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Land adjacent to Spout Farm, Preston Road, Longridge

Full planning application for a proposed residential development of 34 new dwellings and associated works.

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PWA Planning is retained by Mr D Lambert to prepare and submit a full planning application for a proposed residential development on land adjacent to Spout Farm, Preston Road, Longridge.

1.2 The site currently benefits from an extant outline planning consent under planning application reference 3/2013/0782, however due to a slight increase in the number of dwellings it has been necessary to apply for full planning permission (as opposed to a Reserved Matters submission).

1.3 This planning statement, alongside a review of the site’s history and relevant planning policies at both a local and national level, provides a description of the proposed development together with an appraisal of the planning merits of the scheme. This statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- 1APP Form and Ownership Certificates;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Drawn Information:
 - Location Plan (no. 2586 100)
 - Site Layout (no. 2856 014 Rev B)
 - Site Perspectives (no. 2856 013)
 - Streetscape of Terrace Blocks (no. 2856 009)
 - Streetscape of Terrace Blocks (no. 2856 008)
 - Streetscape of Terrace Blocks (no. 2856 007)
 - Streetscape of Terrace Blocks (no. 2856 006)
 - House Type 4 (no. 2856 005)
 - House Type 3 (no. 2856 004)
 - House Type 2 (no. 2856 003)
 - House Type 2 (no. 2856 002)
 - House Type 1 (no. 2856 001)
- Drainage Strategy;
- Ecological Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Assessment;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Landscape Scheme;
- Transport Statement.

1.4 In summary, for reasons identified in this statement it is considered that the proposed development is entirely appropriate and consistent with national and local planning policy. It will be demonstrated that the scheme represents sustainable development and that full planning permission ought to be granted.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site extends to approximately 1.8 hectares and sits to the north of Spout Farm, a former farmstead (no longer involves any agricultural production). The original farmhouse (to the south) is occupied as a dwelling and is associated with Spout Farm Nursery, a small scale garden centre and nursery, and which utilises part of the area of hard-standing which stands to the east of the main buildings.
- 2.2 The site comprises an area of largely open land standing generally to the north and east of the farmhouse, and which is used principally to provide a depot and base for Treeclear, a tree surgery business operated by the applicant. Treeclear utilise the barn (north east of the farmhouse) and some of the parking areas in connection with their business. Moreover, they also use large parts of the land to the north (the application site) as their depot and where numerous large vehicles and plant equipment is stored. The remainder of the application site is rough, unused land which has in the past been used to grow Christmas trees. Note that the application site excludes the farmhouse and garden centre / nursery and part of the hard-standing.
- 2.3 The red edged location plan submitted with the application clearly illustrates the extent of the site, whilst the aerial image provided at Figure 1 shows the site in the context of its wider setting. The site includes all of the Treeclear business, which will be relocated from the site.

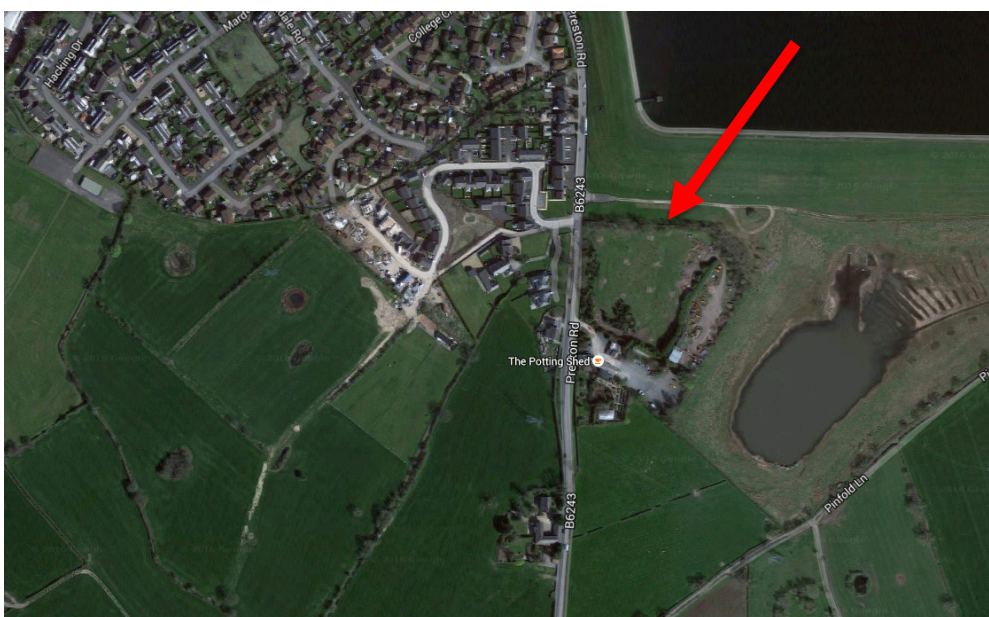


Figure 1: Aerial image of the site within its wider setting (not to scale)

- 2.4 As is evident from the aerial photograph above, the site lies close to the edge of the settlement of Longridge and as per application reference 3/2013/0782, it is clear that the Council accept the site as a logical extension to this settlement, especially when coupled with other residential developments

planned for the area (for example as per application reference 3/2011/0316). Further still, in the Council's emerging Housing and Economic Development DPD, specifically the Proposed Interim Settlement Boundaries for Longridge, the application site is included within the new, defined settlement boundaries for Longridge and albeit this document has yet to be formally adopted, it clearly highlights the Council's intention of including this land, as it represents a logical rounding off of Longridge, moving forward.

2.5 To the north and west of the site are the existing and former reservoirs, which provide a significant degree of containment to the site and which prevent further encroachment of development in that general direction. This physical and visual containment of the reservoirs makes this site somewhat unique and help to ensure that it will very much be viewed as part of the intended residential development to the west, rather than the more open land to the east.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The application site currently benefits from outline consent under application reference 3/2013/0782 which is for a proposed residential development of up to 32 dwellings and on the basis of this consent, it is considered that the principle of residential development on the site has already been accepted by the Council. This consent was granted in January 2014 and for the sake of completeness, the description of development under this application is as follows:

‘Development of 32 dwellings including affordable housing and alterations to existing access following site clearance’

3.2 There are a number of historic applications relating to the site’s use as a nursery and hence are not considered relevant to the proposals.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Following the consent of application reference 3/2013/0782 the applicant and their appointed architect have sought to review and refine the site layout and house types and the result of this is that the scheme now proposes two additional units. It is for these reasons why a full application has been necessary, as opposed to a Reserved Matters submission.
- 4.2 It is now proposed to redevelop the site into 34 no. new dwellings, to include a total of 10 no. affordable units, and providing a mix of 3, 4 and 5 bed houses and 2 bed bungalows, together with an improved access to Preston Road, new internal access roads, children's play area, bus stop provision along Preston Road and significant landscaping. Indeed, save for the increase in units and change to the layout, the ethos underpinning the scheme, which is to create a high quality and sought after housing development reflective of the built vernacular, remains unchanged from what was proposed under the outline consent.
- 4.3 Vehicular access to the site is proposed via the existing site access to Preston Road (as per the outline consent), with improvements to widen and adjust the geometry of the access to ensure a safe and convenient site access to serve the new development of 34 dwellings, together with the retained dwelling and commercial elements of the garden centre. As was accepted under the outline approval, the amended access provides suitable visibility splays based on the posted speed limits on Preston Road and this involves no significant alterations to the frontage of the site, other than for some pruning works to the overhanging trees and reduction in height of a short section of hedgerow. The new access road provides for a rumble strip on entering the site, a right turn into the retained farmhouse, a staggered left turn into the residential development with the road continuing to then serve the retained nursery / garden centre. Traffic calming measures are proposed on entering the internal access road off Preston Road.
- 4.4 Car parking is shown on the submitted site layout at an appropriate rate and comprise a mix of garages and off-road parking. In total the number of parking spaces shown is 91, of which 66 of these will be provided within private garages whilst the remaining 25 will be off-road parking, which for a total number of dwellings of 34 represents a ratio that accords with good practice on residential parking requirements.
- 4.5 Save for the bungalows which seek to meet the needs of the elderly in accordance with local policy, the detached, semi-detached and attached houses are to be 2 ½ storey units, which is considered appropriate to the scale of existing properties within the site's vicinity.

- 4.6 A detailed Landscape Scheme, inclusive of planting schedule, is included with the application which seeks to soften and generally enhance the development. Tree and shrub plant species are considered native to the area and as such will blend in well with the surrounding landscape, whilst also serving an ecological enhancing role. In addition, the layout identifies an area of formal play space for children and which is located within the western core of the site where surveillance from dwellings is high.
- 4.7 As can be seen from the submitted visuals and site perspectives, walls of the properties are to be stone and will have slate roofs, features which are considered to reflect the built vernacular and it is hoped that specific materials can be dealt with by an appropriate planning condition.
- 4.8 The affordable offer as part of the development is 10 units, which is 30% of the total dwellings and will likely be sold at discounted sale (33% discount of the open market value). A further two bungalows will be offered for sale on the open market to meet the needs of elderly residents. It is proposed that the affordable provision as well as the provision for the elderly will be the subject of a s.106 legal agreement in due course.
- 4.9 Moreover, prior to the submission of application reference 3/2013/0782 the scheme was the subject of detailed pre-application negotiations and discussions with the Council's officers, as well as those from Lancashire County Council highways; all of which resulted in a very positive response and these discussions are still considered relevant to the submitted scheme.

5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 In assessing the planning merits and acceptability of any particular development, it is necessary to consider the relevant policies of the Development Plan together with other material considerations, which include national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other supplementary planning guidance, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

5.2 Given that the principle of the proposed development has already been accepted under application reference 3/2013/0782, it would seem superfluous to provide a full planning assessment, however due to changes in local planning policy since this consent was granted, most notably the adoption of Ribble Valley's Core Strategy and the proposed increase in dwellings on the site, a brief assessment of those updated planning policies considered relevant to these changes is provided below.

Development Plan

5.3 The statutory Development Plan for the application site comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which was adopted in December 2014 and the Proposals Map (1998) associated with the former Local Plan, which is still in place until such time as the plans which form the Housing and Economic Development DPD are adopted.

5.4 The Ribble Valley Proposals Map (1998) identifies the site as open countryside (Policy ENV3) and outside the settlement boundaries of Longridge (Policy G5), although these Local Plan policies have now been replaced by Core Strategy Policies DS1 and DMH3 respectively.

5.5 Despite being designated as open countryside (Policy DMH3), it was accepted under application reference 3/2013/0782 that given the site's close proximity to existing dwellings at Longridge, whose settlement boundaries were considered out of date, the development would not result in isolated homes, but would represent a sustainably located residential development which should be welcomed. This argument was further strengthened by the fact that, during the determination period of this application the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Most of these arguments are still relevant today and as noted above, given the Council have accepted the principle of housing on the site, subsequent paragraphs will purely address relevant Core Strategy policies which were not formally in place during the determination of application 3/2013/0782.

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy;
- Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development;

- Key Statement H1: Housing Provision;
- Key Statement H2: Housing Balance;
- Key Statement H3: Affordable Housing;
- Policy DMG1: General Considerations;
- Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations;
- Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection;
- Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation;
- Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside & the AONB;

5.6 Key Statement DS1 outlines where growth will be focused in the borough: Longridge is identified as a principal settlement where the majority of new housing will be delivered. The proposed development is located on the periphery of Longridge, whose settlement boundaries are severely out of date, close to other residential developments and therefore accords with the sentiments of this statement. Indeed, the proposals represents a scheme far preferable than sporadic development in more rural areas or smaller 'Tier 1' and 'Tier 2' settlements. In addition, the site's suitability for housing in the context of this key statement is further reinforced through its recognition in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Schedule (October 2015) as a site which can deliver 32 units and thus makes a noteworthy contribution to the Council's 5-year land supply. Moreover, this matter of principle is already well established through the earlier outline consent.

5.7 Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development looks to mirror Paragraph 14 of the NPPF which sets out sustainable development principles which are to guide both authorities and developers, and encourages authorities to develop proactive relationships with applicants in order to ensure that, where possible, applications are approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposals subject to this application are both well considered and respectful to the surrounding vernacular. Based on this and the more extensive guidance outlined in the NPPF it is concluded the proposals constitute sustainable development and therefore adhere to this statement.

5.8 Key Statement H1 focuses on housing provision and states that all new homes in the borough will be delivered in line with the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Further to this it also states that the council will adopt a 'plan-monitor-manage' approach, to continually monitor the assessment, and hence ensure a rolling five-year land supply is achieved and maintained. As set out in Section 4 of this Statement (Planning History), outline approval for 32 dwellings on the application site was granted in 2014 and is included within Ribble Valley Borough Council's identified supply of deliverable sites within a 5-year period. The site can therefore be seen as playing a key role towards ensuring the borough's 5 year supply of housing is met and in granting consent for a revised scheme

of 34 units, which represents a much more realistic and deliverable scheme for the site, this much needed contribution will be secured.

5.9 The subsequent Key Statement H2: Housing Balance, outlines that planning permission for new residential developments will only be granted when the proposal is in line with local demand as evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA (2008) acknowledges that detached housing is in demand, as are smaller types of housing, which is currently in undersupply in the borough and which will in turn the needs of first-time buyers and lower income households. It is clear from this document that the Council generally seek to promote a mix of housing within new residential developments and therefore the proposed development of 34 new dwellings at Spout Farm, which are to comprise a diverse mix of detached, semi-detached, attached houses together with detached bungalows, is considered to meet this requirement in full.

5.10 The submitted scheme fully accords to the requirements of Core Strategy Key Statement H3 (which expects schemes of this size and in this location to deliver 30% affordable homes on-site and with 15% elderly provision): it seeks to provide 10 units of affordable housing on site, which are to be sold at discounted sale (33% off the market value). A further five bungalows will be offered for sale on the open market to meet the needs of elderly residents. It is proposed that this affordable provision will be the subject of a s.106 legal agreement and indeed a draft Heads of Terms of such an agreement, including the breakdown of affordable provision, will be submitted in due course.

5.11 Moreover, such matters have been the subject of detailed discussions with the Council's Housing Strategy officer and the aforementioned provision is considered to match fully with the Council's requirements for affordable housing.

5.12 Policy DMG1: General Considerations provides detailed development guidance with respect to design, access, amenity, the environment and infrastructure, which all seek to ensure that all future developments are of the highest possible quality. Each aspect is considered below.

5.13 The design of the proposed scheme is thought to be well-considered and of a high standard that provides a quality addition to the local housing mix whilst being reflective and sympathetic to local character. The design follows on from the principles established under outline consent reference 3/2013/0782 and is of a density commensurate to surrounding developments, particularly to the north and west where nearby housing is generally concentrated. The walls of the properties are to be constructed of stone whilst the roofs will be slate, materials which are harmonious to the traditional style of properties in Longridge and the surrounding area. The proposed layout and associated house type drawings, detail the applicant's intention to develop a site which sits well within the surrounding

area and which creates homes that are suitable in the context of the site's landscape character and local distinctiveness. On that basis, in the context of policy Key Statement EN2 Landscape, the proposed new dwellings are in accordance with the Development's Sentiments regarding design and therefore draws support from this particular aspect of this policy.

5.14 With regards access, the new and improved access off Preston road is considered to represent a safe and convenient point of access and egress, with suitable visibility splays and indeed this access arrangement has already been accepted by Lancashire County Council Highways Authority during the determination of the aforementioned outline consent. New access points for both Spout Farm and Spout Farm Nursery are also proposed which are considered to be an improvement to the existing situation.

5.15 In terms of amenity, the nearest dwelling to the application site is the original farmhouse at Spout Farm. Other residential properties stand to the west but are separated from the site by Preston Road. The scheme has however been designed to sit well within the boundaries of the site, such that the new properties will be largely invisible to views from other domestic property, save for the farmhouse. However, even in the case of the farmhouse, the site layout demonstrates that sufficient separation distance has been retained to ensure that there is no adverse impact whatsoever on residential amenity here. Internally the layout also respects residential amenity through adopting *at least* minimum separation distances and avoids any potential overlooking or indeed any other inter-visibility issues. Areas of informal open amenity space are provided within the layout as is a formal play area, which is to sit within the western half of the site. Private amenity space is also amply provided for, with all properties maintaining private gardens of a size relative to the property size to which they relate. Overall, the scheme has been well-designed so as to maintain an overall sense of spaciousness and tranquillity and is considered to correspond well with the site's semi-rural location. Accordingly, the scheme adheres to the requirements of Policy DMG1 with respect to amenity and is consistent with best practice and guidance on residential layouts.

5.16 In the context of the section of the policy which refers to environmental considerations the site does not sit within any local or national landscape/ecological designation. The application is supported by a comprehensive ecological survey which considers whether the proposals will have an impact on local habitats; this is considered further in the technical considerations section (6) of this Statement.

5.17 Policy DMG2 outlines further strategic considerations and is to assist in the interpretation of the Development Strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. The policy also states that within the Open Countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities

of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. As mentioned previously it is anticipated this has been achieved within the submitted package of drawn information.

5.18 There will be no requirement for the clearance of woodland and nor will there be any substantial impacts on existing trees located within or on the boundary of the development site. Nevertheless, to provide confidence in the proposals the application is accompanied by a tree survey which details the state of the onsite trees and how, if at all, the development will impact them. The outcome of this survey is discussed later in the report however it is thought, based on its conclusions, that the proposal adheres to policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands.

5.19 Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection places great emphasis on the protection and avoidance of significant harm to the borough's important landscape or landscape features. As with previous policies, it is considered that the supporting information, with respect to ecology, trees and the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, provides enough evidence to prove that the scheme can be delivered with minimal impact on the site's landscape setting. The detailed landscape and visual impact assessment, which as is common, reviews the existing characteristics and landscape setting of the site and assesses the overall impact of the new development, concluding that the application site, having regard to landscape and key views, is suitable for the proposed development and identifies opportunities to mitigate any adverse impacts. The proposals are considered to have a short term effect on views from the surrounding areas, but eventually an improvement in the amount of vegetation and landscape features, as proposed by Urban Green in their detailed Landscape Scheme, may be perceived. The proposed development is considered to be in context with the landscape character of the land, based on the site's location at the urban fringe and is considered to not significantly alter the landscape character of the surrounding areas.

5.20 Moreover, with the site being included in the HLAS and previously achieving outlined consent it is believed that site has already been adjudged as acceptable against such policies and that the value of the land in terms of Landscape and Townscape is not seen as a significant constraint to development.

5.21 DME3: Sites and Species Protection and Conservation, as with DME2, seeks to protect elements of any proposal site which have notable value, with a focus on relevant ecological designations such as Special Protection Areas and SSSIs. Further to this it also places emphasis on the protection of priority habitats. The development site is not covered by any local or national ecological designations and the accompanying ecological assessment has outlined various mitigation measures which ensure the site would not be at contravention of the aforementioned policy.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

5.22 The NPPF was adopted in March 2012 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As per Chapter 2 of the Framework and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it is to form a material consideration in planning decisions.

5.23 Sustainable development is broadly defined in Paragraph 7 of the Framework as having three dimensions; namely economic, social and environmental. The golden thread running throughout the NPPF is the Government’s presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 14) whereby proposed developments which correctly balance the requirements of economic, social and environmental issues should be granted permission unless there are overriding reasons that would suggest that permission should be withheld. Paragraph 14 states that: -

“For 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 this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

5.24 It has been demonstrated in the preceding Section that the proposed development is consistent with relevant Development Plan policy and as a matter of principle, the proposed development would fully accord with the guidance as set out in the NPPF.

5.25 In summary, the proposed redevelopment of the site in the manner proposed, offers the opportunity to deliver a significant number and good mix of high quality residential properties to the area, in line with borough’s 5-year land supply requirements whilst at the same time supporting a longstanding local business (Treeclear to be relocated should consent be granted) and therefore offering considerable economic benefits as well.

5.26 Considering the sustainability of the site itself, as was established in the outline consent, it sits in close proximity to the main service centre of Longridge and is immediately adjacent to a high frequency bus route providing ready non-car access to Longridge and to the major settlement of Preston to the south

west. The site contains considerable elements of previously developed land and the remainder of the site is of very poor visual quality save for the peripheral tree belts which are to be retained and enhanced as part of the development. It stands adjacent to the boundary of the settlement in a location immediately opposite an area of open countryside which now benefits from planning permission for residential development and which as a result means that this site forms a clear and logical rounding off of the settlement in this location and would ensure a logical boundary to the settlement into the future. It is considered that, even disregarding the other material benefits of the development (affordable housing provision and regeneration benefits), the application site would therefore represent a sustainable form of development and moreover would clearly appear as a logical and natural extension of the built form within this area of Longridge. Moreover the visual impact of the development would be largely positive, given that the majority of new development will be sited well within the site and not directly adjacent to the roadside and the scheme would see the retention and significant enhancement of the mature tree belts which visually contain the site. To the other side the landform of the existing and former reservoirs helps to almost completely mask the new development from wider views from the north and east. As a result the scheme will have at worst a very minimal visual impact on the character of the area, and considering the removal of the existing tree surgery business and the enhancements to the landscape, will almost certainly result in a positive visual impact.

5.27 It is therefore considered that, as a matter of principle, the residential redevelopment of the site would represent appropriate and sustainable development when considered against the requirements of NPPF and those of the emerging Core Strategy document. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 14, such factors are considered to outweigh any conflict with adopted development plan settlement and housing policy.

Emerging Housing and Economic Development DPD

5.28 The Council are currently in the throes of preparing a Housing and Economic Development DPD which once adopted, will include a series of maps setting out future land allocations for the borough's principal service centres, Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements and will generally assist in the determination of planning applications. Once this DPD is adopted, the Local Plan Proposals Map (1998) will be entirely superseded, and together with the adopted Core Strategy, will form the statutory Development Plan for the borough.

5.29 At the present time however, the DPD is purely a material consideration in the determination of this application. That being said, it is clear from the (draft) DPD's associated Proposed Interim Settlement

Boundaries for Longridge map, that the application site has been included into the revised settlement boundaries for Longridge (see Figure 2 for an extract of this map).

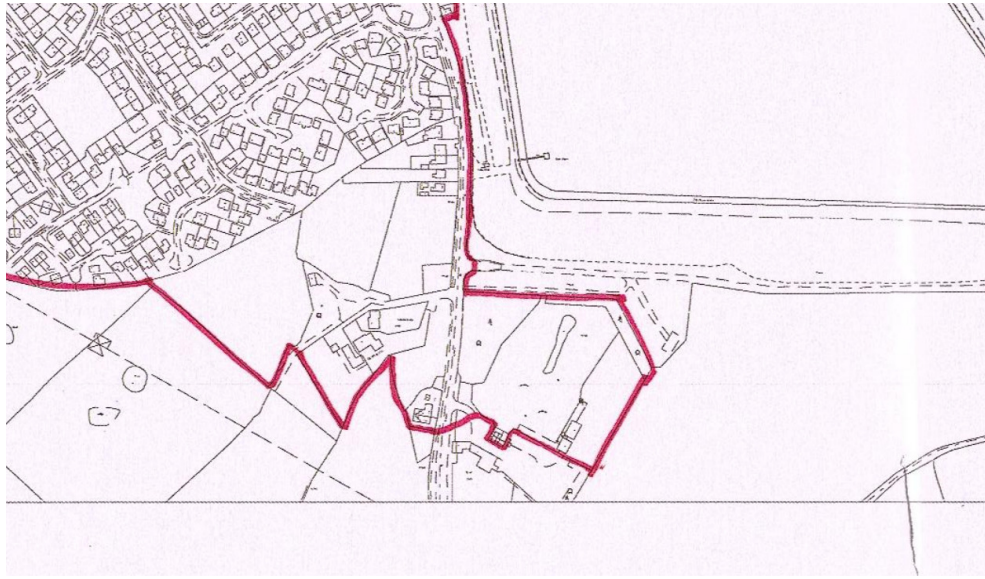


Figure 2: Proposed Interim Settlement Boundaries for Longridge extract, clearly showing the site within Longridge’s new settlement boundaries

5.30 It is clearly evident from this document that the Council believe the application site to be a logical extension to the existing settlement boundaries of Longridge and as such, a residential development on the site such as the one proposed under this application ought to be supported given that it falls within the urban confines of Longridge and outside the fairly restrictive open countryside designation.

6 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 It is not considered that the proposed development raises any other material considerations which would have any adverse impacts on interests of acknowledged importance and would therefore influence the determination of the application.
- 6.2 In addition, the site does not contain any listed buildings, does not fall within a conservation area, and by reference to the Environment Agency's flood risk map, does not fall within an area subject to flooding.
- 6.3 All information relating to ecology, trees, flood risk, drainage, highways and ground contamination which was submitted and approved under application reference 3/2013/0782 has been updated accordingly to match the revised scheme and a copy of the requisite plans / reports are provided with this application.
- 6.4 Reading these reports as a whole, it is not considered that there are any technical matters which would preclude the grant of planning permission for the proposed development.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 PWA Planning is retained by Mr D Lambert to prepare and submit a planning application for a proposed residential development and associated works on land adjacent to Spout Farm, Preston Road, Longridge.
- 7.2 The application follows on from an outline consent which was granted in 2014 for a residential development of up to 32 dwellings and proposes to develop a total of 34 no. residential units, comprising a mix of detached, semi-detached, attached houses and detached bungalows on a piece of land to the north-east of the dwelling associated with the former farmstead attached to Spout Farm, following the relocation of Treeclear, together with detailed access and landscaping works.
- 7.3 The proposals are considered consistent with the Development Plan and guidance set out in the NPPF it is clear that the benefits of the development far outweigh any negative impacts. In particular, the provision of new family housing, in a sustainable location on the edge of the second largest settlement in the Ribble Valley and an identified key service centre, is entirely consistent with the promotion of sustainable development enshrined in NPPF and the desire to boost significantly the supply of housing. Moreover, the application provides material benefits including a significant contribution to the provision of affordable housing in the Borough as well as further improvements to site accessibility.
- 7.4 In accordance with the guidance in NPPF paragraph 14, The supporting information supplied with the application demonstrates that the development can proceed without any significant adverse effects and without harm to interests of acknowledged importance.
- 7.5 Given that the scheme is consistent with relevant development plan policies and with the concept of sustainable development as set out within the NPPF, and has carefully addressed the points raised at pre-application stage, it is considered that the scheme should benefit from the presumption in favour of such development as set out at Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.