual impact may be involved. There is no evidence that any other POL or OPOL sites are preferable to the appeal site in landscape terms. But be that as it may, I must consider the proposal that is front of me, and for the reasons already stated, I consider that the scheme currently proposed for the appeal site would cause substantial harm to the area's character and appearance.

24. The appeal site is not subject to any special landscape designation, and the Council agrees with the appellants that it is not a 'valued landscape' within the terms of NPPF paragraph 170. But as SRA points out (and as was accepted by the appellants' landscape witness) an assessment of the site in isolation risks ignoring the value that it has as part of the wider landscape. As described above, the appeal site lies on the fringes of the Southern Pennines. From my own observations, and from the photographic and other evidence presented at the inquiry, it is apparent that this area as a whole has a distinctive landscape character, with a high scenic quality and a perception of tranquillity and remoteness, and that it supports recreational uses such as leisure walking. To my mind, these characteristics elevate this wider landscape to a status well above 'ordinary countryside'. Consequently, I agree with the SRA's view that the site, or at least the north-eastern part of it, is a component of a valued landscape.

25. But even if no part of the site was considered to be 'valued landscape' in paragraph 170 terms, that would not mean that it should not qualify for any protection at all, as suggested by the appellants. The same paragraph makes it clear that the countryside's intrinsic character and beauty should be recognised. For the reasons given above, I consider that permitting

housing development on the South Field and the northern part of the upper fairway would fail to recognise these qualities. And in any event, the countryside and landscape are also protected by development plan policies including BCS Policies OA1 and CG3. I note the suggestion that Part 11 of OA1 does not apply to OPOL land, but the policy's clear aim is to protect the town's setting and views of the landscape; to my mind this aim is relevant to development both within and outside the urban area.

26. I conclude on this first issue that, due to the inclusion of land within the South Field and the northern half of the upper fairway, the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area and its landscape, and specifically to the setting of the town of Horwich, and to views from local public footpaths. In all these respects, the development would conflict with Parts 9 and 11 of BCS Policy OA1, and with Parts 2 and 7 of Policy CG3.

The Planning Balance and Conclusions neatly sums up the consideration made by the Inspector namely,

80. The appeal proposal would involve development on land designated as OPOL. As such, the scheme would conflict with Policy CG6AP of the adopted BAP, and Parts 4 and 6 of Policy OA1 of the adopted BCS. In addition, because of its intrusion onto the sensitive landscape of the South Field and the further reaches of the upper fairway, the development would cause substantial visual harm to the character and quality of the landscape, and to Horwich's landscape setting. In these respects, it would conflict with Parts 2 and 7 of BCS Policy CG3, and with Parts 9 and 11 of Policy OA1.

81. The proposed development therefore fails to accord with the development plan, taken as a whole. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the appeal be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

82. One of the relevant material considerations is the NPPF, including paragraph 11(d), which requires consideration as to whether the most important policies are out of date, and also paragraph 213 which requires weight to be given according to the degree of consistency with national policies. In the light of the shortfall in the 5-year housing supply, and the urgent need to remedy this by granting new planning permissions on suitable sites, it seems to me that the approach of giving blanket protection to OPOL as a matter of principle must now be considered out-of-date. The conflict with Policy CG6AP and Parts 4 and 6 of Policy OA1 therefore carries limited weight.

83. However, the other policies identified above relate to the protection of the character, quality and distinctiveness of the landscape and the physical environment. To my mind, these policies are directed at the same aims as NPPF paragraph 170, which requires policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including by

recognising the countryside's intrinsic character and beauty. Although these policies apply across very broad areas, they do not give blanket protection, but rather they require the exercise of judgement as to the effects of a particular development's effects on its surroundings. In the light of the need to identify more land for housing, these landscape and character protection policies may need to be applied with a greater degree of flexibility than in other circumstances, but that does not make them out of date, nor does it make them inconsistent with the NPPF. I therefore find no reason to give anything Appeal Decision APP/N4205/W/18/3210299 less than full weight to the conflict that I have identified with Parts 2 and 7 of BCS Policy CG3, and with Parts 9 and 11 of Policy OA1.

84. Weighing against the landscape harm and related policy conflicts, there are the significant benefits of providing 300 units of market and affordable housing, the moderate economic benefits, and the relatively minor benefits of the off-site highway works and open space contributions, and possible biodiversity enhancements. All together, these benefits would be significant. But, for the reasons already explained, the harm to the landscape, and to the setting of the town, would in my view be serious and substantial. Moreover, this would amount to environmental harm that would go to the heart of one of the NPPF's principal objectives for sustainable development, that of protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Taking in all the relevant circumstances, I conclude that this adverse environmental impact would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the sum of the identified benefits.

86. The proposed development therefore does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development under NPPF paragraph 11(d) in this case. It follows that the conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by other material considerations.

87. I have taken account of all the other matters raised, but none changes these conclusions. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Whilst the above Appeal decision can be taken one way or another, **each application must be considered on its own merits. Preston City Council must not use the lack of a 5yr housing supply to ride roughshod over inappropriate and visually harmful developments that will have long term landscape and environmental impacts for future generations. This is not a sustainable approach to development, and is not what the NPPF as a whole is supportive of.**

Finally, we as Barton Parish Council on behalf of our community and neighbourhood plan group and our neighbouring parishes appeal to you, our City Council, to put everything behind helping us to ensure that our village is appropriately and sensitively developed. In the case of this proposed development, I'm sure that as the case officer you have visited the site and can clearly see that this is not infill within an existing village settlement boundary. 125 houses on this land does not in any way fit with the character of the landscape and size of our village. As case officer for land at Cardwells Farm also you can see the full scale of the development proposed and the Significant and harmful effect this will have on the village of Barton.

The Parish Council have had many meetings with housing developers in our village over the past few years. Despite many written and well-reasoned suggestions at both pre planning and reserved matters stages, we continue to see inappropriate, ill thought out housing developments that deliver nothing for our village or indeed Preston as a City. As professional planners alongside City Councillors and other professional officers we feel that you have the necessary skills and powers to ensure that any developments that are granted permission leave behind a sustainable legacy for Preston and deliver for the communities within in. Recent planning applications granted for housing developments in the village do not deliver quality, innovation, exemplar features or indeed any positive benefit to the village.

Our Councillors work hard on a voluntary basis to support the needs of our communities and are committed to working hard alongside the City Council to recognise the growing needs of the City but also recognise that our village is not an appropriate location for the scale of development that we are currently seeing. We appeal to you as a City Council to support us in our endeavours and maintain a dialogue with us outlining how we can work together to support each other as essentially when it comes to housing at the moment we feel our frustrations are shared !

If you have any queries regarding any of the above comments please do not hesitate to contact us.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Melissa Thorpe

Responsible Financial Officer & Clerk to Barton Parish Council