

**Planning
&
Housing Assessment**

Waddow View
Clitheroe
Lancs.

On behalf of
The Huntroyde Estate,
Clitheroe Auction Mart Co Ltd
Mr J Taylor, Ms Sarah Howard
& Ms Samantha Howard

June 2014

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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNER

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement supports the reallocation of the subject site from Greenfield to residential on the Huntroyde Estate/Clitheroe Auction Mart Co Ltd/Mr J Taylor; Ms Sarah Howard and Ms Samantha Howard land located off Waddington Road and Kirkmoor Road, Clitheroe which lies immediately beyond the existing urban boundary but within a 1km distance of Clitheroe Town Centre.

1.2 It takes into account the appeal inspector's comments:

'In summary, the presumption in favour of sustainable development prevails over all matters except for highways. Even then, there is the option to relook at the Waddington Road access to ascertain the level of development on the appeal site that could be served from this single access, with 'bus/emergency access retained to connect to Kirkmoor Road.'

1.3 This revised scheme is presented addressing that sole outstanding concern of the Inspector regarding access.

1.4 This statement therefore provides the planning and housing case for the proposed residential use of the site and provides a detailed review of the site including the Secretary of State's and appeal inspector's comments, a review of relevant national, regional and local planning policy guidance and an assessment of the proposal against the relevant housing policy related issues.

1.5 This report is prepared jointly by Dickman Associates Ltd, planning consultants in Bolton and Trevor Dawson & Co, Chartered Surveyors with offices in Blackburn, Bolton and Burnley.

1.6 This statement is set out as follows:

Section 2: Site Description
Section 3: Planning Application History
Section 4: Planning Policy
Section 5: Discussion
Section 6: Socio economic context
Section 7: Conclusions

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2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site extends to 9.2 ha or thereabouts of open land, shown edged red on the location plan included in this report and lies on the western side of Clitheroe town centre. Access is off Waddington Road with bus and emergency access in one direction only via Kirkmoor Road. It is a relatively flat site with a brook crossing it and abutting existing housing on 3 sides and has the cemetery with open land on the fourth side, furthest from the town. The area to the north has open vistas over the adjacent countryside which is divided from the site by the River Ribble.
- 2.2 The site is in a highly sustainable location adjacent to all the facilities of Clitheroe, Ribble Valley BC's major settlement and exceptionally well located for multi modal transport options as detailed in the highways part of this report, prepared by dtpc.

3.0 PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

- 3.1 The site is open countryside greenfield and has not been previously developed.
- 3.2 A previous application for 345 dwellings and a crèche was made following a pre application meeting was held on 31.7.12. On 4.9.12 RVBC provide a formal response that the site was not currently policy compliant being outside the settlement boundary and their preference would be for site promotion through the development plan rather than an application. Putting that 'in principle' objection aside the LPA then set out the requirements for contributions on a range of items including affordable housing, highways, education, POS and wheelie bins.
- 3.3 On 5.9.12 a public consultation exhibition was held at St Mary's Centre, Church Street, Clitheroe and details of the responses were submitted with that application.
- 3.4 Planning application (LPA no 3/2012/0913) was refused on 15.2.13 on grounds of visual impact and prematurity. An appeal was lodged on 12.3.13 for an appeal by public inquiry.
- 3.5 RVBC did not defend the appeal as on 3.7.13 John Macholc, Head of Planning at RVBC emailed PINS stating:

'I confirm that that the Local Planning Authority has decided to withdraw its objections to the appeal and no longer offer witnesses to defend the appeal.'

'The decision to withdraw from the appeal was taken in the light of a review of the planning balance, recent Inspectorate decisions, ministerial advice and new evidence available to the Council since the original decision.'

- 3.6 Nevertheless the inquiry proceeded in August and September 2013 with the appellants putting their case and with third parties making their statements. The matter was called in by the Secretary of State (SoS) and the decision letters from the Inspector and the SoS were issued on 23.1.14. In brief summary the appeal was dismissed on the ground that the Inspector and SoS did not consider Kirkmoor Road suitable for access for part of the proposed scheme though on all other counts the scheme was acceptable.

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3.7 At para 303 of the inspector's decision he states:

'In summary, the presumption in favour of sustainable development prevails over all matters except for highways. Even then, there is the option to relook at the Waddington Road access to ascertain the level of development on the appeal site that could be served from this single access, with 'bus/emergency access retained to connect to Kirkmoor Road.'

3.8 This application does precisely as the Inspector recommends and relooks at the Waddington Road access and level of development that could be served by that whilst retaining bus/emergency access along Kirkmoor Road. Section 5 of this report discusses the details of this proposal and sets out the main findings of the Inspector and SoS and demonstrates how these are still met and addressed by this application.

3.9 A meeting was held with John Macholc of RVBC on 16.6.2014 when a revised masterplan was tabled and detailing how the current proposal has addressed the appeal inspector's decision. A press release and public consultation leaflet was sent to the key officers and councillors at RVBC, third parties and those who made comments on the previous application/appeal and to the properties in the area adjoining the site, during the middle of June 2014. This aspect and responses are detailed in the statement of public consultation prepared by Latitude included with this application

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1 The NPPF was adopted on 27.3.12 and came into immediate effect. It cancelled the previous PPGs/PPSs including 1,2,3,7,13 and 25. Its underlying premise is a presumption in favour of sustainable development unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The underlining premise is planning for growth to provide sustainable homes, economic growth and jobs. LPAs should plan positively for new development and make every effort to meet housing, business and other development needs and wider opportunities for growth. They should be flexible and responsive regarding the supply of land for key sectors, including housing; foster economic growth; recognise the likely range of benefits; and not impose unnecessary burdens on development.

4.3 Paragraph 7 of NPPF defines 'sustainable development' as having 3 elements – economic, social and environmental.

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- 4.4 Paragraph 14 of NPPF states that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay and where the development plan is silent, absent or relevant policies are out of date permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of so doing would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in NPPF as a whole or if NPPF indicates development should be restricted.
- 4.5 In addition LPAs are encouraged to address barriers to investment and understand business needs in their own and adjacent areas.
- 4.6 The NPPF requires LPAs to:
- Allocate an additional 20% of sites for housing in the initial 5 year housing requirement to give choice and competition, if have had consistent undersupply of housing.
 - Housing sites still need to be available, developable, deliverable, sustainable, accessible and viable
 - To bring empty dwellings back into use.
 - Provide a wide choice of homes.
 - Consider use of large extensions to existing settlements or new settlements and whether these would need new Green Belts round them.
 - reappraise previously allocated land and produce the SHLAA and Economic assessments together
 - ensure viability and deliverability of sites
 - they should not seek such a scale of obligations and policy burdens as to threaten the viability of a development
 - schemes should be providing acceptable returns to willing landowners and developers to enable delivery of schemes
 - Promote sustainable transport
 - LPAs should give positive weight to schemes for economic and housing development.
 - The presumption on planning applications should be in favour of sustainable development and finding ways of overcoming substantial planning objections where practical and consistent with the Framework.
 - Planning conditions should only be attached when they can be shown to be necessary, relevant, enforceable, precise and reasonable
 - Planning obligations should only be sought if the following tests are met: necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms; directly relate to the scheme; and fair and reasonably relate in scale to the kind of development.
- 4.7 Para 47 of NPPF sets out the requirements LPAs have to fulfil in terms of significantly boosting housing supply:
- *use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;*
 - *identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable¹¹ sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should*

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increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;

- *identify a supply of specific, developable 12 sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;*

4.8 Para 49 of NPPF states:

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 local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The Development Plan

4.9 The statutory development comprises the saved policies of the RVBC Districtwide Local Plan (June 1998). The NPPF, which as the most recent document (March 2012) should be given full weight. The RVDLP saved policies arose from the Lancashire Joint Structure Plan which itself was superseded by RSS which has now been abolished thus the RVDLP is over 15 years old and thus should be afforded very limited weight.

Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan

4.10 This document (RVDLP) was adopted in June 1998 and the housing policies therein refer to being in accordance with the Lancashire Structure Plan 1991-2006. Given the age of this document and the fact the Structure Plan end date was almost 6 years ago limited reliance should be given to it. The RVDLP is the adopted plan and the application site is shown as an unallocated site outside the urban boundary of Clitheroe on the Inset 5 plan Clitheroe (Centre). This in itself demonstrates the site is the closest to the town centre and its strong sustainable credentials.

4.11 Policy G1 sets out the criterion against which all applications for development will be assessed. It states: *'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.'*

4.12 Policy G2 of the RVDLP states:

Within the plan area developments will be mainly directed towards land within the main settlement boundaries. These are defined on the proposals map. The following **scale of development will be approved:**

ii) Clitheroe - consolidation and expansion of development and rounding off development. In all cases this must be on sites wholly within the settlement boundary and must be appropriate to the town's size and form;

4.13 Policies G3 and G4 refer to scale of development appropriate to existing settlements and G5 seeks to restrict residential development proposals outside the main settlement and village boundaries to those which are small scale or meet various exceptions.

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- 4.14 Policy H2 deals with development outside settlement boundaries and the criteria against which proposals will be assessed. In particular it states: *'Residential development will be limited to residential development intended to meet a proven local need'* and also *'development should be appropriately sited and landscaped and that scale, design and materials used must reflect the character of the area, and nature of the enterprise.'*
- 4.15 RVDLP planning policies relating to affordable housing contributions are H19 and H21. Both were saved policies carried forward to the LDF process. Policy H19 relates to affordable housing on large sites within the main settlements and refers to negotiating for the inclusion a proportion of affordable housing on such sites, subject to the policy H21 criteria which required details of the tenure arrangements and who might occupy in terms of target group for local need and a justification that the proposed properties were suitably match to the local need group.
- 4.16 Policy ENV3 requires development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape area and reflect the local vernacular in style, scale, features and building materials. It states:
"Proposals to conserve, renew and enhance landscape features, will be permitted, providing regard has been given for the characteristic landscape features of the area. "
- 4.17 Policy ENV6 requires the best and most versatile agricultural land be safeguarded unless it can be shown the need for development overrides agricultural considerations.
- 4.18 Policies ENV7 and ENV13 relate to protection of wildlife and landscape features respectively and prohibit development that would have an adverse effect on either unless mitigation measures are proposed. An Ecology Report and Tree Report accompany this proposal.
- 4.19 On development sites of 1ha+ Policy RT8 requires the provision of adequate and useable POS. Policy RT18 promotes the improvement of public rights of way/footpaths and bridleways.
- 4.20 Policy T1 on transport sets out the matters to which the LPA will attach considerable weight in consideration of development proposals. These include the availability and accessibility to multi modal transport – buses, trains, access on foot and by bicycle not just by private car. Policy T7 relates to the provision of adequate parking and servicing space on schemes.

Draft RVBC Core Strategy (RVBC CS)

- 4.21 The RVBC CS has been through various consultations of which the latest is current and due to end on 7.7.14. It proposes Clitheroe as the main recipient of additional housing being the main settlement in the borough and taking account of the proposals for housing of adjacent councils most notably Preston's allocation on the border with Longridge the second largest settlement in RVBC.
- 4.22 It proposes a large site at Standen which will account for less than half the housing allocation for Clitheroe. Of the overall new housing for the borough about 41% is proposed for Clitheroe.

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- 4.23 The Examination in Public (EiP) was held in January 2014, as a result a series of major modifications to the plan were requested by the Inspector for the purpose of addressing the soundness of the Plan.
- 4.24 The CS following a Special committee meeting is currently out for consultation from 23.5.14 for 6 weeks until 7.7.14. The EiP Inspector will then consider any comments received and advise whether the EiP needs to be re-opened.
- 4.25 The current timescales anticipate the examination into the CS to be autumn if the EiP is not reopened but later probably Dec2014/Jan2015 if it is.
- 4.26 The modifications currently out for consultation now propose 280dpa over the plan period, a split of 'other settlements' into 2 tiers based on an analysis of their sustainability attributes and a reallocation of the 'Longridge adjustment' to the tier 1 'other settlements'. This gives a residual number of houses for Clitheroe of 240.

Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley

- 4.27 The RVDLP policies and the Affordable Housing Memorandum of Understanding have now been superseded by the Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley (June 2011) which is the policy currently adopted by the council and treated as a material consideration in planning applications. It provides a definition of affordable housing:

“housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford to occupy homes generally available on the open market”.

- 4.28 It also details how affordable homes for sale should be treated:

‘To ensure that homes are affordable to the majority of people living in Ribble Valley. They should be sold at a price that does not exceed:

- **3.5 times the mean of an individual’s gross annual earnings**
- or
- **2.9 times the gross median household earnings of those households identified as being in housing need in the parish.**

This is based on the calculation commonly used by mortgage lenders when assessing the household’s suitability for a mortgage.’

- 4.29 It also discusses how affordable for rent or for shared ownership should be treated. Before setting out the affordable housing thresholds:

‘The Council will negotiate the provision of affordable housing on all qualifying housing developments as follows:

In Longridge and Clitheroe on housing developments of 10 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.5 hectares or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings) the Council will seek affordable housing provision at 30% of units on the site.

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In all other locations in the borough on developments of 5 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.1 hectares or more irrespective of the number of dwellings) the council will seek 30% affordable units on the site.

The Council will only consider a reduction in this level of provision to a minimum of 20% only where supporting evidence, including a viability appraisal fully justifies a lower level of provision.'

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT - SHLAA

- 4.30 The 2009 SHLAA was undertaken by RVBC to identify the general location and amount of sites for potential future development.
- 4.31 Site 023 forms part of this proposal and was a high scoring site with a score of 78. The intervening parcel which joins these two whilst submitted was not included in the 2009 SHLAA.
- 4.32 The SHLAA was reviewed in 2013 and the subject site scored 90 out of 100 for sustainability though the scoring system made no allowance for the fact there was an application/appeal in progress with the landowners working cooperatively and thus assumed because there was more than one landowner it would not come forward in the 0-5 year time period.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The appeal inspector concluded at para 299:

'The starting point in weighing the various factors is that the proposal would not conform to the DP. However, this is an old plan and in the absence of an up-to-date replacement the default position identified in the Framework prevails. Thus, as the site constitutes sustainable development there is a presumption in favour of the appeal scheme unless other material circumstances dictate otherwise. This position would stand even had there been a 5-year supply of readily available housing land and, of course, the Council did not argue prematurity, accepting that, even with the strategic site at Standen, more land would need to be released to meet the latest canvassed CS figure of 250 dpa'

In regard to the development plan whilst the CS EiP has commenced the plan is still not adopted and consultation on further modifications is still being sought, thus the only adopted plan is old and out of date thus NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless other material considerations dictate otherwise still prevails.

- 5.2 It must be noted that this position stands even if there is a 5 year housing supply. Until as recently as May 2014 RVBC have not achieved a 5 year housing land supply. The May 2014 report to the Planning and Development committee includes the latest calculation showing 5.16 year supply based on 280dpa and using Sedgfield. The 280dpa figure has been agreed by planning committee on 8.5.14. It states the build out rates to be 100 dpa per site whereas on the sites currently

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under construction the build out average rate is 30 dpa per site. Therefore we do not consider the rates RVBC using are robust.

5.3 NPPF sees 5 years HLS as the minimum and the general view emerging from appeal decisions and development plan inquiries is that really 6 years supply is required to be sure.

5.4 At para 300 the Inspector concluded:

'As for the other material circumstances, the one relied on by the Council in a reason for refusal was the harm to the rural landscape. However, the appeal site has no special designation and, while there would be some harm, there is acceptance that some countryside around Clitheroe would have to be forfeit. Inevitably, this means that the boundaries of the Town will need to be revised. Put briefly, the modest harm to the countryside landscape, its usage and public and private views thereof do not constitute a cogent reason for dismissing this appeal.'

Whilst Appleton Group's report, included separately as part of this application, will provide a detailed response to issues of landscape and visual amenity. We reiterate the application site has no special designation and that in order to meet the growing need for housing as the Inspector (para 54) noted:

'There are no known sizeable sites within the existing Town boundary or any significant brownfield sites available outside.'

RVBC and the Inspector concurred with the need for settlement boundaries to be amended to accommodate the additional housing.

5.5 The site is Grade 3 agricultural land based on DEFRA classifications and thus in regard to RVBC policy ENV6 this is of moderate value and used for grazing not crop production. Its proximity to the centre of the main settlement and high sustainability credentials for development its need for development overrides the agricultural need.

5.6 On numerous occasions throughout his decision the inspector comments on the fact that this site abuts RVBC's main settlement (Clitheroe) and is the best and most sustainable site available ahead of any of its competitors. Furthermore in the 2013 SHLAA this site scored 90 out of a 100 and the appeal inspector states at (paras 215 & 276) that this:

'...locationally is the most sustainable site available.'

'It is in fact locationally the best site'

At para 22 the Inspector notes:

'...it is accepted by the Council that, to meet the housing requirement in Clitheroe, the current, tightly drawn, settlement boundary will have to be revised.'

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At para 28 the agreed facts are noted:

'...the site is in a sustainable location and the settlement boundaries for Clitheroe divined in the LP are out of date and will need revising to provide sufficient land to meet the projected housing requirement figure for Clitheroe. For these matters the Framework prevails. Prematurity is not a matter the Council now defends.'

5.7 Para 301 of the Inspector's decision deals with the highway matters:

'The highway objections are, however, in my professional view compelling. Whereas the access to Waddington Road would be acceptable, there are unresolved issues along Waterloo Road.'

He then goes on at para 303 to add:

'Even then, there is the option to relook at the Waddington Road access to ascertain the level of development on the appeal site that could be served from this single access, with 'bus/emergency access retained to connect to Kirkmoor Road.'

This is precisely what the applicants have done and dtpc's report accompanying this application explains the detail of how this has been addressed. In short the current proposal proposes up to 275 dwellings of which 82 will be affordable and in line with RVBC policy on housing need the requisite percentages of homes for the elderly (both in the affordable and market categories) and affordable for first time buyers and key workers amongst others are proposed as part of this application. The access to the site for general traffic will be Waddington Road, whilst Kirkmoor Road will be used for bus and emergency vehicles only.

5.8 At para 302 of the inspector's decision letter he concludes:

'Looking at other matters, there are minor to moderate objections on a number of fronts such as ecology, flooding under the railway bridge and some broader sustainability aspects. However, taken individually or cumulatively they are not sufficient to outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Even if combined with the landscape harm this would not tip the balance in favour of dismissal. This is the most sustainable undeveloped site, immediately outside the present Town boundary of the largest and most sustainable Town in the Borough. As such, common sense dictates that it will almost certainly be developed some time in the future.'

Separate reports on ecology, landscape/visual amenity and FRA are included with this application. A further ecology survey has been carried out in June 2014 and no protected species have been found.

5.9 The current scheme indicative masterplan layout strikes a balance between access, landscape, housing requirements and design against the backdrop of planning policy. So the existing public footpath across the site is retained as a landscaped corridor with a children's play area included adjacent to it located toward the middle of the site as there is an existing play area already to the east at the end of Chester Avenue. Pedestrian/cycleway links are provided through and around the site maintaining the links between the town centre and riverside.

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Landscaping around the southern site boundary with Back Commons Lane has been enhanced and the existing trees and hedgerows have been retained as far as possible. Indeed as the inspector noted at para 281 the ancient hedge is 'not a show stopper'. The brook will include SUDS and within the overall scheme the houses will be built to the appropriate standards now required by Building Regulations.

Upon occupation the aim is to achieve recycling and composting rates above the borough average and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The homes will be fitted with A rated gas and electricity appliances. Grey water recycling and renewable energy will also be incorporated in the scheme.

The proposed development will not result in the use of any natural resources considered to be in short supply. These matters are included in more detail in the D&A statement with this application.

- 5.10 The 3 roles to sustainable development set out in NPPF para 7 are - economic, social and environmental.

The inspector noted at para 100 that:

'The appeal site would deliver the most sustainable opportunities for economic growth in Clitheroe Town Centre. Its location is unrivalled in terms of proximity to existing services and transport infrastructure. The site ranks highly in market demand terms, when compared to alternative sites in the Ribble Valley and within a ward, which has capacity, both in terms of jobs and income growth.'

He considered due consideration had been had to social infrastructure noting that: *'..there is nothing to suggest that local people would be unduly disadvantaged.'* (para 105)

In environmental terms he concluded:

'In terms of environmental sustainability - being adjacent to an existing built up area and able to take advantage of any existing services and infrastructure - developing this site scores extremely heavily. It is in fact locationally the best site and, as such, with no special landscape or other designation, it is really not a matter of if the site will be developed, but more a matter of when. On undeveloped sites in the Borough, the opportunities for multi-modal travel on the appeal site are unparalleled in and around Clitheroe.' (para 276)

Section 6.0 of this statement sets out the socio economic context, whilst the environmental issues on trees, landscape, ecology and flood risk assessment are in other reports included with this application.

6.0 SOCIO ECONOMIC CONTEXT

OVERVIEW

- 6.1 Clitheroe has recently (March 2013) been named by the Sunday Times Best Places to Live Guide as one of the most desirable places to live in Britain and in

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the top ten in the North West. Particular features highlighted are the number of independent shops, transport links, natural beauty, state and independent schools, cultural life, low unemployment figures and lowest crime rates.

6.2 Over the last twelve months the government has introduced several initiatives to boost construction in the housing market:

- The “Get Britain Building” scheme helping to unlock sites that are stalled.
- The New Homes Bonus offering real incentives for Local Authorities to encourage new development.
- Help to Buy schemes on new build.
- The Build to Rent fund, a grant offered in the affordable housing guarantee scheme.
- Funding for Lending.

6.3 With the exception of Funding for Lending, none of these initiatives apply to the existing housing stock, only new build.

6.4 The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Residential Market Survey (May 2014) reports that the housing market is remains robust. It further reports that the imbalance between supply and demand still persists.

6.5 The Borough has a population of 57,600, an increase of 5.9% between 2001 and 2011. In the North West region the population grew by 4.8% in the same period. The number of households in the Ribble Valley, with an average household size of 2.38, is 24,000 (2012 LCC) an increase of 8.1% from 2001, one of the highest percentage increases in the Lancashire Authority area. Interim population projections covering the period 2011 to 2037 show an increase in the population of the Ribble Valley of 3.9%. Growth in Clitheroe is at the heart of the borough’s economy, being the largest service centre in the borough, and a vibrant market town with excellent communications via road and rail. Unemployment is well below the national and regional average and the borough as a whole has the lowest level of deprivation in the Lancashire region. Average earnings in the Ribble Valley are ahead of the British average when measured by place of residence.

6.6 The economic benefits of development are widely acknowledged to fall into several categories. Direct employment within the construction sector in the supply chain. Potential to increase and diversify the population by giving a mix of housing that is attractive to younger working age people in skilled occupations and family households. Ribble Valley has a strong concentration of high value employment in the aerospace sector and against adjoining boroughs higher than average employees in manufacturing. Locally this will sustain the economy and boost essential services to enhance spending power.

In addition the New Homes Bonus (NHB) payment for this scheme of 345 dwellings including 30% affordable would accrue to just over £2.75 million over 6 years to RVBC.

6.7 Market information has been provided by Trevor Dawson and Co (TDC), chartered surveyors. They advise that the development will attract predominantly

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family purchasers and first time buyers in the immediate area, but with scope to bring people into the area due to the proximity of the rail link. Market research suggests a range of properties, mainly apartments, townhouses, semi and detached, two, three and four bedroom family homes with gardens, and off road parking. There are a number of terraced properties in the Town Centre where owners would be looking to climb the ladder and yet stay within the Town Centre and all its attractions and amenities.

- 6.8 There are a number of sites around Clitheroe currently being considered for residential development, as part of the Core Strategy options. These vary in size but all are outside the current urban boundary. We have produced a plan showing how our clients' site and the 3 largest alternative sites (Henthorn 1 and 2, which now have outline consent following recent appeal decisions, and Standen) overlap with the existing facilities and shape of Clitheroe. What is instantly apparent is that our clients' site is an infill and rounding off of the town and is closest to all the existing facilities.
- 6.9 Standen is the strategic site anticipated in the Core Strategy and the members have keen interest to approve the application subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement. We understand from press reports that it is currently subject to a Judicial Review. If this site fails, or its members are reduced, then Ribble Valley Borough Council continue to have a gaping hole in their housing policy.

Para 277 of the Inspector's Decision Letter notes:

"...Standen is better located in terms of access to the strategic road system but it is a far less sustainable location in broader transport terms."

The subject site at Waddow View in market terms is likely to be far more popular than its competitors and offers a wide range of housing appropriate to a Town Centre location and as such is more readily deliverable by the private sector.

Waddow View is one of the most sustainable sites in Clitheroe that will contribute toward the existing retail/service/employment within the town. It is accessible to multi modal travel being the closest site to the bus/rail interchange. It is outside the current urban boundary but sufficiently close to be rounding off infill that while greenfield is not Green Belt nor AONB. Thus in terms of NPPF it is a sustainable development that should be approved without delay and could deliver homes within the 0-5 year time period.

POPULATION

- 6.10 Ribble Valley has a resident population of 57,600 (2012). The three main settlements are Clitheroe (15,026), Longridge (8,240) and Whalley (4,078).
- 6.11 Clitheroe is the main economic and administrative centre of the borough with 15,026 inhabitants (2010) and 6,737 households. 61.3% of the population of the borough is of working age (16-64 years). In the Ribble Valley borough 20% of the population is aged 65 and over, with a higher than average 30% of the population aged between 45 and 64. This is projected to increase in the next 15 years. 78% of those of driving age own a car, a sign of a wealthy population.

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- 6.12 It is estimated that between 2011 and 2021 the population in the Ribble Valley, as stated earlier, will increase by 5%, and the number of households is projected to grow by 7.8% over the same period.
- 6.13 Clitheroe is a significant tourist destination and since 2004 there has been an overall increase in tourist numbers. Boosted by the improvements in road and rail infrastructure, more than 3.61 million people visited the Borough in 2012, up 110,000 compared to the previous year.

THE ECONOMY

- 6.14 There has been a strong rate of increase in employee numbers in the Ribble Valley over the decade to 2008. The source of jobs is heavily influenced by the presence of BAE at Samlesbury and as such has a higher proportion of manufacturing jobs than adjoining Local Authorities. In contrast, the Ribble Valley has the lowest proportion of employment in the service sector, which is against the national trend. Agriculture and construction are two of the top five employers in the district, and with the exception of BAE Systems, the remaining top employers are based in Clitheroe.
- 6.15 The Samlesbury site forms part of the Lancashire Enterprise Zone which was awarded by the government in 2012 to promote high value employment generation in the advanced engineering and manufacturing sectors. It is expected to create up to 6,000 high value jobs and become one of Europe's most important advanced engineering complexes, and has recently been boosted by the provision of government funds to accelerate works on site.
- 6.16 There is a higher rate of self employment in the Ribble Valley 18.9% compared to the North West figure of 7.8%. The Ribble Valley Employment Land and Retail Study 2008 identified that Ribble Valley has a significant above average proportion of businesses with less than 4 employees when compared to regional and national figures. Coupled with above average business start-up and survival rates, this illustrates the entrepreneurial qualities of the Ribble Valley.

At para 273 the Inspector states, "On economic matters, the Council's aim is to promote growth and the delivery of new homes is consistent with this. It would create temporary jobs during construction and some 80+ permanent jobs thereafter. The objectors' scepticism appears to be borne of some misunderstanding and is not a credible argument in my judgement."

- 6.17 Over half the working age population commutes out of the borough each day to work. The Review of the Ribble Valley Economic Strategy undertaken in 2012 provides an economic strategy promoting sustainable growth to stem commuting out of the area to work.
- 6.18 The Ribble Valley exports its managerial and professional residents and imports skilled trades to work in its industrial sector. Clitheroe is acknowledged as the key service centre and therefore it can accommodate the largest and growing population, requiring more family housing of a modern nature to sustain its economy.

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- 6.19 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (Draft June 2013) indicates that there is notable capacity to undergo continued economic growth. The Office of National Statistics data on job density for 2010 states there are 0.99 jobs per working age person in the borough, against the North West region of 0.74. The figure of 0.99 represents an increase from the 0.81 recorded in 2006 before the start of the economic downturn. The SHMA acknowledges the main drivers of the housing market are the resident population and the local labour market.
- 6.20 Data highlighted within the Ribble Valley Employment Land Study 2013 indicates that whilst Ribble Valley's employment was initially impacted by the recession, there has since been a sharp recovery. Job numbers in 2012 (34,500) were well above those of 2007 (28,700) over the plan period this is forecast to increase by 1,600 jobs.
- 6.21 Clitheroe is the main economic centre in the Ribble Valley and as such is an important indicator of competitiveness with adjoining towns. The Local Competitiveness Index 2010 shows that many of the localities that have experienced the greatest decline in competitiveness are more rural in nature. Ribble Valley has recorded the greatest fall in rankings, 62 places, since 2009. The report states that whilst many of the cities have benefitted from urban renewal programmes, there have been fewer resources allocated to maintaining the competitiveness of more rural areas.
- 6.22 An important barometer of competitiveness is the provision of new housing stock that will appeal to and attract younger and skilled people to live in the area as well as improving the choice of homes for existing residents. It is acknowledged in the draft SHMA that housing provision plays a key economic role.
- 6.23 Clitheroe by far accommodates the largest goods based retail economy in the Ribble Valley, approximately £59 million, (Ribble Valley Employment Land and Retail Study 2008), however it is showing signs of decline as retailers report a fall in shopper numbers and a decline in trade. This could be compounded in coming years as nationally consumer spending is curbed by the recession of the last few years. For its size the town captures a very low market share of retail spend from the catchment, and is overshadowed by the retail economies of Preston, Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington and Nelson. Its retail economy is dominated by spend on convenience goods at its four supermarkets and is the main reason shoppers visit the town. More people appear to be visiting the Town Centre as a necessity rather than for an experience. Retailers' main concerns are the poor variety of shops and lack of national retailer representation to draw more people in.
- 6.24 Clitheroe has a vital role in terms of service provision to its hinterland of the surrounding rural areas. The 2008 Study referred to above found that a further 14,919 sq. m. of retail floorspace was required in the Borough by 2018 for it to maintain its existing market. Most of this, it stated, is required in Clitheroe. Development is vital across all sectors to underpin its ongoing sustainable growth.
- 6.25 The average gross household income in Ribble Valley is higher than any other district in Lancashire and ahead of the GB average when measured by place of

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residence. Individual income for full time employees resident in Ribble Valley was £32,859 (ONS Annual Survey of House and Earnings) higher than the North West region at £28,850.

- 6.26 The Ribble Valley Employment Land Study 2013, as part of the evidence base for the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and LDF, recognises that the forecast projected jobs growth in the borough may have additional implications with regard to the housing growth requirements over the planned period and is important to aid economic growth.

THE RESIDENTIAL MARKET

- 6.27 As stated earlier the Sunday Times Best Places to Live Survey (March 2013) placed Clitheroe as one of the top ten places to live in the North West, based upon a range of elements; transport links, quality of schools, low crime rate and unemployment.
- 6.28 Generally house prices in the Ribble Valley are higher than the national averages. The lack of development in the Ribble Valley, largely due to the moratorium in the early 2000s, has ensured that the market and prices remain relatively buoyant. Ribble Valley has the highest proportion of household spaces with detached dwellings occupying 31.5% of all household spaces (2011 Census).
- 6.29 Clitheroe has a wide range of existing housing from traditional terrace to large detached and semi-detached properties with low density occupation, and generally is of good quality. The draft SHMA highlights the changing profile of residents and the tenure profile, most notably the growth in the private rental sector, and emphasizes the need to provide a range of housing.

The Ribble Valley has the least number of empty homes in Lancashire (www.emptyhomes.com). This is confirmed by the draft SHMA which states that the vacancy rate in 2011 in Ribble Valley was estimated to be 3.6% compared to 4.2% across the region.

- 6.30 The average house price in the Ribble Valley in Q3 2012 was £226,021 (Department for Communities and Local Government) the highest in Lancashire, with detached properties at an average of £316,060, which showed a decrease in sale prices from the previous 12 months.
- 6.31 The Ribble Valley Borough Local Plan (Key Statement HI) recognizes affordability as an issue and emphasises the importance of bringing forward a wide range of affordable family housing, and that Ribble Valley Borough Council will seek affordable housing provision at 30% of units on housing developments within the settlement boundaries of Clitheroe and Longridge. This is endorsed by the SHMA that currently affordable housing needs cannot be met unless new development comes forward.
- 6.32 It is acknowledged by the SHMA that entry levels on price and rent in Clitheroe are high, and that the housing market gaps analysis shows the nature of the housing ladder in a particular locality. An analysis of the gaps between each tenure shows that there is a large income gap between the social rented sector

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and market entry. This indicates that intermediate housing priced within this gap could potentially be useful for a number of households in Ribble Valley.

6.33 Market information collected from rightmove.co.uk (May 2014) confirms comparable properties in the area as follows:

4 bed detached:	Henthorn Road, Clitheroe	£344,995
	Low Moor Gardens	£289,995
	Woone Lane, Clitheroe	£227,950
3 bed detached:	Moorland Crescent, Clitheroe	£235,000
	Mearley Syke, Clitheroe	£234,950
3 bed semi detached:	Princess Avenue, Clitheroe	£204,950
	Woone Lane, Clitheroe	£199,950
	Montgomerie Gardens, Clitheroe	£190,000
	Faraday Avenue, Clitheroe	£169,950
3 bed terraced:	Woone Lane, Clitheroe	£139,950
2 bed terraced:	Hawthorn Place, Clitheroe	£190,000
	St Mary's Street, Clitheroe	£155,000

6.34 This highlights the disparity between the price of an existing smaller turn of the century terraced Town Centre property at Hawthorn Place and a typical three bedroom new terraced and semi-detached property at Montgomerie Gardens and Woone Lane.

6.35 Government initiatives, with the exception of the Funding for Lending scheme, only apply to new build and not to the existing stock as outlined above. It is widely acknowledged that the Help to Buy policy is a key driver for young families in skilled employment.

6.36 The SHMA indicates that 89.0% of households in the Borough are resident in market accommodation without subsidy.

6.37 This climate has ensured continued interest from national private housing developers in opportunities in the Ribble Valley, evidenced by the commencement of development on the following schemes in the last twelve months. These, however, supply a backlog of pent up demand over the last few years rather than correcting the imbalance.

1. Low Moor Gardens (Taylor Wimpey)
2. Montgomerie Gardens, Woone Lane (Miller Homes)
3. Ribble Meadows, Henthorn (Taylor Wimpey).

6.38 We have contacted the developers of the schemes underway at Low Moor and Montgomerie Gardens who report good levels of interest. Rowland Homes Phase II scheme at Barrow Brook is now built out and only 9 units remain of the 36 plots, 2 units per month, 30 per annum.

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- 6.39 Economic drivers will dictate the deliverability of these schemes over the next few years rather than assumptions or projections.
- 6.40 In comparison to other areas of the borough such as Whalley, Clitheroe still has a disproportionately low number of units coming forward in the next five years, given its economic significance and increasing population. The scheme will offer the opportunity to deliver a range of family homes, affordable and starter homes in detached and semi-detached formats, which are conveniently located within easy walking distance of all the Town Centre amenities, and in a ward which is lacking new housing.
- 6.41 The scheme will also deliver the needs of an increasingly elderly population who choose to downsize and require a range of modern, practical housing.
- 6.42 This scheme is of a size which will enable developers to bring forward an exceptional level of high, medium and low density housing on a phased basis. The development will attract family purchasers and first time buyers, generally from the immediate area but with scope to bring people from the wider area. This is reflected in the SHMA which identifies a range of market and affordable properties are required over the next fifteen years.
- 6.43 The excellent accessibility of the transport network in the Town Centre will create further economic and employment opportunities to stem the flow of commuters out of the borough. Additional accessible housing adjacent to the Town Centre creates further guaranteed spend in the town and the use of its amenities.

At para 100 of the Inspector's Decision he states, "The appeal site would deliver the most sustainable opportunities for economic growth in Clitheroe Town Centre. Its location is unrivalled in terms of proximity to existing services and transport infrastructure."

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.44 The procurement of new housing is acknowledged to contribute to all aspects of the economy, both in the short term through employment and construction, and in the longer term with significant local economic benefits.
- 6.45 Construction activity in the residential sector is a barometer of the local economy and can bring forward significant output in terms of regeneration and the delivery of affordable housing. All sectors of the economy benefit; the retail economy through increased expenditure, the construction sector and the Local Authority through increased revenues via rates and the Homes Bonus in the key main economic centre of Clitheroe.

At para 274 the Inspector comments, "There is also the new homes bonus, which some residents see as a bribe. It is not, however, something underhand, but an open incentive to councils and does deliver funding into the local economy. This is a benefit. Lastly, everyone agrees that the Town Centre needs a boost and this would help. As such, this scheme would fulfil the economic role.

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- 6.46 Expenditure on goods and services equates to an average of £5,386 per person residing in Ribble Valley (Oxford Economics – Estimates in 2011 Prices – March 2013). By multiplying this figure by both household size (2.38 people) and the number of households to reside on Waddow View, (345 houses), it is estimated that the scheme would generate total household expenditure of £3.5 million per annum.
- 6.47 Based upon BCIS Residential Build Costs, construction expenditure associated with this scheme could be as much as £22 million, a significant contribution to the local economy.

At para 101 the Inspector noted, “Construction expenditure associated with the scheme could be a significant contribution to the local economy, even if many materials, construction workers etc come from outside. Thereafter the development could bring £4.4 million per annum into the economy. The RVBC strategy is to grow the economy for all and to attract the younger population to stay in the Borough. The appeal scheme would assist in furthering both these strands.”

- 6.48 We estimate, assuming a build period of 5 years, that 166 construction jobs (full time) will be generated, which when converted into direct or indirect employment will create approximately 55 permanent new jobs.

At para 102 the Inspector states, “ Despite the pessimism expressed by Objectors, the Ribble Valley Employment Land Study 2013 states that there has been a sharp recovery in employment within the Borough, and job numbers are well above 2007 levels. Whereas some of the 490 working age residents of the site would undoubtedly work remote from Clitheroe, including on the BAE site, some would work locally, some would move to the appeal site to be nearer their existing jobs and some would create new jobs within the local area.

- 6.49 It is acknowledged (Lancashire Telegraph 17th June 2013) that Clitheroe Town Centre is facing a number of pressures which reflect not only the wider national retail scene but also the lack of opportunity for a range of speciality and national retailers. The mix of retailers is crucial for the long term character of the town, which will only fundamentally change if there is enhanced spending power.
- 6.50 This uplift in local expenditure will increase the trading performance of existing shops and services in the locality and provide opportunity for new facilities to be sustained, both locally and within the wider borough. This will help to sustain larger retail centres in Ribble Valley, such as Clitheroe, as well as enhancing appeal to retail investors.
- 6.51 New housing attracts an economically active population and will have direct benefits for the vitality of the Town Centre.
- 6.52 Based upon the working age population of Ribble Valley, the development of housing at Waddow View could provide approximately 385 working age residents in the area.

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- 6.53 The subject application at Waddow View in market terms is likely to be far more popular than its competitors and offers a wide range of housing appropriate to a town centre location and as such is more readily deliverable by the private sector.
- 6.54 Waddow View is one of the most sustainable sites in Clitheroe that will contribute toward the existing retail/service/employment within the town. It is accessible to multi modal travel being the closest site to the bus/rail interchange. It is outside the current urban boundary but sufficiently close to be rounding off infill that while greenfield is not Green Belt nor AONB. Thus in terms of NPPF it is a sustainable development that should be approved without delay and could deliver homes within the 0-5 year time period.

At para 103 the Inspector noted, "The current level of new development in Clitheroe is lower than other areas, given its size and economic importance. A lack of new homes will hamper future growth and prosperity. Clitheroe is the largest retail centre in the Borough and it requires an uplift in expenditure to provide new sustainable facilities. The appeal site is readily available and deliverable quickly and effectively. The building of affordable homes is crucial to the economic strength of rural communities. The development would create social amenity with open space and extended public links to the Town Centre.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The site is immediately available without the need for further land acquisition beyond the red edge.
- 7.2 It is in 3 ownerships who are presenting this as a joint application.
- 7.3 It will provide a rounding off and balancing of Clitheroe on a Greenfield site that is neither Green Belt nor AONB.
- 7.4 The subject site ranks highly in market demand terms when compared to alternative sites in the Ribble Valley.
- 7.5 The development of this site maximises the opportunities for sustainable economic growth in the Town Centre.
- 7.6 It is the nearest undeveloped site to Clitheroe town centre with all its facilities. It will lend support to those facilities in line with revival of the economy as set out in NPPF.
- 7.7 It is compliant with NPPF in social, economic and environmental terms.
- 7.8 It is highly accessible to a range of well established existing services and modes of transport.
- 7.9 The issue on which the appeal was dismissed i.e. the use of Kirkmoor Road for general access to the application site has been addressed and as the appeal inspector noted (para 302) and we concur:

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'This is the most sustainable undeveloped site, immediately outside the present Town boundary of the largest and most sustainable Town in the Borough. As such, common sense dictates that it will almost certainly be developed some time in the future.'

That time is now.

For these reasons the application should be recommended for approval.

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