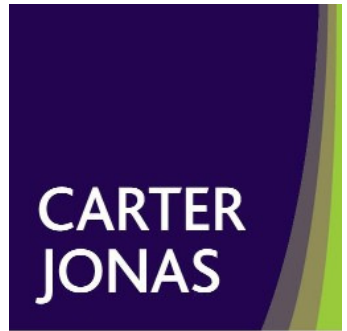




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STONYHURST COLLEGE

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

PRE-APP REF 3/2012/0571/P

FULL APPLICATION FOR

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND REPLACEMENT
SCHOOL CAR PARK

ON LAND AT

WHALLEY ROAD
HURST GREEN
CLITHEROE

DATE: OCTOBER 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted to support proposals for the development of land to the north of Whalley Road in Hurst Green.

1.2 These proposals are submitted on behalf of Stonyhurst as a full planning application for the

“Erection of 30 (thirty) dwellings, creation of a new access onto Whalley Road, new estate road, landscape, servicing, a replacement school car park, pick-up and drop-off provision and public open space, along with demolition of the existing agricultural building.”

1.3 A range of dwelling types and styles are put forward as part of the proposals to include: terraces, cottages, and semi-detached houses, as well as single-storey bungalows. Such provision will range from 2 to 5 bedroomed properties reflecting local needs and policy requirements; taking in to account comments made at public exhibition and market signals. The design and layout is also informed by the characteristics and nature of the application site and its surroundings.

1.4 The site extends to 2.44 hectares (6.03 acres). A majority of the site currently comprises agricultural land for grazing of livestock, storage of farm machinery and implements; there is one agricultural building and the school car park along the Whalley Road frontage associated with St Joseph’s Catholic CP School which itself is located to the east of the site. The school car park is not marked out but currently accommodates approximately 13 vehicles.

1.5 There has been extensive pre-application discussion with the Local Planning Authority in the preparation of these proposals as well as consultation with the local community, through the Parish Council and a Public Exhibition held at the Shireburn Arms Hotel in the village on 12th July 2012. Details are set out in the Consultation Report which accompanies the application.

1.6 Given the requirement to relocate the St Joseph’s School Car Park, there has been detailed discussion with the Head teacher and Board of Governors. Correspondence from the school indicates their satisfaction with the proposals. Comments made through

this process are reported in the Statement of Consultation and the scheme progression and amendments are set out in the Design and Access Statement.

1.7 Within this Statement, we set out the merits for the proposals, compliance with planning and other relevant policies. This document should be read alongside the other supporting information contained within the application pack. It includes

- Site plan and site location plan;
- Detailed Design Drawings;
- Design and Access Statement (DAS)
- Landscape Plan and Report;
- Landscape (and Heritage) Assessment
- Transport Assessment – affect upon the local road and transport system;
- Statement of Community Involvement /Pre-application Consultation

1.8 Also accompanying the application are

- A Phase I Habitat Survey and arboricultural appraisal
- A Flood Risk Appraisal; and a
- A topographical survey.

1.9 This particular report comprises the following

- **Section 2** contains a description of the site and its location;
- **Section 3** reviews current planning policy considerations as they are relevant to this application;
- **Section 4** contains a assessment against policy; and
- **Section 5** contains our conclusions.

2.0 LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located in Hurst Green approximately six miles south west of Clitheroe, and 5.5 miles west of Whalley. It fronts directly onto the B6243 Whalley Road which carries bus services to the two towns.
- 2.2 Extending to 6.03 acres (2.44ha), the site is owned freehold by Stonyhurst College. Currently part of the site frontage is leased to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School solely for the provision of visitor parking and the pick-up and drop-off of school children. Parking is provided for some 13 vehicles although this is often exceeded through double parking. A separate parking area is provided within the school premises for teaching and support staff.
- 2.3 Usage of the school car park is described in some detail in the Transport Assessment. This indicates that the car park is used to capacity for a half hour period at the beginning and end of the school day, peaking for a few minutes just before and after 9.0am.
- 2.4 Recently a footpath link has been fenced off and laid within the application site (along the eastern boundary) between the car park and the school entrance to separate children walking to and from the school and vehicular and farm traffic travelling along School Lane, a single track road with restricted visibility. This path /route will be retained as part of the proposals.
- 2.5 Most of the site is currently in agricultural use for the grazing of livestock. There is one structure on the northern edge of the site which is a maximum of 10ft (3m) to the ridge and occupying around 800sq.ft (75 sq.m) of gross floorspace. This structure is used for a livestock shelter and storage of hay and animal feedstuffs. It will be demolished and removed as part and parcel of the development of the site.
- 2.6 For the most part the application site boundary is well defined; by School Lane to the east, Whalley Road to the south, and Warren Fold to the west. These three boundaries are marked by existing hedgerows and stockproof fencing, although the car park is open to the highway verge with a modest landscaping scheme.
- 2.7 These boundaries provide a degree of enclosure to the site which is further strengthened

by the buildings of St Joseph's Primary School to the east, along with residential properties, fronting both sides of Whalley Road. To the south of Whalley Road there are traditional terraced dwellings, (Widow's Row) of stone construction and slate roof over, as well as more recently constructed dwellings, the buildings of Manor Farm and the Eagle and Child pub.

- 2.8 To the west the site is bounded by Warren Fold, a housing estate of one and two storey dwellings dating from the 1980's. For the most part they are unremarkable and simple in appearance of rendered walls with concrete tiles over. Traditional and vernacular buildings associated with "Warren Farm" (the farmhouse and ancillary barns and structures) are located at the north western boundary; all of which are in residential uses.
- 2.9 A northern boundary to the application site is not directly distinguishable on the ground but reflects the nature and topography of the site. Generally the site slopes from north to south down to Whalley Road with a fall of about 20ft (7m) across the site. A topographical survey has been undertaken and included in the application, which indicates a noticeable crest/ ridgeline to the north of the site, beyond which the land form falls away to the north and east.
- 2.10 Much of the application site is not designated lying on the outside edge of the settlement limit for Hurst Green. It is excluded from the Hurst Green Conservation Area but is generally "enclosed" by through the inclusion of various building groups within the designated Area. For instance, the dwellings to the south of Whalley Road, and the vernacular buildings at Warren Farm and the school buildings/Walkers Castle to the east.
- 2.11 Given the application site's location to the north of Whalley Road, it falls within the generality of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This statutory designation seeks to protect and enhance landscape beauty.
- 2.12 Hurst Green is a compact village of around 200 households centred on Whalley Road, the Avenue and the Dene. There are three public houses in the village; the Eagle & Child Inn which accommodates the village post office on part time basis, the Bayley Arms and the Shireburn Arms which includes guest accommodation. There is a village hall and various community facilities, including a village hall, children's play area and playing fields.

- 2.13 Stonyhurst College is the major landowner in the area. The College Campus and Estate parkland are broadly to the north and east of the village.
- 2.14 Stonyhurst comprises a substantial range of Grade 1 Listed buildings and the parkland is a Grade II* Registered Historic Park and Garden.

Planning History

- 2.15 There is no history for the application site in relation to residential use. An application was approved for the construction of the school car park which included levelling of the site and construction of access points.
- 2.16 Pre-application enquiries suggested that the school had proposals to upgrade and extend the car parking area.
- 2.17 Part of the application site has been promoted through the emerging Development Plan process and is included within the Council's SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). The site has been positively appraised as suitable, viable and available. Such recognition is useful but of itself not an indicator of whether the site will be allocated for development or planning permission granted.

Pre Application Advice

- 2.18 As part of the Council's protocol, Stonyhurst submitted a request for pre-application advice during July 2012, immediately after (and reporting upon) the community consultation event. The pre-app also included a request for a Screening Opinion on the requirement for formal Environmental Impact Assessment.
- 2.19 RVBC responded (Ref.: PRE-APP 3/2012//0571/P, dated 25th July 2012) suggesting that EIA is not required but that the list of reports suggested by the applicant would be sufficient to enable the determination of an application, subject submission of additional material in the form of a Phase I habitat study and a tree survey.
- 2.20 Further responses were received from the Environment Agency and the County Education Authority which will be dealt with as part of the application process.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 Recent publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has revised certain areas of policy. Matters contained in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 remain. It states

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

- 3.2 The development plan for Ribble Valley comprises the Regional Strategy for the North West, the saved policies of the Ribble Valley District wide Local Plan and the Publication Draft Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
- 3.3 As regards the status of these documents the Framework states at paragraphs 214 and 215 that:

“For the twelve months from the day of publication [of the Framework] decision-takers may continue to give full weight to the relevant policies adopted since 2004 even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the Framework”

In other cases following this twelve month period, due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing local plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the framework, the greater weight that may be given).”

NATIONAL POLICY

- 3.4 Coming into force on 27 March 2012, the Framework supersedes the former suite of planning policy statements and guidance at national level. At the heart of the Framework it states (at paragraph 14) that there

“is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.”

- 3.5 In respect of decision-taking this means:

- *“ Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:*

- *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; or*
- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

3.6 Three dimensions to sustainable development are outlined at paragraph 7 – economic, social and environmental, suggesting that the planning system has specific roles to play as summarised below:

- An **Economic** role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time to support growth and innovation;
- A **Social** role - supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required, to meet the needs of present and future generations; 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
- An **Environmental** role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

3.7 Within these overarching roles the Framework includes a core set of planning principles which underpin decision taking. Those of relevance to this application suggest that planning:

- Should be a creative way in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, development and other development needs of an area, and respond to wider opportunities for growth;
- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants on land and buildings;

- Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the supporting thriving rural communities within it;
- Encourage effective use of land; and
- Actively manage patterns of growth and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

3.8 Throughout, the Framework makes clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It indicates that the contents and policies of the Framework should be read as a whole and constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice. These policies are set out under a number of thematic headings and are summarised below as these are relevant to this application:

Building a Strong and Competitive Economy

3.9 Paragraphs 18 and 19 suggest that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, stating that the planning system should operate to encourage, and not act as an impediment to, sustainable economic growth.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

3.10 Paragraph 28 suggests that economic growth should be supported in rural areas, particularly where these can contribute to retention and development of existing local facilities and businesses.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

3.11 Para 32 suggests that planning decisions should take account of whether:

- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- Development proposals should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

3.12 Paragraph 47 of the Framework suggests that in order “to boost significantly the supply of housing” authorities should:

- Use their evidence to ensure that the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing are met in the housing market area;
- Identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide up to five years supply of housing against their housing requirement with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure competition and choice in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, this buffer should be increased to 20%;
- Identify a supply of specific deliverable sites or broad locations of growth for years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11- 15.

3.13 Para 49 states that:

“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.”

3.14 Para 50 continues that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, planning authorities should:

- Plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community;
- Identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand;
- Where a need for affordable housing is identified seek to meet this need on site or through a contribution of broadly equivalent value where this can be robustly justified.

3.15 Furthermore it suggests that the supply of new homes in rural areas can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development such as extensions to existing villages (para 52) and accepting that additional market housing can facilitate provision of affordable housing to meet local needs (para 54).

Requiring good design

3.16 Good design is identified as a key and intrinsic aspect of sustainable development. It is

recognised as indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). As indicated in paragraph 58 planning decisions should ensure, inter alia, that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history;
- Create safe and accessible environments;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Meeting the challenge of flooding etc

3.17 The Framework suggests that local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies. In determining planning applications, paragraph 96 states that authorities should expect new development to:

- Comply with Local Plan policies for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable;
- Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

3.18 Paragraph 109 indicates that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, inter alia:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes;
- Preventing new or existing development from contributing to, or being put at risk from unacceptable risk of soil, air, water, or noise pollution or land instability.

3.19 In meeting development needs the Framework suggests that the aim should be to minimise the adverse effects on the local and natural environment (paragraph 110). Effective use of land is encouraged and particularly the re-use of previously developed (brownfield) land in sustainable locations (paragraph 111). Protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account and where possible Council's

should seek to use areas of poorer quality in preference to higher quality land (paragraph 112).

3.20 Great weight is given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest levels of protection (para 115). Paragraph 116 suggests that planning permission for major developments in these areas should be refused except in exceptional circumstances or where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. Paragraph 116 states a number of matters to include in the assessment of exceptional circumstances:

- *“The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- *The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need in some other way; and*
- *Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational activity and the extent to which that can be moderated.”*

3.21 Paragraph 125 suggests that planning decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3.22 Paragraph 126 states that local authorities should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, taking into account, inter alia:

- *“The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the heritage assets,*
- *The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment could bring;*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- *Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”*

3.23 Paragraph 131 continues that in determining planning applications the authority should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
- The positive contribution such assets can make to sustainable communities; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

3.24 Paragraphs 133 and 134 set out circumstances where a proposed development may result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm, where regard should be had to the public benefits of the proposal, securing optimum viable use and the scale of any harm or loss to the significance of the heritage asset.

3.25 With regard to Conservation Areas, paragraph 137 states that authorities should look at opportunities for new development in such areas or within the setting of such areas, suggesting that proposals that preserve elements of the setting or which make a positive contribution should be treated favourably. Para 138 continues that not all elements of a Conservation Area contribute to its significance, therefore the guidance contained in paragraphs 133 and 134 should be taken into account when considering the relative significance of the element or its contribution to the area.

Plan Making and Decision taking

3.26 Subsequent sections of the Framework deal with plan-making and decision taking.

3.27 Local Plans are expected to be prepared with a view to delivering sustainable development, being aspirational but realistic (paragraphs 150 and 154). The onus is upon preparing a robust and proportionate evidence base taking into account the most up to date data and market signals.

3.28 Paragraph 173 advocates deliverability. It suggests that development should not be burdened with a scale of development costs (such as affordable housing, standards, infrastructure or other requirements) which renders development unviable. It also advocates the provision of competitive returns to a willing landowner and developer.

3.29 Paragraph 186 state that planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. Paragraph 187 advocates looking for solutions not problems it continues that

“decision takers should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. “

- 3.30 In determining applications para 196 reiterates the plan led system confirming that the Framework is a material consideration. Paragraph 188 reinforces the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.31 Paragraphs 203 to 206 refer to the use of planning conditions and obligations suggesting that such controls could make otherwise unacceptable development acceptable. Such conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning, and the development, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.32 Local policy for the consideration of this planning application is contained in the following documents
- Regional Strategy for the North West (RS) adopted May 2008.
 - The Ribble Valley District wide Local Plan (adopted June 1998) – Saved policies
 - Ribble Valley Core Strategy Consultation Draft (April 2012)
- 3.33 Given the age of the DWLP and the advanced stage of the Core Strategy, these documents are considered to provide an appropriate context for the determination of this application alongside evidence base documents and other documents such as the Hurst Green Conservation Area Appraisal.

Region Strategy for the North West

- 3.34 Whilst the Coalition Government announced its intent to abolish the Regional Strategies these documents remain in place and as such remain a material consideration. However as the RS is a spatial and non-site specific document providing guidance to local authorities for the preparation of their Core Strategy and other DPD's, it is of limited weight in the determination of individual planning applications.
- 3.35 Aspects of the RS which are relevant are the indicative District housing requirements set

at 161 units net per annum through to 2021 (Policy L4). Other spatial policies seek to maximise the economic potential of the Region's rural areas and ensure fair access to housing, jobs and services (Policy RDF2).

- 3.36 Area based priorities for the Ribble Valley fall under the Central Lancashire City Region which seeks to increase prosperity in the smaller towns, villages and rural communities and to ensure a range of good quality housing to meet the needs of the population and support economic growth.

Ribble Valley District wide Local Plan (DWLP)

- 3.37 Saved policies within the Local Plan which are relevant to the consideration of this development scheme are discussed below:

Policy G1 Development Control

- 3.38 Chapter 3 of the DWLP sets out the general policies for the determination of planning applications. 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.”

- 3.39 There follow a number criteria to be applied to determining planning applications including the following, inter alia

- Sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of type density and nature;
- Scale and type of traffic generation, adequate car parking (see T7), safe access;
- Visual appearance and relationship to surrounding uses;
- Adequate arrangements for servicing and public utilities;
- use of materials sympathetic to the character of the area; and
- economic (effective) use of land.

Policy G4 Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.40 Hurst Green is identified as a third tier settlement in the District's hierarchy as a village capable of accommodating a scale of development which protects the individual character

of the settlements, preventing expansion into the countryside.

3.41 The policy suggests some development will be permitted within the village in a limited range of circumstances as follows:

- on allocated sites;
- infill sites not defined as essential open space;
- re-use of rural buildings; and
- proposals which contribute to the solution of a particular local housing, social, community or employment problem. In the case of housing where these comply with H20.

3.42 Paragraph 3.2.15 set out the considerations for the definition of village development limits, particularly where these exclude dwellings which are not well related to the main (built) part of the village and areas of open land not within residential cartilage. For these reasons much of the application site is outside the defined development limit.

3.43 Paragraph 3.2.16 defines “infill development” which relates to the filling of small gaps; this could not be argued to apply to the application site.

Policy G5 Open Countryside

3.44 Outside development limits, the Plan recognises the need to protect the countryside whilst recognising that it is a working areas and the source of livelihoods for many of the Borough’s residents. Consequently only limited small scale developments are permitted which are for local needs housing, otherwise essential to the local economy or social well being.

Policy G6 Essential Open Spaces

3.45 That part of the application site which is within the village development limit relates to the generality of the school car parking area fronting Whalley Road. It is not clear why this area which is in essence a private car park is defined as having “*significant amenity value either visually or through their recreational use*” (paragraph 3.2.22). Policy G6 seeks to protect such areas from unnecessary developments, in order to protect the characteristics of the plan area.

Policy ENV1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 3.46 Over 70% of the Borough is designated as AONB. Inset 15 of the Proposals Map (Hurst Green) defines the AONB boundary as following the Whalley Road; i.e. that part of the village to the north along Avenue Road and Warren Fold is included in the AONB, that area to the south including the river valley is excluded.
- 3.47 Policy ENV1 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland. It continues

“Development will also need to contribute to the conservation and natural beauty of the area. The environmental effects of the development will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications. The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment will be the most important considerations in the assessment of any development proposal. Regard will also be had to the economic and social well-being of the area.”

- 3.48 Policies ENV2 and ENV3 seek to provide similar levels of protection for those areas immediately adjacent to the AONB and provide its setting. In effect the policies seek to provide similar levels of policy coverage to ENV1 outside the AONB.

Policy ENV6 Agricultural Land

- 3.49 Paragraph 4.2.34 suggests that there are limited quantities of Grade 2 agricultural land and no Grade 1 land in the District. Around 70% is Grade 4 and 5 either poor or very poor quality agricultural land.
- 3.50 Within the Policy intent is the desire to protect the best and most versatile land, prioritising its retention above that of lower quality agricultural land. Where loss of lower quality land may result the policy requires consideration of the effect of the loss on the management of individual farms and severance and fragmentation of holdings.

ENV16 /ENV17 Conservation Areas

- 3.51 Paragraph 4.7.3 identifies that a Conservation Area will be designated for Hurst Green. This process was duly completed and Conservation Area designated for the village in November 2007. Most of the application site is excluded from the designated area, although car park is designated. The designated area surrounds the application site on

three sides.

- 3.52 Policy ENV 16 seeks to strictly control development in Conservation Areas to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size design and materials. Important open spaces and natural features may be protected. It continues:

“The desirability of preserving and enhancing the character of or appearance of a conservation area will also be a material consideration in deciding development proposals outside the designated area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.”

- 3.53 Policy ENV17 requires planning applications within or affecting conservation areas to be accompanied by “sufficient additional information” to aid the determination.

Policy H2 Dwellings in the Open Countryside

- 3.54 On unallocated sites beyond the defined settlement boundaries there is only limited support for particular types of residential use, including the conversion of existing buildings. Dwellings are restricted to agricultural/forestry uses or where required to address a local need.

Policy H20 Affordable Housing

- 3.55 Policy H20 seeks to restrict any planning permissions for sites outside the settlement limits for 100% affordable housing to meet a proven local need, expressly for the groups of people defined in the policy.

Policy T1 Development Proposals

- 3.56 This policy states that when determining planning applications, considerable weight will be given to the following inter alia

- Availability and adequacy of public transport;
- Relationship to the primary route network; and
- Access for pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility.

Policy T7 Parking Provision

- 3.57 This policy requires that adequate parking and servicing space is provided within the development site.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 3.58 Published as a Regulation 19 Consultation Pre Submission Draft document 1 April 2012, the Core Strategy is reasonably well advanced to be considered in the context of the development scheme on the application site as it sets out the spatial development strategy for the District to 2028. As a non-site specific document however, it is appropriate only to consider the general provisions of the document and the evidence which informs it.
- 3.59 There are a number of objections to the Core Strategy which remain to be resolved, including those submitted on behalf of Stonyhurst; therefore the Core Strategy is only considered to carry limited weight.
- 3.60 Key to the Core Strategy are the background issues and challenges listed at paragraph 2.14 which include:
- Retaining the high quality environment and protecting the AONB;
 - high and unaffordable house prices;
 - Jobs and employment;
 - High levels of out migration to work ;
 - Loss of young people from the Borough; and
 - Creating sustainable communities.
- 3.61 Reflecting these broad issues the Core Strategy is informed by a vision which aims that (by 2028):

“The Ribble Valley will be an area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all, sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres, meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

We will seek to create an area with unrivalled quality of place, respecting the unique natural social and built heritage of the area.

New development to meet the needs of the area for growth, services and quality of life will be managed to ensure the special characteristics of the area are preserved for future generations.”

3.62 To deliver the vision a number of strategic objectives are listed. Those of relevance to these development proposals include, inter alia

- Respect, protect and enhance the high quality of environment of the Borough;
- Provision of decent and affordable homes;
- Ensure neighbourhoods are sought after locations by building cohesive communities and promoting community safety;
- Safeguard and promote local employment opportunities;
- Improve accessibility and service delivery to address rural isolation; and
- Contribute to local, regional and wider sustainable development

3.63 Some 38 Key Statements and 22 development management policies are then set out to inform and guide development and the determination of applications for development in the Borough.

3.64 Running through these:

Key Statement DS1 Development Strategy

3.65 Sets out the broad focus of development to be within the main settlements and a strategic extension to the south of Clitheroe. Elsewhere it suggests

“In general the scale of planned housing growth will be managed to reflect existing population size, the availability of, or the opportunity to provide facilities to serve the development and the extent to which the development can be accommodated in the local area.”

3.66 It continues that specific sites will be identified through the preparation of a separate allocations DPD. Development across all the Borough’s settlements will be considered where it has recognised regeneration benefits, is for recognised local needs or which are appropriate for consolidation, expansion or rounding off.

3.67 Reflecting the development strategy paragraph 4.11 indicates that “Other Settlements” including Hurst Green should accommodate a minimum of 816 dwellings in the period to 2028. Reference to the contents of Appendix 2 indicates how these figures are derived. A footnote to Paragraph 15.1 suggests that these suggest that each of the “Other Settlements” could accommodate on average 35 dwellings.

Key Statement EN2 Landscape

- 3.68 This policy seeks to provide protection for the designated parts of the Borough and afford similar levels of protection to the open countryside outside the areas. It states

“The Landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the natural beauty of the area.

The landscape and character of those areas which contribute to the character and setting of the AONB will be protected and conserved, and wherever possible enhanced.

As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials.”

- 3.69 In delivering this approach the Council suggests at paragraph 5.2 that it is important that developments do not seek to undermine the inherent quality of the landscape. As such it goes on that developers should adopt a non-standard approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity.

Key Statement H1 Housing Provision

- 3.70 This policy sets out the housing requirement for the District for the period 2008 to 2028, to provide for a minimum of 200 dwellings per year, although it suggests that the identification of sites will be deferred to a subsequent DPD.

Key Statement H2 Housing Balance

- 3.71 This policy seeks to ensure that housing provision matches local household requirements as evidenced by the SHMA. It suggests

“Determination of planning applications for residential development will be informed by the most recent Housing Needs Survey. Addressing Housing Needs statement and the most recently adopted SHMA, to identify the type, tenure and size of residential dwellings across the Borough.”

Key Statement H3 Affordable Housing

- 3.72 In delivering a mix of housing types, this prescriptive policy suggests that the Council will require development on sites of 5 or more dwellings across the Borough to deliver 30% affordable units to be provided for local need in perpetuity. This proportion may be

reduced albeit only to 20% where supporting evidence, including a viability appraisal, justifies a lower level.

- 3.73 Provision of housing for older people is identified as a priority through this policy along with a specific requirement of 15% of provision.

Key Statement DMG1 General Considerations

- 3.74 This largely repeats the provisions of Policy G1 of the District wide Local Plan as set out above. A number of additional matters are included to take on board more recent policy pronouncements; for example sustainable construction techniques and energy efficiency.

Key Statement DMG2 Strategic Considerations

- 3.75 This suggests that development should accord with the Core Strategy and spatial vision. Namely

“Development proposals in defined settlements should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement.”

- 3.76 It continues that outside settlement limits development should be essential for the local economy or social well being of the area. So far as the AONB is concerned it states:

“In protecting the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Council will have regard to the social and economic well-being of the area. However, the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area, avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be expected to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB Management Plan should be considered and will be used by the Council in determining planning applications.”

Key Statement DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets

- 3.77 This sets out a presumption in favour of the preservation of important heritage assets and their settings. With regard to Conservation Areas it states:

“Proposals within or closely related to Conservation Areas should not harm the Area. This should include considerations as to whether it is in keeping with the architectural and historic character of the areas set out in the relevant conservation area appraisal. Development in these areas will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials and also respects trees and open space.

In the Conservation Area there will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of elements that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.”

- 3.78 We consider that this is not consistent with the provisions of paragraph 132 of the Framework and have suggested modifications accordingly.

Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy

- 3.79 A number of comments were submitted to the Draft Core Strategy on behalf of Stonyhurst raising concerns about the draft document. In broad terms these seek changes to the Core Strategy to recognise the role of Stonyhurst as a major employer in the District, and that the campus represents a major heritage asset. A number of changes were also requested to clarify the settlement hierarchy particularly the “Other Settlements” which Hurst Green falls into.
- 3.80 A number of other changes were requested to specifically address the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, as published.
- 3.81 An Officer’s report to Council, approved on 28 August 2012, suggests a number of changes to the Core Strategy with a view to a limited consultation exercise and formal Submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2012. This may suggest Examination by the year end.
- 3.82 Some of the changes respond to comments raised; the major change is the inclusion of the model policy for the “Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development”. Other changes are merely clarifications.

Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report

- 3.83 Published as of 1 December 2011 this document sets out to what extent the Council has met its various targets and delivery of development.

- 3.84 In respect of the need to maintain a five years supply of land the commentary in respect of the Housing Trajectory and demonstrated on Graph 7 suggests that in the five year period to December 2011, only 375 net additional dwellings had been delivered. This represents a shortfall of over 430 units, more than 50% of the requirement. Of particular note was the delivery of only 69 units in the year to date. This demonstrates a substantial and persistent under delivery against the RSS target of 161 units per annum; more so against the emerging Core Strategy target which is higher.
- 3.85 Taking into account the history of under delivery the net dwelling requirement set out at Table 8 of the AMR indicates a dwelling target of 187 dwellings per year for the remainder of the RSS period (to 2021), suggesting that the Council will need to identify an adjusted 5 year supply of 935 dwellings. Against this target, the AMR indicates that the identified supply (taking into account a non-delivery discount) is 555 dwellings; resulting in a 2.9 year supply at 1st April 2011. A further note suggests that this supply had increased slightly at 1st October 2011 to a 3.3 year supply.
- 3.86 Two recent reports to Committee (16th August and 13th September 2012) provide a more up-to-date assessment of the housing supply position (at 1st July 2012) suggesting that the Council can demonstrate a 4.97 year adjusted supply including a 20% buffer. No detailed analysis is made regarding non-delivery of sites although a 10% discount is included for slippage.

Emerging Allocations DPD /Proposals Map

- 3.87 Table 16 of the AMR suggests that the Proposals Map will be progressed alongside the Core Strategy. An adoption date of November 2012 is unlikely to be achieved.
- 3.88 A revised timetable for the production of the Housing and Economics DPD suggests a Submission to the Secretary of State during June 2013. We would anticipate some slippage on this date.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

- 3.89 Produced as part of the evidence base for the LDF the SHLAA is a “policy off” appraisal of sites submitted to the Council by various landowners. The adopted SHLAA dates back to 2008.

3.90 Some eight sites (080 to 087 inclusive) were submitted on behalf of various land owners to the SHLAA for land within or near the settlement boundary for Hurst Green. In total these provide a net developable area of around 4.5 hectares which the Council estimates can accommodate around 158 dwellings, equating to a density of 35 per hectare.

3.91 Four sites are submitted on behalf of Stonyhurst College, two of which are excluded:

- 080 - Land south of Whalley Road – excluded as operational farm.
- 081 – East of St Joseph’s School – excluded as prominent school playing field, remote from village boundary.
- 082 - North of Whalley Road (part of the application site) – notes field barn to rear and relocation of (school) car park required. Availability noted but included in 6-10 years supply for deliverability – potential capacity 31 dwellings.
- 083 – Land at Smithy Row – notes low visual prominence. Availability noted but included in 6-10 years supply for deliverability – potential capacity 28 dwellings.

3.92 With the remaining sites, three of these refer to land at the Dene:

- 084 – Field at The Dene noted as Significant Open Space. Considered to be available and deliverable within the 0-5 year supply. Identifies capacity for 16 dwellings.
- 085 – Adjacent to No.5 – Excluded due to tree cover.
- 086 Whalley Road west of village – excluded
- 087 Adjacent to 3 The Dene – noted as scrub and garden land within settlement limited. Noted as available but with access issues, so it is included with the 6-10 years supply for delivery. Identifies capacity for up to 3 dwellings.

3.93 Concluding these matters the SHLAA identifies that there is some 2.21 ha of land available for 78 dwellings with the Site 084 suitable for immediate delivery and sites 082, 083 and 087 available as a second tranche.

3.94 Since the SHLAA was completed it is worth noting:

- That an application for site 084 (LPA Ref.: 3/2011/0312P) for planning permission for 13 dwellings and a local shop was withdrawn in the face of substantial local opposition on the grounds of over development, inadequate access and effects upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Site 082 forms part of the application site the subject to this statement.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Addressing Housing Need

- 3.95 A SHMA was produced for the District and approved in December 2008, given the intervening events the SHMA is of limited weight. The latter document “Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley” was adopted as Council policy in January 2012 and provides the basis for relevant Core Strategy policies. It provides sources of information on the affordable requirement alongside site specific design, density and layout matters.
- 3.96 Appendix 3 suggests that at 2007 the mean price ratio (Mean House Price divided by mean household income) was 8.1 in Aughton, Bailey and Chaigley.

Aughton, Bailey and Chaigley Housing Needs Survey

- 3.97 A final report was published during January 2009 based upon a 26% return rate. Overall conclusions suggested a lack of affordable housing stock in the Parish. Some 70% of respondents supported provision of additional housing in the Parish where proposals included for the provision of affordable housing.

Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan

- 3.98 Some 70% of the Borough is designated AONB, including the application site. A Management Plan is currently in place which covers the five year period to April 2014. The document provides a policy framework and a programme of works to be implemented.
- 3.99 It outlines that the primary purpose of the AONB is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. In doing so it does acknowledge that:

“Account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities. Particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and

economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment.”

3.100 This document does not identify site specific, land use planning or policy measures but seeks to sit alongside and inform such documents. It lists a series of objectives under the following banners: Natural and Cultural Landscape; Enjoyment, Health and Wellbeing; Economy; Community; and Working in Partnership.

3.101 Within the Economy heading, the Plan seeks to maintain a long terms approach to economic development in the AONB (11.1), support sustainable local enterprise (11.2), and ensure appropriate development within the AONB and neighbouring settlements (11.3). A section devoted to “Planning and Built Development” seeks to guide proposals for instance to ensure development is in keeping with and conserves and enhances the character of the locality and considers local historical, cultural and wildlife interests (12.1A). It is also intended to produce an AONB design guide and use the AONB Landscape Character Assessment to determine the landscape and visual impact of development, both within and on the periphery of the AONB. (12.1b and C). Other objectives include

- Maximise appropriate opportunities for affordable housing and employment within the AONB (12.2);
- Ensure planning and development decisions uphold the purpose of AONB designation (12.3)
- Allow appropriate flexibility in maintaining vibrant rural economies and communities (12.5).

3.102 Under the “Community” banner the Plan recognises the need to work in close partnership with local business (14.2).

Hurst Green Conservation Area Appraisal

3.103 A Conservation Area was designated for Hurst Green in 2007. It sets out the extent of the designated area and the special architectural and historical characteristics within it. A summary of special interest in relation to the application site suggests:

- Architectural and historic interest of the conservation area’s buildings;

- Rural setting partly with the Forest of Bowland AONB;
- View of surrounding countryside, particularly Pendle Hill;
- Relationship to Stonyhurst College and grounds;
- Prevalent use of local building stone; and
- Historic associations with individuals.

3.104 A SWOT of the key features of the Conservation Area does not mention aspects of the application site. An associated Management Plan recognises limited opportunities for new development within the Conservation Area, suggesting a number of key design principles which should be applied where these occur.

4.0 THE PLANNING CASE

4.1 Based on the above, the following sets out the main considerations supporting the principle of residential development at Hurst Green. A design justification is covered in detail in the Design and Access Statement that forms part of the application. Other technical reports accompanying the planning application deal with issues such as transport and ecology and suggest that the development would not be contrary to the relevant provisions of the NPPF (the Framework).

4.2 It is considered that the principal issues are as follows:

- Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development:
- Housing Land Supply and the Principle of Residential Development
- Sustainability of the Site and Compliance with the Framework; and
- Other Material Considerations

Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

4.3 When published, the Framework reduced the extent of policy guidance down to some 56 pages of text and re-emphasised the role of the planning system to deliver sustainable development, describing it as a “golden thread” running through all plan making and decision taking.

4.4 Subsequently PINS published the “model policy” to be included within local planning documents setting out the Presumption in more formal terms. Ribble Valley Council has indicated that the emerging Core Strategy document will be revised to include a version of the policy.

4.5 At the heart of the Framework is to secure sustainable development and to determine applications (for sustainable development) without delay where they are consistent with the development plan. It is worth reiterating the main points of the Framework's core planning principles which should be adhered to and which have been the subject of pre-application discussions. Namely: finding creative solutions to enhance and improve places; identifying housing needs and addressing them; creating thriving places; securing high quality design and recognising the intrinsic value of the countryside.

- 4.6 It is considered that the application proposals accord with these Core Planning Principles and are consistent with the objective of achieving sustainable development.

Housing Land Supply and Principle of Residential Development

- 4.7 Housing completion rates for the District are set out in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report for the period up to March 2011. This suggests a consistent under delivery of housing since 2006, achieving only 50% of that required over the five year period. It also highlights that at March 2011 the (current) housing land supply position demonstrates a 2.9 year supply. A footnote indicates a modest improvement to a 3.3 year supply at October 2011; however, this still falls well below the Framework's five year supply requirement. This position becomes more severe having regard to the 5% buffer, which is added for "flexibility".
- 4.8 In Ribble Valley's case however, this is exacerbated further by the requirement for a 20% buffer in local authority areas which demonstrate persistent under delivery, which is clearly the case here.
- 4.9 More recent position statements reported in August suggest that the housing supply has improved and that a 4.97 year supply can be demonstrated taking into account the various buffers. Whilst this is an advance on the previous submission, a brief analysis would suggest that a number of the sites with historic permissions may have delivery issues and phasing on some sites would indicate that some sites should not wholly contribute to the five year supply.
- 4.10 On this basis the provisions of paragraph 49 prevail. It states

"Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites."

- 4.11 Having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the Framework indicates (at paragraph 14) that for decision takers this means:

"Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless"

- *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

4.12 In giving weight to relevant policies, the Framework suggests that decision-takers should take into account

- *“The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation , the greater the weight that may be given);*
- *The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less the significant the unresolved objections, the greater weight that may be given); and*
- *The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight which may be given).”*

4.13 Against this the current saved policies of the District-wide Local Plan do not allocate the application site for housing, and sets policy which would resist development (the subject of this application) outside of settlement limits. In the absence of a five year housing land supply the Development Plan can be considered to be out of date. As such the provisions of the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development take precedence.

4.14 As set out in the previous section, the emerging Core Strategy is subject of a Council resolution (28 August 2012) to submit to the Secretary of State for Examination and can therefore be considered to be at a relatively advanced stage. No timetable has yet been set for the submission or the Examination.

4.15 Within the Officer’s report requesting the Council resolution is an appraisal of the representations submitted to the most recent consultation exercise. Unfortunately, a number of the comments set out in the Officer’s report are unreferenced to the relevant provision of the draft Core Strategy. None the less, the report does set out a series of ninety proposed changes which seek to address a number of outstanding objections, including number of submitted on behalf of the applicant. Some of these changes seek to

align the Core Strategy more closely to the Framework including the “model” policy. Overall this reveals a number of fundamental issues on “soundness” remain to be considered. For example on housing numbers, the use of the Standen Strategic site and distribution of development across the settlement hierarchy (but not the hierarchy itself).

- 4.16 No progress has been made on a Site Allocations DPD and discussion with the policy team suggests that the nature, content and timing of that document, including any changes to settlement limits and identification of development sites has not been reconciled.
- 4.17 On this basis, the up-to date evidence base suggests that there is an acknowledged housing land supply shortfall in the District. Hurst Green is a village included within the settlement hierarchy capable of accommodating and supporting residential development. Material contained in the SHLAA suggests that the application site can be brought forward. The site has been subject to sustainability and technical appraisals which indicate that development can be brought forward subject to mitigation and appropriate design. This suggests that the application site could make a contribution to housing delivery and the five year supply.
- 4.18 It is considered therefore that the site benefits from in principle support from the Framework. Additional weight in favour of development can also be drawn from the emerging Core Strategy policy which suggests that Hurst Green as an “Other Settlement” could accommodate on average 35 dwellings.

Sustainability of the Site and Compliance with the Framework

- 4.19 Policy in the Framework indicates that where a District’s housing policy is out of date, in this instance, by virtue of the absence of a five year housing land supply, planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would “significantly and demonstrably” outweigh the benefits or where it would conflict with the policies contained within the Framework.
- 4.20 Consideration of the proposals against the relevant provisions of the Framework, as summarised in Section 3, above follows:

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.21 This proposal is in accordance with the aim of supporting economic growth through the objective of ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places at the right time. As highlighted previously this development will help meet the identified shortfall in the housing land supply within the Borough, and provide market and affordable, local needs housing to meet the demand set out in the SHMA and local Housing Needs Assessment.
- 4.22 Delivery of new homes in support of sustainable economic development is a core planning principle set out in the Framework.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

- 4.23 Over 90% of the Borough is rural in nature and Stonyhurst College is one of the major landowners and employers in the Borough and is intrinsically linked with the village of Hurst Green. Both the Framework and the emerging Core Strategy support a positive approach for a strong rural economy and promoting sustainable new development. The Framework also advocates the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, often this requires new development to maintain vibrancy and vitality.
- 4.24 In the rural areas, settlements such as Hurst Green as the focus for housing and employment development and the retention of services and facilities. As such the development (both the housing and the replacement car park provision) is consistent with the rural economy aims of the Framework.

Promoting sustainable transport

- 4.25 A transport study accompanies the application. This demonstrates that the development can be accommodated without prejudicing the local transport network. This is confirmed in the County Council's initial response to the proposals. Primary access into and out of the site on to Whalley Road does not give rise to any safety issues.
- 4.26 A number of public rights of way are located in the vicinity of the site and measures are incorporated into the layout to ensure access and permeability through the site to encourage pedestrians on to the wider network but also facilitate safe and secure access

to the village facilities as well as to local bus stops.

- 4.27 Part of the site frontage is currently occupied by the car park for St Joseph's School. The school has indicated during pre-application discussions a desire to improve and expand the facility to cater for an increased school roll. Relocation and replacement of the facility has been integral part of the design process with the school and governors; this is covered in some detail in the Design and Access Statement. Material contained in the Transport Assessment includes consideration of use of the car park, circulation along with the provision of a lay by on the Whalley Road which can accommodate larger forms of pupil transport such as minibuses and coaches.
- 4.28 A package of highway measures is also included within the scheme to respond to an issue noted in the traffic surveys carried out as part of the transport assessment; notably traffic speeds in excess of the posted limit. The proposed measures are anticipated to reduce traffic speed and as a consequence improve conditions for pedestrian safety for local residents, the school children, visitors and walkers who frequent the area.
- 4.29 As such we consider that the proposals are consistent with this element of the Framework.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- 4.30 Central to the Framework is *"to boost significantly the supply of housing"*, as a consequence the development is consistent with the core tenet of the planning system.
- 4.31 As set out above, this scheme will make a contribution to the Council's five year land supply, in a settlement identified as suitable for accommodating such development in the emerging Core Strategy and evidence base.
- 4.32 A mix of housing types is proposed to meet the needs and demands for housing in the area as a result of the Council's own evidence base (the SHMA, the Parish Housing Needs Assessment and pre-application consultation response) and soft market testing (with local and regional house builders and developers) along with community responses from the public exhibition held in the village. It is considered that the proposal will meet an identified requirement for local needs and market housing.

- 4.33 In rural areas, the Framework supports housing development in locations where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It suggests that achieving a good supply of new homes in can be best achieved through larger scale developments as “extensions to existing villages”, following the principle of Garden Cities. Continuing this theme it also suggests that allowing more market housing where this will facilitate the provision of additional housing to meet local needs.
- 4.34 It is considered that the development will make a significant contribution to the provision of local needs housing and meet identified shortfalls in delivery over recent years.
- 4.35 Where local planning authorities are unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (plus a 20% buffer in circumstances of persistent under delivery), the presumption in favour of sustainable development should carry significant weight. Whilst the applications is considered to be consistent with the provisions of the Framework, policies at the local level preclude the scheme as it is designated as open countryside beyond the Hurst Green settlement limits. An absence of a five year supply (plus buffer) allows decisive weight to be given to the Framework.
- 4.36 On this basis it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the aims of the Framework to promote sustainable development and boost the supply of housing.

Requiring Good Design

- 4.37 Good design is considered indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 4.38 Such matters are dealt with in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies this application and sets out the design rationale for the development. It shows how the development responds to its local context and the topography in terms of layout, scale, massing and design and will provide an uplift to the quality and sense of place within the area.
- 4.39 A palette of materials and styles which matches the local vernacular without pastiche reflect comments made at the community exhibition.

- 4.40 This approach is considered to be wholly compliant with the Framework in promoting good design.

Meeting the challenge of flooding etc.

- 4.41 A response from the Environment Agency confirms that the site falls within flood zone 1 and is therefore unconstrained for residential development. A drainage strategy is submitted with the application which confirms that the development can be accommodated without adverse impact upon existing watercourses and within the existing foul and surface water drainage network.
- 4.42 Measures described in the Design and Access Statement set out the design approach adopted to ensure that layout, orientation and massing of buildings will seek to minimise energy consumption and incorporate renewable energy measures.
- 4.43 As a consequence the scheme is considered suitable to be brought forward for residential development and would be in accordance with the Framework in this respect.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 4.44 Matters in the Framework relating to the natural environment consider two aspects: the effects of proposals upon the immediate and wider environment and also to site-specific considerations (i.e. the capacity of the site to accommodate the development).
- 4.45 Looking at the wider effects first, the Framework recognises the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes, and places greatest weight on those areas which have the highest levels of protection such as AONB's. It also places value on areas which provide the setting of the AONB.
- 4.46 Development in such locations can only proceed where "exceptional circumstances" are demonstrated. Such "exceptional circumstances" are not defined; although three "tests" are identified against which major developments should be assessed.¹
- 4.47 The first test is one of need and the effect of permitting, or refusing, the scheme upon the

¹ Major developments being defined as development of ten dwellings or more/ or sites of more than 0.5ha, i.e. the scheme the subject of this application.

local economy. Proposals in the emerging Core Strategy identify Hurst Green as a settlement which is capable of accepting some development to maintain vitality and vibrancy, with such settlements accommodating on average around 35 dwellings. As such the principle of this scale of development in Hurst Green is already accepted.

- 4.48 A direction of travel of policy is that in some villages the scale of development should be considered in respect of its ability to deliver much needed affordable housing; if the development is not permitted the local needs housing will not be delivered.

- 4.49 For the second test, we are of the view that any development in or on the edge of Hurst Green (i.e. within the AONB, or sites providing its setting) will face the same policy hurdle in respect of effect upon the landscape designation.

- 4.50 Some 8 sites have been put forward through the Council's SHLAA with an indicative capacity of over 100 dwellings. For a variety of reasons a number of the sites have been ruled out (excluded) from the SHLAA including 80 (South of Whalley Road), 81 (South of Walkers Castle) and 86 (The Rochfords). This leaves a cluster of sites at the Dene (87, 84 and 85), land at Smithy Row and the application site.

- 4.51 Land at the Dene offers potential for small scale housing; although access is problematic due to the narrow width of the roadway of The Dene, there is a substantial slope onsite to the back of kerb and a limited ability to upgrade the agricultural access. It is noteworthy that a planning application was withdrawn on the site in the face of substantial local opposition. A file note from the Council's policy team indicates no "in-principle" issue with housing on that site. The site is noted as substantial open space with the Conservation Area, with the need to provide some form of landscape attenuation. In all this would suggest that whilst the site is capable of accommodating some residential development this is unlikely to provide more than a few units.

- 4.52 Land at Smithy Row remains available and will continue to be promoted for housing for the latter part of the Local Plan period. It is not currently the subject to an application.

- 4.53 Thus the application site remains the main location in the village capable of the scale of development that the Council has indicated could be focussed in to the village.

- 4.54 Reverting back to Test 1, this would suggest that if the Council does not accept the principle of the development of the application site then there is little likelihood of delivering the scale of development it has identified in the Core Strategy.
- 4.55 Addressing the third test a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Smeeden Foreman Limited, a practice registered with the Landscape Institute. That document accompanies the planning application and assesses the effects of the development proposals upon local assets including the AONB and the purposes of including land within it.
- 4.56 What is striking in the Assessment is how well-contained the application site is in terms of localised viewpoints, the topography and existing buildings on three sides. As a consequence the potential visual impact of the development is very localised, and its impact upon the character of landscape beauty is also of a restricted nature. A description of the design process and architectural and landscape mitigation built into the scheme as a consequence of detailed site analysis are set out in the Design and Access Statement. It is a matter of fact and degree that the development will have some adverse effect upon the AONB although the Assessment indicates that this is a slight impact, very localised and does not affect the overall integrity of the AONB.
- 4.57 Giving consideration to site specifics, a topographical survey has been undertaken of the site and analysis of historical maps. OS maps from 1847 to 1955 suggest some form of minor quarrying on one part of the site, although the duration of any activity is not certain. A historical map of 1893 does not show the quarrying and is considered an anomaly. Mapping from 1970 suggests that any evidence was filled in and there is not infill activity immediately evident. It is not clear what infill material was deposited or whether it is a potential source of contamination or instability.
- 4.58 This matter is not considered to be a matter which would rule out the development potential of the site and can be subject to detailed investigation at a later stage.
- 4.59 In terms of the other site specific considerations none of these are considered to be overwhelming where they cannot be dealt with at a later stage and through planning condition.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 4.60 Stonyhurst is an important collection of Listed buildings in the ownership of the applicant. As indicated in the Landscape and Visual Assessment (which includes an appraisal of the historic resource) and highlighted in the previous paragraphs, the zone of visual impact is very localised. Consequently proposals on the application site would have very limited effects upon Stonyhurst, the historic landscape and a park and garden.
- 4.61 An important consideration is that any funds which arise from the development of this site will be directed towards maintaining the educational use of those buildings and retaining them in a viable use. Indeed this approach is consistent with the NPPF which suggests that as the most appropriate way to protect the historic and cultural assets. However, an “enabling” case is not being made to justify this application.
- 4.62 Consideration is then given to the Hurst Green Conservation Area; the application site is for the most part excluded from the Conservation Area. It is not identified as an important open space which adds to the character of the Conservation Area, for example as the SHLAA site in the Dene is considered. As a consequence it is considered that in its present guise the application site does not add to the character and amenity of the Conservation Area.
- 4.63 For some reason the School Car Park is included in the Conservation Area, and it is identified as an area of Essential Open Space under saved policy G6 as “having significant visual and amenity value”.. We would question this status as the piece of land is a private car park and not a community asset; as such the Local Plan designation misrepresents its function. It is difficult to describe it as of visual importance.
- 4.64 It is not clear how the car park in its current form adds to the character and amenity of the Conservation Area. It will be replaced by a new facility as part of the application proposals.
- 4.65 An appraisal of the effect of the proposal on the Conservation Area is included in the heritage section of the Landscape, Visual and Heritage Assessment. This identifies the scheme will have an adverse effect upon the existing character of the Conservation Area as it will introduce a new element. Matters within the Design and Access Statement

suggest that with the scale, massing and design along with local materials will minimise such negative effects and may counterbalance the poor design quality of the development at Warren Fold.

Other Material Considerations

- 4.66 Much of the foregoing analysis has focussed upon the statutory designation of the AONB for landscape beauty. It is important also to take into account the underlying principles of the Management Plan for the AONB which seeks to sustain the character and amenity of the landscape.
- 4.67 Key to this is maintaining a vibrant rural economy and meeting the economic and social needs of the local community. By doing so the Management Plan seeks to maximise the opportunities for providing affordable housing and employment opportunities and ensure that development through its design and appearance upholds the purposes of the AONB designation and conserves and enhances local character.
- 4.68 It is considered that the application proposals satisfy this aspect of the AONB Management Plan.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 A planning application has been prepared for the erection of 30 dwelling houses, services and new road layouts and ancillary open space, along with the relocation and replacement of the current school car park.
- 5.2 The application is made in full to enable appropriate consideration of matters and the effect of the scheme upon important features such as the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Hurst Green Conservation Area and the buildings and campus of Stonyhurst College. All of these are recognised as significant cultural heritage resources.
- 5.3 In bringing forward the proposals Stonyhurst College as the applicant has openly engaged with the community, the Parish Council as well as neighbours and tenants likely to be affected by the proposals. These matters are set out in the Statement of Consultation, which also reports on the outcome of the public exhibition. Correspondence from St Josephs School confirms their acceptance of the replacement car parking facilities.
- 5.4 Pre-application discussions (under reference 3/2012/0571/P) with Ribble Valley Borough Council as the Planning authority have been positive and continue the long established collaborative approach. Underpinning the application is to raise funds for the on-going maintenance and upkeep of the college. Correspondence from the Chair of the Governors sets this out. Whilst this is the principal imperative for the development the planning application proposals are not being justified as “enabling development” and the proposals are submitted to be considered on their own merits.
- 5.5 In considering those merits, we have reviewed and appraised the policy position for the site and take on board the stance of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). At the heart of the Framework is a number of planning principles: namely finding creative solutions to enhance and improve places; identifying housing needs and addressing them; creating thriving places; securing high quality design and recognising the intrinsic value of the countryside. It is considered that the application proposals meet these Core Principles.

- 5.6 The Framework states that the principal purpose of the planning system is to deliver sustainable development and substantially increase the supply of housing where proposals are consistent with the development plan; namely the Framework, the Regional Strategy, the saved policies of the Adopted Local Plan and the emerging Draft Core Strategy.
- 5.7 At present the policy position is in a state of flux with the Adopted Local Plan largely out of date and the Core Strategy not substantially advanced towards adoption. The Core Strategy identifies that Hurst Green is designated as an “Other Settlement” which is capable of accommodating (on average) 35 dwellings. For the Local Plan the Proposals Map indicates the extent of the Forest of Bowland AONB washing over the application site and the settlement limit for Hurst Green including the car park as an important community asset.
- 5.8 In such circumstances the NPPF prevails giving great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty. It suggests that major development should only be permitted where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated citing three particular circumstances to be considered.
- 5.9 First is the consideration of need and the effects of permitting or refusing the scheme. At the heart of the Core Strategy is the delivery of housing to address local housing needs, particularly affordability in the rural areas of the District. A Housing Needs Survey for the Parish, albeit dating back to 2009, indicates a high level of need. As the major settlement in the Parish, Hurst Green would be the most sustainable location for such provision. At this stage the scheme is presented with an indication of 30% of units to be provided for “local needs” albeit the precise nature, type and tenure remains the subject of negotiation and more up to date evidence from the Council. This has been requested as part of the pre-application process.
- 5.10 Within the proposed housing policies is a requirement for housing suitable for older people. A number of single storey dwellings are included to satisfy this requirement, both for local needs and sale. The latter reflecting feedback from the public exhibition.
- 5.11 In dealing with the effects of not permitting the scheme, will simply result in the local

needs housing not being delivered on this site.

- 5.12 Secondly is whether the scheme can be developed outside of the designated area i.e. beyond the AONB boundary. For this we consider that the most sustainable solution is to deliver the development needs of Hurst Green within the village. A consideration of the other sites put forward, for example through the SHLAA, suggests limited alternatives, none of which would deliver the same number of dwellings.
- 5.13 On the third issue requires consideration of any detrimental effect upon the environment and to what extent it can be moderated.
- 5.14 A request for a Screening Opinion under the EIA Regulations was submitted to the Borough Council in June 2012 suggesting that the proposals do not require formal EIA suggesting that the effects of the proposals upon the designated assets (such as the AONB, Stonyhurst College and the Conservation Area) could be dealt with through a number of specific reports and appraisals. RVBC duly replied confirming that EIA would not be required.
- 5.15 A number of reports have been prepared to consider the virtues of the proposals in the context of these landscape and environmental designations. Within the Landscape and Visual Assessment the appraisal identified that the application site is relatively well contained on three sides by existing built development and the topography with the ground rising to a crest to the north of the site limited extent the Zone of Visual Influence resulting in very localised landscape effects.
- 5.16 A Design and Access Statement explains how the proposals for the site emerged through an iterative process of consultation and consideration of site specific issues such as topography, access and neighbouring uses. It explains how Hurst Green has developed over time from through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and more recent expansion of the twentieth century. This explains a number of design styles and has informed the layout and types of housing to include stone facing and stone/slate roofing as well as the style of doors and windows and rainwater goods.
- 5.17 A Transport Assessment has been prepared which indicates that the effects of the

scheme upon the local road network will be minimal. Surveys included within the Assessment have resulted in proposals for a traffic management scheme, although these will be considered alongside current proposals for a school zone with an associated 20mph mandatory limit. Car parking associated with the housing meets local authority standards and the School has agreed the principle of the replacement car parking.

- 5.18 Based on the foregoing we consider that the proposals are consistent with the principles of sustainable development and that there are no overriding factors which give the Council concerns and therefore planning permission should be granted.

