

Robert Major
Principal Planning Officer
Ribble Valley Borough Council

Via Email with Hard copy to Follow

15th March 2017

Dear Robert,

Application 3/2016/0990 – Land to the North of Ribblesdale View, Chatburn

I write further to your email dated 3rd March 2017, which is included as an attachment, comments made by Colin Hirst, Head of Regeneration & Housing as well as addressing other issues relating to the application.

We agreed that Rural Solutions would respond in writing following a detailed review of the comments made in the context of our application submission. Our response is set out below:

Locational Strategy

The comments acknowledge that the Core Strategy focuses a significant amount of development to the Borough's Tier 1 villages which are acknowledged in the Core Strategy to be the nine most sustainable of the Borough's 32 villages.

The location of development within Chatburn is therefore acknowledged in the comments to be sustainable in principle. This conforms to our assessment in our submitted Planning Statement.

Whilst the comments do not assess the sustainability of the location of the site specifically we are very firmly of the view that the site is in a sustainable location, as set out in our planning submission. The site is situated between an existing residential area and a railway line and will not lead to unrestrained encroachment into countryside.

As noted in section five of our statement the site is sustainably located in relation to services and transport links.

It can therefore be reasonably considered that the site and development proposed is sustainable in principle and should be considered in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (and Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement 2).

Need for Development in Chatburn

As noted in our Planning Statement the delivery of up to 18 new dwellings, including affordable housing in line with requirements set out in local policy, will contribute to the growth of Chatburn and introduce families into the village to support facilities such as the school, shops and the village hall. It will also support the facilities and services of the wider area, including Clitheroe.

An analysis of Census data within the submitted Planning Statement demonstrates that there are a number of demographic challenges facing Chatburn which could impact upon the viability of the village in the coming years.

The data reveals that there has been a slight decrease in the overall population in the village during the intercensal period from 1,123 to 1,102 people. This equates to a decrease in growth of 1.8 % compared to a 6% increase in growth rate in the Ribble Valley.

Over the same period there has been a stark reduction in young people within the village with a 35% reduction in young people (aged 0-24 years) between 2001-2011 compared to the 15% increase when compared to the Borough. This is coupled with an increase in the number of people aged between 55 - 64 (20% increase) and 65 and over (8% increase).

With fewer children and an ageing population, the demographic changes will have a negative impact on the future vitality of the settlement and viability of the services such as the school, the public houses and the shops.

Analysis of dwelling types in the Parish shows that there is a high dominance of terraced housing, almost double the District average. The proportion of semi-detached, detached and bungalows are all significantly below the average for Ribble Valley, especially detached dwellings which is two thirds fewer than District average.

The low supply of detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings and bungalows makes it less desirable for households with children who want more space and gardens to move to the village. This application includes a mix of housing types and a number of three and four bedroom properties which are attractive to working families with children and will help to address the above-mentioned shortfall of family homes in the village.

There is a recognised need to deliver affordable housing and the proposal will deliver 30% affordable units in accordance with Policy DMH1. The proposal will also deliver three bungalows on the site which will be for older people. This will also accord with Policy DMH1.

It is therefore clear that our assessment of the settlement in the planning submission demonstrates a specific need for housing in the village, which can be met on the application site.

Level of Housing Delivery in Chatburn

The proposed development seeks 18 dwellings, while the comments received suggest that there is a residual requirement of 2 dwellings in Chatburn.

The NPPF is clear that Local Planning Authorities should **“boost significantly the supply of housing”** and the housing figures set out in the Core Strategy are acknowledged as being **a minimum requirement (para 6.2)**. As such, there should be no cap on the level of development coming forward providing it is sustainable, appropriate to the scale of the settlement and meets the housing need of the area.

KEY STATEMENT DSI: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY of the Core Strategy states that:

“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 development can be accommodated within the local area.”

It goes onto state that:

“Development that has recognised regeneration benefits, is for identified local needs or satisfies neighbourhood planning legislation, will be considered in all the borough’s settlements, including small-scale development in the smaller settlements that are appropriate for consolidation and expansion or rounding-off of the built up area.”

The proposal performs well against these policy extracts as it will create regeneration benefits in terms of addressing demographic trends, including the local need for housing which can rebalance an ageing population, including through the provision of locally needed affordable housing. Development can be easily accommodated within the local area and will consolidate the built up area of Chatburn by infilling land between Ribblesdale View and the railway line.

Overall the delivery of 16 houses above the revised residual housing figure for Chatburn included in the Core Strategy will have significant economic, environmental and social benefits for the village as noted above and in our Planning Statement.

In this context, it is our position that the proposal would not result in an adverse impact which significantly and demonstrably outweighs the economic, social and environmental benefits of development in this instance.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

Upon submission of the planning application it was noted that the Council had a 5.36-year supply of housing, based on the most up to date figure at the time (dated March 2016).

The comments provided advise that the most update to housing land supply figure is 4.99-years and therefore the Council are unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply (at the time of writing).

The consequence of this is that, in line with paragraph 49 of The Framework, relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date.

While it is suggested that the Council may have a five year supply in the near future at the moment it does not. The development of new housing can, and will, provide additional enhancement to local services to the community and village. Provided that there are no dis-benefits or harm arising which outweigh this enhancement, development should be brought forward as it will make a positive contribution to future vitality and improve sustainability overall.

Planning Inspectors have consistently taken the view that there should be no cap on the level of sustainable development and the Council should still seek to grant planning permission for schemes which satisfy the NPPF and local plan policies.

For example in appeal referenced APP/L3245/A/14/2229145 the Inspector noted that “sustainable development should not, I consider, be restricted solely because a projected allocation has been met, if otherwise found acceptable”. Additionally, in an appeal (referenced APP/T2350/A/13/2194601) at Clitheroe the Inspector noted that:

“205...Put bluntly, it is the failure to have an up-to-date plan that drives applications on sustainable sites. As such, even had the Council been able to show a 5-year supply of housing land the presumption in favour of granting planning permission for sustainable development would still prevail.”

On this basis, there is no reason to warrant refusal of the proposed schemes based on the existence of a five-year supply of housing given the significant benefits that would be delivered by the scheme, its contribution to sustainable development and the lack of any identified adverse impact which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of development.

Summary

In summary we note that:

- The proposed development is in one of the village’s most sustainable settlements as identified in the Core Strategy
- The proposed site has clearly defined boundaries and its development will not result in any unrestricted encroachment into the countryside or materially harm the village environs
- The NPPF calls upon local authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing and determine applications positively in accordance with its presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- A clearly identified need for housing in the village to ensure it has a sustainable and mixed population was presented in the application submission. The delivery of housing on this site will assist, together with any consented housing, to reverse the demographic trends which could render the village unsustainable.
- The contribution of the proposed housing to addressing the demographic trends and the provision of affordable housing are two of numerous economic, social and environmental benefits arising from the proposed development. All of these benefits are noted in our policy statement.

- Figures for housing delivery included in the Core Strategy are expressed as minimums and must be treated as such. Key Statement 1 supports development which has regeneration benefits and meets local needs, which this proposal is demonstrated to do.
- There are numerous and substantial economic, social environmental benefits arising from development proposal. It cannot be considered that the exceedance of the minimum housing requirement for Chatburn could be considered to both significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of development.

For the above reasons and those set out in our Planning Statement, we believe that the proposals fully comply with planning policy and should be approved as such.

Please let me know if any additional information is required.

Yours sincerely,



James Ellis
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