

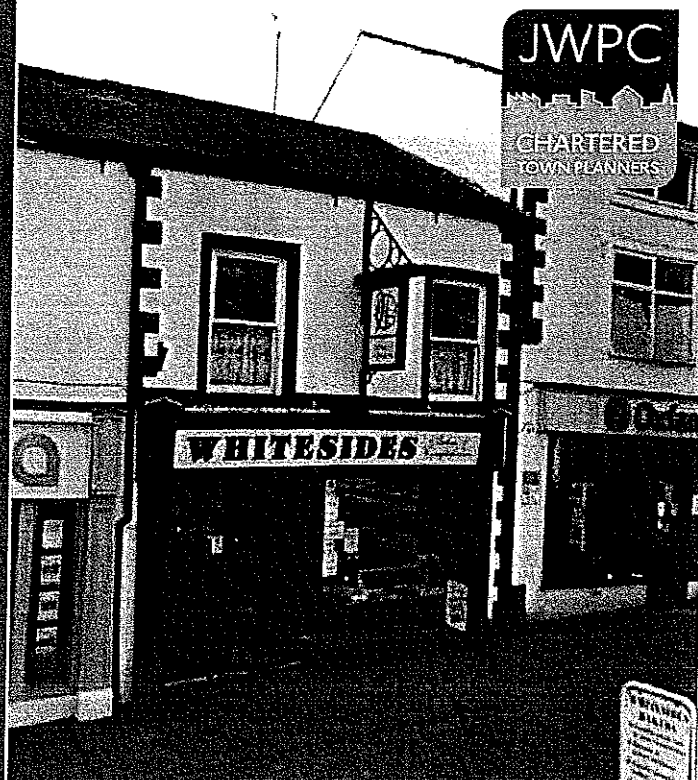
**Planning Application and
Advertisement Consent
Application**

**10 Market Place, Clitheroe,
Lancashire**

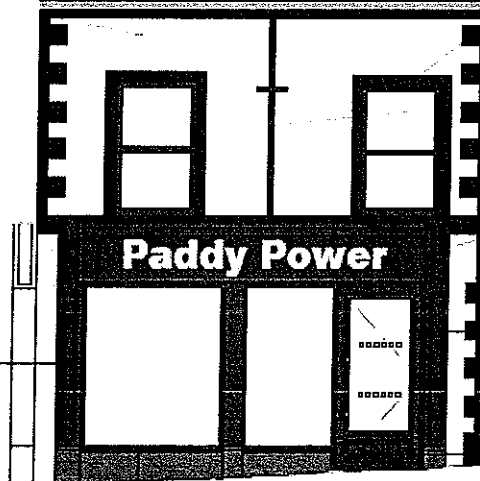
**Proposed change of use from
bakery to betting shop,
including external alterations
and signage**

Client:

Paddy Power



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Planning

Design &

Access

Statement

Contents

- 1** Introduction
- 2** Site Characteristics
- 3** Application Proposal
- 4** Planning Policy
- 5** Planning Considerations
- 6** Summary and Conclusions

320120842P

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is planning application seeks to secure the change of use of 10 Market Place, Clitheroe from a Class A1 Bakers Shop with Bakery to the rear (Class B1) to a Class A2 Betting Shop operating by Paddy Power. In addition the same application seeks to secure consent for minor external works and advertisement consent is sought for the associated use.
- 1.2 The previous use of the unit was as a long-established bakery with shop which was operated by a family business for many years. However increased competition and pressure from multiple retailers and superstores in Clitheroe such as the Sainsbury's and Tesco led to the closure of the business in the early part of 2012. Since February 2012 the unit has remained vacant, rather than allow the vacancy to continue the applicants wish to secure planning permission to change the use of the premises, make minor alterations to its external appearance and amend the existing advisements on the site to reflect their branding.
- 1.3 The site lies within the principal shopping frontage of Clitheroe Town Centre and also within the Clitheroe Conservation Area. Therefore this Planning, Design and Access Statement seeks to assess the proposal against important planning factors such as the impact upon retail function of the town centre and upon its conservation area. In addition to this statement a Heritage Statement is prepared as required by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Heritage Statements are normally required for unlisted buildings within conservation areas as well as other listed buildings which have additional statutory protection

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2 Site & Surroundings

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- 2.1 Number 10 Market Place is located on the northern fringes of the core retail area of Clitheroe. This runs from Moor Lane to the south around the Castle Gate and Castle Street to where the highway changes its name to Market Place. Nonetheless, on this northern side of the town centre the immediate area is characterised by a number of other uses namely Banks, the Clitheroe Library, Public Houses and other A2 uses such as Building Societies and Estate Agents.
- 2.2 In terms of location, the site is extremely accessible on foot from the outlying residential areas given its town centre location. Moreover, Clitheroe is well connected in terms of public transport - both road and rail. Indeed Clitheroe railway station lies approximately 270m away on foot whilst slightly to the north of the station lies the Clitheroe Interchange which allows access to bus services to outlying towns and villages such as Blackburn, Whalley and Burnley.
- 2.3 Clitheroe has a relatively vibrant town centre with many smaller retail units, some of which occupy small independent retailers. However one common problem which is consistent with many other historic town centres is the lack of modern retail floor space of a layout and size commensurate with the requirements of contemporary retailers. Moreover, the relatively new development of three Supermarkets on the periphery of the town centre has led over time to an erosion in the vitality and viability of the primary shopping frontage of Clitheroe; most recently following the construction of the Homebase store in circa 2007-8.
- 2.4 As with any other provincial town Clitheroe has not been immune of the effects of the downturn in the British Economy; the increasing trend for the use of the internet for shopping purposes and other diversification of traditional food retailers into comparison goods sales. As a consequence Moor Lane, Castle Gate, Castle Street and Market Place all have a number of vacant retail units, many of which have been empty for months if not years.
- 2.5 The application site itself extends to approximately 161 square metres and consists of a retail shop unit which fronts Market Place itself and the floor space for which is 52.7m². To the rear of the premises a number of extensions have been formed over the years which provide a considerable ground floor area which was previously used for the Bakery itself.

Indeed a number of large items of equipment and machinery including commercial ovens are still present within the building. On this basis it can be considered that the existing planning unit has a mixed use of A1 retail and Class B1 light industrial use. The upper floor where most recently used in association with the ground floor for a staff room and welfare facilities as well as upper floor storage. It is not proposed to make any alterations to the use of these upper floors in the application and therefore it is for ground floor only.

- 2.6 Externally, the unit has an appearance as a modest 2 storey property which it is likely was originally constructed as a dwelling. The ground floor has a traditional shop front which is articulated with pilasters with console brackets and inclined fascia. It has double doors set to the left of the centre of the unit and display window on the right hand side. It does not benefit from level access and has a small step which increases in height as the land falls to the north. At the first floor the building is rendered and painted cream with maroon/brown painted highlights of the quoins and stone window surrounds.
- 2.7 At first floor there is also a decorative metal bracket which supports a hanging sign which is also illuminated with trough lighting. To the rear there is a shared service yard and beyond that a stone retaining wall which separates the site from a lower yard beyond. To the rear there is currently a large asbestos flue pipe attached to the rear elevation at second floor level which is an unsightly structure when seen against the backdrop of the attractive window arrangement.

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3 Application Proposal

- 3.1 This submission consists of one planning application for both the change of use of the premises from Class A1/B1 to Class A2 for the purposes of using the premises as a betting shop operated by the applicants Paddy Power and for minor external works. In addition and in parallel to this, an advisement application is made in order the applicants branding can be reflected on the building through the reuse and repair of the existing 'Whitesides' fascia and hanging signs.
- 3.2 Through inventive marketing and betting initiatives, Paddy Power have grown from its origins in Ireland in 1988 into a highly successful company with over 400 retail outlets in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Great Britain. In Great Britain at present it operates 182 shops and employs over 1000 people. Although the company is relatively young, that is not to say that staff or directors lack experience. Indeed Paddy Power was formed by the merger of three existing and long standing Irish bookmakers and their knowledge and experience has been harnessed over the years as the business has continued to grow. Indeed in 2010 their turnover was 3.83 billion Euros. Whilst Paddy Power has been committed to innovation and providing customers with different platforms such as the internet and mobile betting, a significant proportion of their customers continue to prefer the vibrancy and face to face contact of a betting shop rather than more digital platforms.
- 3.3 Paddy Power has traditionally operated throughout the south of England and the Midlands. Only recently have they opened branches within Manchester and most recently in Union Street, Accrington. As the brand expands through the North and Midlands the applicants have carefully selected town and city locations which are currently under represented in terms of betting offices. Clitheroe is a typical example of this with only one other bookmaker within the town centre (William Hill on King Lane). There is also a smaller independent betting office on the periphery of the town centre on Whalley Road.
- 3.4 In terms of use existing small shop front will be extended to form a larger betting shop with a floor area of 97.1m². In addition to traditional betting facilities and counters, Paddy Power offers a first class service and will use the latest technology to ensure that the customers can enjoy the best betting experience this includes the provision of flat screen TVs, information screens, toilets, refreshments, comfortable sitting, electronic betting terminals

and gaming machines. It is their intention to create a modern, welcoming and exciting environment for customers attracting a broader range of customers than would have traditionally been the case before the de-regulation of the betting industry. Moreover, whilst the company's core business has historically been in relation to horse and greyhound racing it has expanded into many other sports particularly football, rugby and boxing as well as other weather, political and lottery type predictions. These additional lines of business have been successful in attracting a much broader range of customers to the betting shops and those of the type not traditionally associated with such activities. It makes good commercial sense for Paddy Power to attract as many people to their facilities as possible.

- 3.5 The changes in betting legislation now allow for opening hours between 7am and 10pm and opening on Sundays. In addition, the traditional vinyl or obscure glazed windows are no longer a feature of such shops and open windows and displays are now allowed; significantly contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the street. Betting shops now bring in more people to shopping areas and such trips are normally combined with other shopping visits.
- 3.6 The Association of British Bookmakers point to latest gambling statistics (January 2010) which show that 55.2% of the adult population gambled within the last 4 weeks. 6.5% of the population had indeed placed bets over the counter in betting shops whilst the majority of the remainder was betting through the purchase of National Lottery tickets etc. It is estimated that around 7 to 8 million people visit a betting shop each year which represents around 70% of the adult population. At present there are around 8700 betting shops in the UK. Whilst the industry relatively buoyant it is wrong to assume that the number of betting shops is increasing. Indeed betting shop numbers have remained stable for a number of years and in some areas numbers have actually declined. Nonetheless, the nature and format of betting shops and their offer changes all the time and on the high street, units open and close to reflect this. It is important to note that betting shops provide 40,000 full time jobs nationally and promote footfall for other local retailers. There is a heavily regulated environment that offers a alcohol free social centre where groups of individuals come together on a regular basis to exchange opinions, knowledge and stories.
- 3.7 The main change within the application site is the opening up of the unit so that the public floor area continues beyond the original part of the building into the rear and lower central section of extended part. Beyond the public floor area store rooms, training rooms and

welfare facilities is provided for staff whilst the upper floors will remain in storage use. Some internal walls will be removed whilst additional stud work will be provided to provide such facilities.

- 3.8 The alterations to the shop front are necessary both in terms of the re branding of the site and to allow for compliance with the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) and Part M of the 2010 Buildings Regulations. A single leaf door is therefore provided to the right hand side of the shop front. At this higher level it creates a level threshold from the street into the floor of the shop itself. Elsewhere the central supporting pillar in the shop front which currently sits to the right hand side of the double doors is retained in situ as its removal may harm the structural integrity of the front of the building. A new stall riser will be constructed to frame the display windows whilst the consisting pilasters, console brackets and fascia will be repaired, and painted green. The painted stone quoins and stone window surrounds will be also be painted green.
- 3.9 To the rear it is proposed to remove the existing unsightly asbestos flue pipe with projects to the ridge height of the rear portion of the building. In order to service the many TV channels and telemetry it is necessary to erect 3 900mm diameter satellite dishes on the low single story flat roof outrigger to the rear of the property.
- 3.10 A separate application for advertisement consent is made in parallel to the planning application. This seeks to secure consent for an externally illuminated facer sign set on the existing timber facer of the shop it will display the name of the applicants brand in white acrylic individual letter and will be externally illuminated by way of overhead trough lighting. The existing attractive hanging sign at first floor will be refurbished and the decorative metal brackets repainted along with the existing trough light being refurbished and in a new sign in the same dimensions as existing will be displayed.

4 Planning Policy

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and immediately resulted in the revocation of all National Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Statement (PPSs). It also provides instruction on how to consider existing Development Plans as part of the 'Implementation' of the National Policy Framework. This is a significant material planning consideration in the determination of all planning applications. The 'Development Plan' for the area remains the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North-West (which is also due to be revoked imminently) and the 'saved' policies of the Ribble Valley District-Wide Local Plan. Some weight must also be afforded to the emerging Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Whilst a Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication Version of the document was carried out in Summer 2012, the Council is still considering the responses and it is uncertain whether the submission version will be made to the Secretary of State by the end of 2012. Whilst only limited weight can be attached to the document at this stage, its 'direction of travel' is of some material importance.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The implementation of the NPPF requires decision makers to give weight to policies within existing Local Plans (adopted since 2004) for a period of 12 months and for older plans: *'due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework'*. Given that the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan was adopted in 1998, this latter part of the sentence is relevant.
- 4.3 The 'Golden Thread' of the document is the presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be adopted in the plan-making and decision-taking processes. For 'decision-taking' this means the following:
- Approving developments that accord with the Development Plan
 - Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant permission unless:
 1. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework;

2. Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. This may include sites designed as SSSIs or Green Belt for example, where there is specific guidance in the Framework.

Decisions should be made 'without delay'. The document acknowledges that neighbourhood planning will play a critical role in planning process.

- 4.4 The NPPF includes a list of 12 core land-use planning principles that will underpin plan-making and decision-taking. Amongst others it includes the following:

- Planning should not simply be about scrutiny but *'instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places'*.
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units... and thriving local places that the country needs. Plans should take account of market signals and take account of the needs of the residential and business communities;
- Seek high quality design;
- Consider the different roles and characters of areas, including Green Belt and supporting thriving rural communities;
- Contribute towards conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Allocating land for development that is of less environmental value etc.
- Conserve heritage assets; and
- Manage growth to make the best use of public transport and other non-car modes;
- Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sustainable community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

- 4.5 The document makes it abundantly clear that the Government *'is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth'*. It also states that *'significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system'* (Para 18).

- 4.6 Part 2 of the document addresses town centre matters. It reiterates the objective of supporting vitality and viability of town centres. It also seeks to ensure local plans should

promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer. It also acknowledges that where town centres are in decline *'local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity'*.

- 4.7 The adoption of the sequential approach to town centre uses is also advocated (Para 24) and local planning authorities should require town centre uses to be located in town centres first.
- 4.8 Paragraphs 67-68 of the NPPF refer to advertisements. It states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. It also reflects previous guidance which limits the assessment of advertisements to the impact they have upon amenity and public safety... *'taking account of cumulative impacts'*.

Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West

- 4.9 Until the affects of the Localism Act come fully into force the 'Development Plan' for this application site continues to include the Regional Strategy for the North West. However, it will shortly be revoked through powers set down in the Localism Act (Section 109). RSSs remain in place until the Secretary of State makes an order to revoke them and this will follow once the Environmental Assessments have been completed. Given this inevitable revocation and the fact that this application presents no strategic planning issues, it is considered unnecessary to recite policies of the RSS here.

Ribble Valley District Wide Local Plan

- 4.10 The Development Plan is the Ribble Valley Local Plan. The following policies have been 'saved' by Direction of the Secretary of State.
- 4.11 Policy G1 states that all development proposals will be expected to provide a high standard of building design and landscape quality. Development which does so will be permitted, unless it adversely affects the amenities of the surrounding area. In determining planning applications the following criteria (amongst others) will be applied:

- Development should be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature.
- The likely scale and type of traffic generation will be assessed in relationship to the highway infrastructure and the proposed and existing public transport network. This will include safety, operational efficiency, amenity and environmental considerations.
- A safe access should be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.
- The density, layout and relationship between buildings are of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.
- Developments should provide adequate arrangements for servicing and public utilities.
- Materials used should be sympathetic to the character of the area.

4.12 Policy S1 of the Local Plan addresses the development of small and large scale shopping developments in Clitheroe and it has a firm presumption in favour of this. It states that *'special regard will be had to the likely contribution of proposals to the vitality and viability of the centre and their effect on the character and appearance of the area...'*

4.13 Policy S3 seeks to control development in Principal Shopping Frontage of Clitheroe as shown on the Proposals Map. The application site frontage falls within this designation. Within such frontages only Class A1 or uses *'for the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises'* will be permitted – other than in exceptional circumstances *'where there would be no material adverse effect to the character of the frontage, general amenity or highway safety'*. In 1998 the food and drink category of the Use Classes Order was Class A3 but this was subdivided in 2005 under The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order. It is reasonable therefore to assume that Use Classes A3 and A4 remain applicable but Class A5 uses (Hot food takeaways) are not.

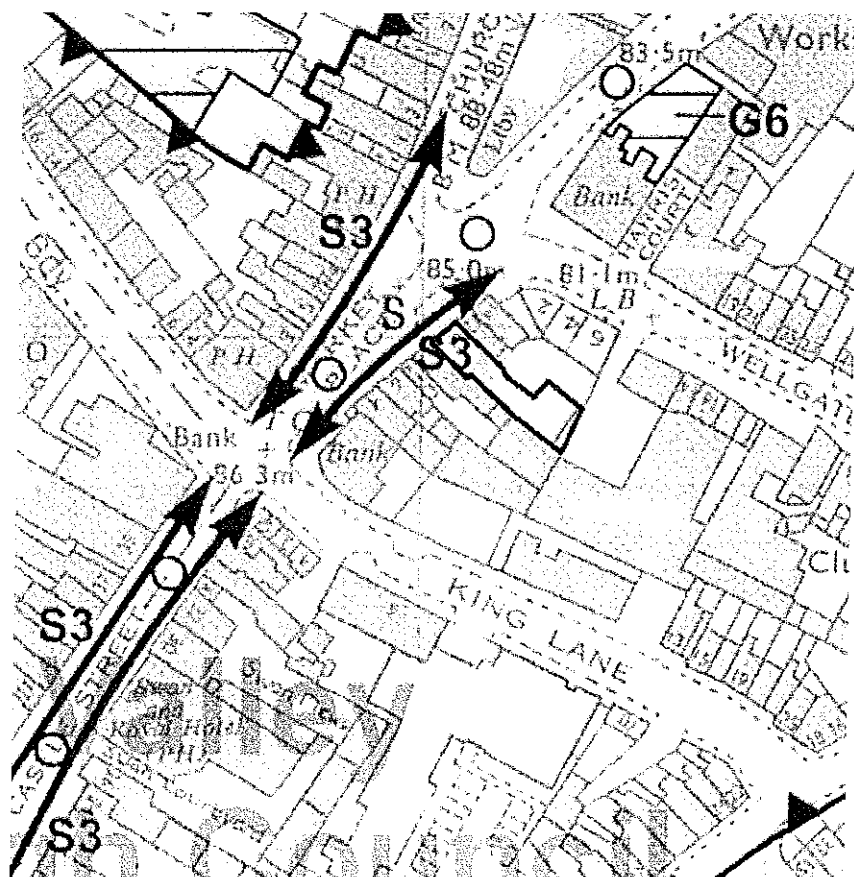


Fig 1: Extract from RVDLP Proposals Map showing application site

- 4.14 The justification text seeks to guard against Class A1 retail units being forced to secondary streets (Paragraph 9.2.11) when uses such as Class A2 uses occupy principal frontage. However, the policy would allow for cafes, restaurants, bars and pubs.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 4.15 The RVCS is not yet adopted. A Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication Version of the document was carried out in Summer 2012 and the Council is still considering the responses. It is uncertain whether the submission version will be passed to the Secretary of State by the end of 2012. Only limited weight can be attached to the document at this stage.
- 4.16 'Key Statement' EC2 addresses planning in Town Centres and Commercial Leisure Development. The pre-ambule text states that there is currently a poor share of spending retained in the towns of Longridge, Whalley and Clitheroe and whilst the first two town centres continue to perform to differing degrees of success, Clitheroe was identified as

showing early signs of change – such as a lack of national retailer representation as an attraction in the town (Para 7.8). The text also acknowledges that town centres are an important source of employment and the intention to improve the quantity and quality of shopping facilities is an objective. It states that 'in all cases, large and small, proposals should protect or enhance the character of the town.

- 4.17 The Key Statement encourages development that supports and enhances the vibrancy, consumer choice and vitality and unique character of the areas important retail and service centres (including Clitheroe) and only supports proposals that have an adverse impact on existing community facilities if they bring defined and demonstrable benefits.

New Opportunities for sustainable development and growth through the reuse of existing buildings – Consultation Document (July 2012)

- 4.18 As part of the reform of the planning system and in response to changes in the economy, the Government issued a consultation document in the summer of 2012 with the aim of widening Permitted Development Rights so that it would be easier for redundant buildings to be re-used for a variety of purposes without planning permission. It is intended that such changes will also promote brownfield regeneration, support local high streets and secure jobs.
- 4.19 The document proposes a number of changes but of most relevance is the proposal to allow for temporary changes of use of certain buildings (retail and other A classes, offices (B1) and non residential institutions and assembly and leisure (D1 and D2) for a period of up to 2 years. These temporary uses *'are likely to be within the use classes A1, A2, A3 and B1'*.
- 4.20 Whilst this application seeks consent for the permanent change of use of the premises from A1 to A2, the recent consultation demonstrates an acknowledgement at Government level that there is a need to move away from the rigid policies of tightly restricting high street uses, so that the vitality and viability of the high street can protected and new business encouraged.

5 Planning Considerations

- 5.1 The chapter shall consider each element of the application(s) in turn, assess it against prevailing Development Plan policies and address material considerations and justify why the application(s) should be approved.
- 5.2 The main element of the planning application is the change of use of this existing bakers shop with bakery to rear which falls within Class A1 (with B1 to rear) of the Use Classes Order (as amended) to use as a betting office (Class A2). No Permitted Development Rights exist for such a change and therefore an express grant of planning permission is required. In assessing such a proposal, the local planning authority must consider the policies of the Development Plan and attribute the necessary weight to each policy, in accord with the transitional arrangements set out by the previous Government when addressing the move from Local Plans to Local Development Frameworks ('saved' policies) as well as the requirements of NPPF (Annex 1) which addresses implementation.
- 5.3 The Ribble Valley Borough Local Plan was adopted in 1998. In economic, cultural and planning policy terms, much has changed in the intervening 14 years. NPPF makes it clear that where plans were adopted before 2004 (as in the case of the Ribble Valley Borough Local Plan) due weight should be given to relevant policies *'according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)'*.
- 5.4 The principal policy in the Ribble Valley Borough Local Plan that addresses change of use proposals from A1 to A2 uses, is Policy S3. Whilst it is a 'saved' policy, it is 14 years old and no longer satisfactorily reflects the intentions of NPPF or indeed PPG6 or PPS4 before it. Whilst NPPF acknowledges that the vitality of town centres is key, it encourages local planning authorities to plan for retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential needs in town centres. In contrast to this and also many other more contemporary local plan policies, Policy S3 of the Local Plan limits uses within the principal shopping frontage to A1, A3 and A4 uses only – other than in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.5 The applicants consider that uses such as restaurants (A3) or public houses (A4) encouraged by Policy S3 would potentially contribute far less to the vitality and viability of

the high street than a betting shop. It is material that the policy was adopted long before the changes in gambling legislation in 2007, which have resulted in a new format for betting shop. This in turn has resulted in uses which are far more welcoming and inclusive than was once the case. In terms of window displays, types of gambling, opening hours and facilities, betting shops are almost recognisable from those of the late 1990's and before. Moreover, Policy S3 and the Use Classes Order itself were drafted long before the method and pattern of retail purchasing changed with the advent of internet shopping, supermarket comparison good sales etc.

- 5.6 It is therefore the applicants' submission that these changes in legislation, character of betting shops and planning policy – coupled with the need to attract a new use back to a vacant high street unit, together represent exceptional circumstances.
- 5.7 In this instance, it is necessary to consider contemporary evidence commissioned by the applicants which considers the effect of betting shops located within retail frontages on their vitality and viability (**Appendix 1**). The report includes footfall surveys comparing a betting shop with a budget foodstore (A1), homewares shop (A1) and opticians (A2) and demonstrates that on average, the betting office attracted 57 visitors per hour; compared to half as many for the homeware store; five times more than the opticians and a third of the visitors to the foodstore. Linked trips and browsing of the window were also observed during the survey. It was also relevant that the results may have been slightly skewed as a good proportion of people entering the foodstore were in groups such as families/couples, whereas those visiting the betting shop were normally alone. In short, footfall and activity for betting shops is comparable with retail outlets and favourable compared to other A2 uses such as an opticians. As a result, they have the potential to enhance the vitality and viability of the high street.
- 5.8 The comparison with an opticians is particularly relevant insofar as consent was granted in Clitheroe in 2005 (Ref: 3/2005/0794/P) at 34 Castle Street for the change of use of an A1 unit to an opticians (A2). This was also a vacant retail unit. In the delegated report, officers considered the proposal against Policy S3 and concluded that:

'The unit itself is surrounded by various retail units, banks, cafes etc and bearing in mind the proposed use as an opticians will no doubt provide a service to both the local and wider community, I consider this proposal to be acceptable'.

- 5.9 In the case of the application submission, the site lies on the edge of the principal shopping frontage surrounded by shops, estate agents, a bank, a public house and is close to the town library. The same argument that the use will offer a service to the local community holds true – particularly given the under-representation of betting shops in the town.
- 5.10 This is not a unique situation in terms of planning policy. Many local authorities retain 'saved' policies which are superseded by more recent policy at National level and which do acknowledge how retailing and the high street itself has changed dramatically in recent years.
- 5.11 Many appeals decisions address such issues and in particular, address how betting shops contribute towards the vitality and viability of town centres. A summary of 6 appeal decisions is included from page 10 of the Cerda Planning Report (**Appendix 1**) and together they provide compelling evidence that Inspector's place significant weight on the fact that since de-regulation, betting shops offer the community a valuable service. Moreover, their welcoming open frontages are not akin to the 'dead frontages' of previous decades and indeed some other A2 uses. In the Hayes case (T/APP/R5510/A/95/258479/T7) the Inspector considered that diversity of the offer on the high street was an essential element of vitality and that betting shops contribute to this. Inspectors have also accepted that betting shops complement existing retail uses by encouraging people into the town centre where they perform linked trips. Finally, it is accepted that betting shops typically open for longer hours than many A1 and A2 uses. The law allows them to operate from 7am to 10pm seven days a week. Unlike public houses, restaurants or banks for example, they contribute to the town centres vitality and viability for long periods of each day and evening.
- 5.11 In the context of Policy S3 and NPPF, it is clear from the evidence submitted that the vitality and viability of the principal shopping frontage would not be harmed by this proposal for what is a vacant unit; nor would the character of the frontage change as a result. The application site lies at the widest point of Market Place where there is a mix of retail and non-retail uses. The proposed use would complement these uses and add the mix on offer to the community here. Secondary shopping frontages such as Wellgate and York Street also offer complementary retail uses; many independent. However, the number of vacancies within the principal shopping frontage indicates that Class A1 retail operators are not being forced to these secondary areas. The application proposal would not contribute to this.

- 5.12 Given the nature of the application proposal and the evidence of the impact of other modern betting shops on town centres, it is submitted that the proposal is entirely compliant with both NPPF and the spirit of Policy S3 of the Local Plan.
- 5.13 The external alterations to the property that constitute development are minor in nature. The repositioning of the single leaf door is necessary to comply with building regulations and allows for the remainder of the existing shopfront to be retained. Indeed, a single leaf arrangement is preferable and more sympathetic to the character of the building than the existing double door arrangement. In terms of signage, the existing signs are simply refurbished and re-used whilst a traditional external trough light will shine down onto the fascia. The proposed signage would not harm the general amenities of the area or harm public safety in any way.

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6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This application has been carefully conceived in order that a new use can be found for this vacant high street unit. The applicants' intention is to occupy the building as a betting shop, offering a modern, comfortable and safe gambling experience in a town which currently has an under provision of betting shops. Evidence has been submitted (and advanced successfully on other proposals elsewhere) that demonstrates that the use would have a positive effect on the vitality and viability of the area by way of footfall levels, diversification of the principle shopping frontage, the potential for linked shopping trips and longer opening hours. Betting shop customers normally make two trips to the shop – one to place a bet and another to seek the result and collect any winnings. In between times, customers are likely to remain in the retail centre and visit other outlets – further contributing to the health of the high street. It is also material that the proposal would result in 2 full time and 3 part time job opportunities, where there are none at present.
- 6.2 These factors, coupled with the changes in the way people shop and visit the high street and also the evolution of retail planning policy, amount to exceptional circumstances. Together they allow the local authority to justify the proposal in the context of NPPF and importantly, Policy S3 of the Ribble Valley Borough Local Plan. Given that there are no other material planning considerations that would prejudice the application, it should be approved in accord with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

JWPC Ltd

September 2012

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