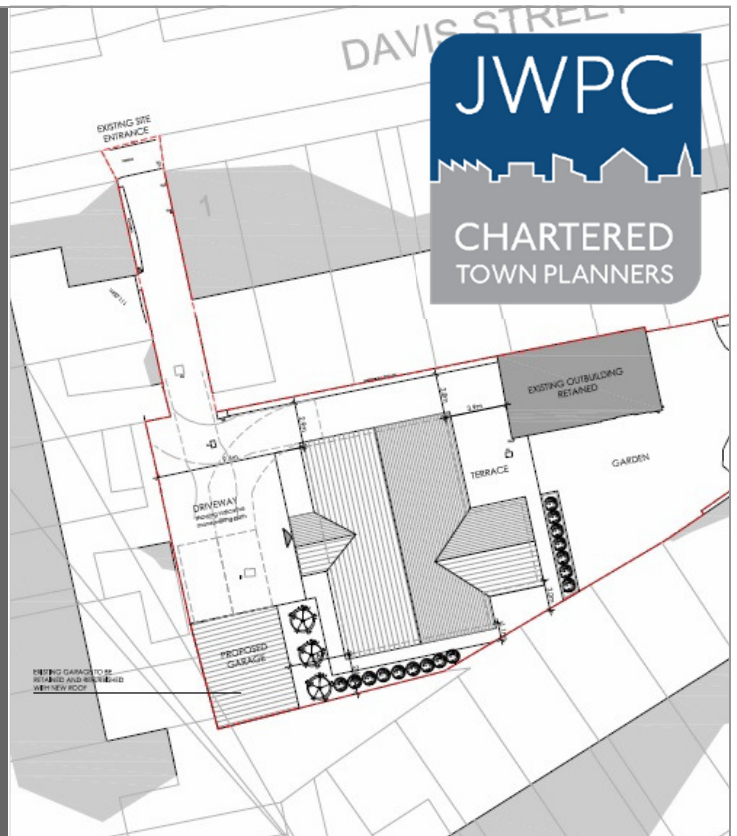


Land off Davis Street Longridge Lancashire PR3 3NL

Demolition of Existing Garages and Erection of a Single Dwelling



Client:
Mr and Mrs Jennings

Planning

Support

Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application by Mr and Mrs Jennings for the demolition of the existing garages and the erection of a single dwelling, to the land at the rear of Davis Street, Longridge. The application follows a formal pre-application enquiry with Ribble Valley Borough Council dated 14th September 2016 (Ref: RV/2016/ENQ/00121) and builds upon the feedback received.
- 1.2 The chapters below will provide a review of the site context, history and prevailing planning policy to justify why planning permission should be approved for the proposed development. In particular, it will focus upon the appropriate design, improvements to the amenity of neighbours and the reduction in the intensity of the use of the land.
- 1.3 In addition to the requisite planning application forms and OS site location plan, this Statement should be considered alongside the:
- Existing and proposed plans by Sunderland Peacock & Associates;
 - Heritage Asset Statement by JWPC Ltd; and
 - Bat Survey by Sunderland Peacock & Associates.
- 1.4 Bearing in mind the LPA's duty under Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is requested that the Agents (JWPC Ltd) are contacted in the first instance if any further information is required to enable a positive determination.

2. Site Characteristics

- 2.1 The planning application site is a 0.08 ha area of land, comprising 12 garages, a private workshop and a garden / patio, which is accessed from Davis Street, Longridge. The land is triangular in shape and adjoins the boundary of traditional Victorian terraced housing on three sides.



Figure 1: Photograph of the existing garages off Davis Street, facing east

- 2.2 As seen from the site location plan and photographs contained within this Statement, the existing garage buildings are positioned adjacent to neighbouring curtilage boundaries, abutting stone walls of approximately 3.2m and in sections 3.8m high. The majority of garages are of breeze-block construction with basic sheet roofing. The photograph at Figure 1 moreover shows a garage with a taller gable roof, providing internal floorspace, with a ridge height of approximately 5.9m.
- 2.3 The existing street scene plans submitted with the application demonstrate how the existing boundary walls currently prevent any significant degree of overlooking into the site from the dwellings which surround it. In places, such as the position of the taller garage, the existing buildings impact negatively on the quality of outlook from dwellings. Nevertheless, the density of development is consistent with that of the Victorian qualities of the area, where terraced properties directly face one another.



Figure 2: Photograph of existing garages off Davis Street, facing west

- 2.4 The submitted Heritage Asset Statement details how the site was historically stabling for a horse and cart haulage business established during the 19th century, until it was eventually redeveloped by the Applicant's father with the erection of garages in the early 1960s, leased for the parking of cars and storage. A decision was taken by the Applicant not to renew lease agreements in March 2016, due to their intention to seek planning consent. However, no further consent would be needed to re-instate the use and the site's active role over the past century is an important material consideration.
- 2.5 Indeed, whether in use for parking or storage, the land could require access by multiple vehicles, including larger vans, at any one time. A lack of any current planning restrictions also means that the site currently has the potential to generate noise and disturbance for surrounding residential occupants, at any hour, day or night. This would represent a bad neighbour use that would be difficult for the Local Planning Authority either to control or enforce against.



Figure 3: Photograph of the rear of a single storey garage, showing the existing boundary wall

- 2.6 The photograph at Figure 4 shows how access is taken from Davis Street, via a cobbled back-street gap between terraced properties. Other than the footway along Davis Street, there are limited sight-lines for oncoming pedestrians or traffic. Visibility is further restricted by on-street parking along the highway, which is essential for occupants of Davis Street, since none of the Victorian terraced properties benefit from private off-street spaces. A new use that reduces the level of vehicle movements would therefore be beneficial to local highways safety.



Figure 4: Photograph of vehicle egressing the access point onto Davis Street

3. Application Proposal

- 3.1 The planning application proposes the demolition of the existing garages and the erection of a single dwelling, establishing a use which is more compatible with the predominately residential nature of this part of Longridge. Given their intention to build and occupy the dwelling as their home, the Applicants have had significant input into the design, which has been carefully balanced by their professional team against requirements under planning policy.
- 3.2 The proposed design for the bungalow has paid regard to the scale of the existing buildings on the site and the relationship with surrounding residential uses. In particular, the layout and the position of openings has sought to minimise the potential for overlooking from neighbours, making the best use of existing boundary walls that obstruct views into the site.
- 3.3 Every effort has been made to increase the level of privacy both when inside the dwelling and enjoying the garden. Whilst in dense Victorian housing areas a degree of overlooking can normally be expected, future occupants will enjoy a good standard of amenity. Moreover, there is no reduction in the amenity of neighbouring occupants, who will actually benefit from the removal of some of the larger existing buildings which reduce the quality of their outlook.
- 3.4 The existing workshop building will be retained for storage and hobby use by the Applicants, forming part of the residential curtilage. A small garage to the south-west corner will also be retained for private use. This will be repaired and improved, adding a render finish, replacement roof and a new door.
- 3.5 A range of materials has been drawn upon to establish a modern appearance which reflects elements of the past. This includes natural stone and timber cladding to the building walls, Marley Eternit roof tiling which gives an appearance of natural slate, grey-coloured uPVC openings and black uPVC rainwater goods. Details and photographs of each material are contained on the approved plans.
- 3.6 Access will continue to be achieved via Davis Street and the proposed plans show the ability to provide two private off-street car parking spaces outside the retained garage. Swept paths have also been included to demonstrate how space remains available for manoeuvring, so that vehicles can achieve ingress and egress in a forward gear.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 Under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Longridge consists of the adopted Ribble Valley Core Strategy which, in addition to strategic policies, includes a number of Development Management policies. Relevant national planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

- 4.2 Key Statement DS1 sets the general development strategy for the borough and seeks to direct the majority of the housing requirement to the strategic site at Standen, and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. It goes on to state 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. Development that has recognised regeneration benefits will moreover will be considered in all the borough's settlements.
- 4.3 Through Key Statement DS2, the Council is committed to carrying forward a positive approach towards development which reflects the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' contained within the NPPF. It states that planning applications that accord with the policies of the Development Plan will be approved without delay.
- 4.4 Key Statement H1 sets out the housing provision target over the plan period (2008 to 2028) of 5,600 dwellings at an annual average of 280 dwellings per year. This reflects the evidence contained within the Housing Requirement Update by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners which expressed concern that a failure to deliver the homes needed within the Borough could prejudice the economic development of the Ribble Valley.
- 4.5 Key Statement DME3 sets out that proposals must consider the impact on protected wildlife and take necessary measures to investigate the potential for sites to provide habitat.
- 4.6 Policy DMG1 requires all developments to meet a number of criteria including (inter alia):
- Have a high standard of design;
 - Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses;

- Consider the layout, density and relationship between buildings.
- Be acceptable in traffic, access and parking terms;
- Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area;
- Be acceptable in terms of day-lighting and privacy;
- Be acceptable in terms of the natural and built environment;
- Protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings;
- Achieve efficient use of land and buildings; and
- Reuse previously developed sites over Greenfield land.

4.7 Policy DMG2 states that development proposals within the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley, and Tier 1 Settlements should consolidate, expand and round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built-up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.8 The 'Golden Thread' running through the NPPF is one of a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be adopted in the plan-making and decision-taking processes. For 'decision-taking' this means the following:

- Approving developments that accord with the Development Plan;
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, grant permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework.

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

- Planning should not simply be about scrutiny but 'instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places';
- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units... and thriving local places that the country needs;
- Seek high-quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

- Consider the different roles and characters of areas, including promoting vitality of our main urban areas;
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land);
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

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

4.10 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF relates to the suitability of new development, where it is likely to generate vehicular trips. Amongst other considerations, it states that plans and decisions should take account of whether development provides opportunities for sustainable travel. Moreover, development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

4.11 Meeting housing development needs is seen as a key principle of good planning, and providing new homes is paramount to proactively driving and supporting sustainable economic development. In this context, Paragraph 47 of the NPPF guides local planning authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing by identifying and updating annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements, with an additional buffer (of 5% or 20%¹) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

4.12 Paragraph 49 makes clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

¹ Buffer should be increased to 20% where there is a record of persistent under-delivery of housing.

- 4.13 Under Paragraph 56, the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Housing White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'

- 4.14 Published in February 2017, the Government's Housing White Paper sets out the future intentions and strategies for increasing the supply of homes within England. It should therefore be attributed some material weight in planning decisions.
- 4.15 Within the list of proposals set out within the Housing White Paper, the Government emphasises the need to maximise the contribution of housing from the re-use of brownfield land. Moreover, the Government seeks for Local Planning Authorities to make better use of land for housing by encouraging higher densities, where appropriate.
- 4.16 Support is also offered for developers within the White Paper by seeking to tackle unnecessary delays caused as a result of planning conditions.

5. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The planning application site is located centrally within Longridge, which is identified under Key Statement DS1 as a principal settlement and is intended to accommodate the majority of housing growth over the Plan period. Through the redevelopment of former garages which are close to the town centre, the proposal complies with Policy DMG2 by consolidating the settlement, as well as the Government's aims for making the best use of previously developed land, set out within the NPPF and recently emphasised in the Housing White Paper.
- 5.2 Future occupants will consequently have access to a range of local services, community facilities and employment opportunities within a short walking distance, as well as a range of local bus services that connect the settlement with the rest of the Ribble Valley, Preston and Blackburn. The ability of the proposal to help foster sustainable communities also plays an important role when applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within Key Statement DS2 and the NPPF.
- 5.3 The provision of a single dwelling in an appropriate location will also make a modest but important contribution to Ribble Valley Borough Council's provision of new homes. This is in line with the minimum targets referred to under Key Statement H1, and the Government's intention to significantly boost the supply of housing.
- 5.4 The LPA's pre-application response under Ref: RV/2016/ENQ/00121 indicates an agreement with the above interpretation of policies contained within the Development Plan and at a national level under the NPPF. As such, the principle of development should be supported and the benefits of sustainably located housing should be attributed significant material weight.

Regeneration Benefits

- 5.5 Whilst the appropriateness of the specific design of the proposed dwelling is discussed below, it is vital for the LPA to recognise and attribute significant weight to the improvements to neighbour amenity that will result from the removal of the existing garages.
- 5.6 By virtue of their basic construction and scale, the existing garage buildings do not promote current values for good design. Their materials, which include breeze-block walls and sheet roofing, give a poor appearance and more importantly, due to their scale and height, the garages reduce the quality

of outlook for neighbouring occupants which look towards the site. The Applicant has been unable to locate the historic planning permission relating to the existing garages that were built in the 1960s. However, it is certain that they would not be supported by the LPA if applied for afresh and assessed against Policy DMG1.

- 5.7 Moreover and as discussed in Chapter 2 above, the site is not currently subject to any planning controls which limit either the intensity or hours of use. Whilst the site may be fairly quiet as a result of the reduced activity, the site could realistically become an anti-social, bad neighbour use. Having such a use within proximity to homes is not within the spirit of Policy DMG1 or the provisions of the NPPF, which seek to ensure a good standard of amenity for both existing and future occupants. Nevertheless, if the current application were to be unsuccessful then the reinstatement of an active role for the site is the only viable option available to the landowner.
- 5.8 In light of the above improvements to the amenity of neighbouring properties, the regeneration of the site is an opportunity to be seized by the LPA. It is within the interests of good planning to support the current proposal, which is well within the spirit of the Development Plan and the NPPF when considered as a whole.

Design

Ensuring Good Levels of Amenity

- 5.9 The proposed dwelling has been designed to best respond to the constraints of the site, which have been appropriately balanced against prevailing standards for appearance and amenity. Bearing in mind the sustainable location of the site and, as discussed above, the improvements delivered as a result of its regeneration, the LPA must adopt a pragmatic approach to design requirements. These key matters have not previously been appreciated as part of the pre-application response (Ref: RV/2016/ENQ/00121) but nevertheless represent significant material considerations in favour of the proposal.
- 5.10 In balancing the design considerations, it should be noted that the overall built footprint will be reduced by 74m² from that of the existing garage buildings. Positioning the dwelling centrally within the site increases as far as practical the distance from surrounding residential developments. Therefore, in addition to the improvements to outlook that will result from the demolition of garages, the proposal will generate a sense of openness for neighbouring occupants which isn't currently

experienced. This is increased further by maintaining the height of a bungalow rather than pursuing a two storey dwelling.

- 5.11 The layout has specifically focused habitable rooms so that openings are positioned to the east and west elevations. The kitchen and living room are therefore not directly overlooked, and the bedrooms towards the west of the building are as far as practical from the rear wall of existing dwellings along Inglewhite Road. Any potential views into openings serving these rooms are also obscured by the retained private garage and the stone boundary walls which separate the site from the residential curtilage of neighbouring properties.
- 5.12 Parts of the residential curtilage will inevitably experience a degree of overlooking. However by retaining the height of taller 3.2m – 3.8m high boundary walls and the workshop adjacent to the rear garden, this is not considered unreasonable. Indeed, the decision-taker is encouraged to study the context of the application site, which is characterised by Victorian terraced houses, where some overlooking and reduced privacy is to be expected. This occurs along all three surrounding streets of Davis Street, Crumpax Avenue and Inglewhite Road.
- 5.13 The LPA is also referred to the approval of seven dwellings at Severn Street, Longridge under Ref: 3/2009/0821, which have now been fully constructed and are currently occupied. This development, which is also characterised by surrounding Victorian terraced properties, features a number of units situated within a much closer proximity to neighbouring dwellings than what is proposed under the current application. Associated windows and residential curtilages are consequently overlooked to a much greater level.
- 5.14 Having reviewed the Committee Report for Ref: 3/2009/0821, it is clear that the LPA adopted a pragmatic approach towards separation distances and the resulting impact on amenity. The improvements to the built environment and street-scene represented an important factor in preparing the recommendation for approval. As such, there was not considered to have been an unreasonable impact on the amenity of either existing or future occupants.



Figure 5: Photograph of bungalows developed at Severn Street, Longridge



Figure 6: Photograph of bungalows developed at Severn Street, Longridge

- 5.15 When considered on the individual merits of the scheme, the proposal is well within the spirit of Key Statements DS2, Policy DMG1 and the NPPF. Despite the inability to comply with a number of design guidelines such as separation distances, the regeneration benefits significantly outweigh any perceived harms from potential overlooking that were originally identified within the pre-application response. The LPA will also be familiar with the recently published Housing White Paper, which although not adopted policy, sets the Government's current agenda to make the best possible use of previously developed land and for an increase in densities. The current planning application site is an excellent example of the type of site that should be prioritised on this basis.

Scale and Appearance

- 5.16 The proposed scale of the development, in addition to providing a sense of openness for neighbours, ensures that the proposed dwelling does not appear as a prominent feature. This is also discussed within the submitted Heritage Asset Statement.
- 5.17 As mentioned in Chapter 3, above, the proposed use of materials draws upon a mixture of modern and historical influences, bearing in mind the character of surrounding Victorian development. Given that the site can only be accessed from Davis Street, this is considered an appropriate appearance for the local setting and Longridge Conservation Area.
- 5.18 Reference should again be given to the development at Severn Street, Longridge (approved under Ref: 3/2009/0821). As seen from the above photographs at Figures 5 and 6, these dwellings have introduced red-brick walls and tile roofing into a similarly less-prominent part of the Longridge Conservation Area. It would consequently be unreasonable for the LPA to take issue with the current proposed appearance, which should be perceived an opportunity to improve a site which is currently harmful in terms of design quality. The relevant criteria of Policy DMG1 are satisfied.

Highways and Parking

- 5.19 Were the existing land use to be re-instated, then the planning application site would continue to be unrestricted in terms of the number of traffic movements. The existing layout plan submitted with the application demonstrates how limited room presently exists for the manoeuvring of vehicles, which if intensified under the fall-back position, would encourage reversing both into and out of the site onto Davis Street.

- 5.20 The current plans to change the use of the land will consequently reduce the volume of traffic to and from the site on a daily basis. Moreover, the site layout plan demonstrates how the development will provide two parking spaces, in addition to a space within the retained garage to the south-west corner. Swept paths have been shown to indicate how vehicles will manoeuvre. Whilst it may be necessary for vehicles to undertake a three-point turn before proceeding along the back-street entrance, enough hardstanding space exists for this to be achieved. The access arrangements certainly are no worse than the existing fall-back position.
- 5.21 Bearing in mind the site's sustainable location and proximity to Longridge town centre, it provides opportunities for future occupants to utilise sustainable modes of travel. Given the fall-back position and proposed residential use, it cannot be considered that the residual cumulative impact of the proposed development is severe. Therefore, in light of Paragraph 32 of the NPPF and the criteria of Policy DMG1, the application is acceptable in highways terms.

Ecology and Protected Species

- 5.22 The planning application has been submitted alongside a site-specific bat survey. It concludes that existing buildings which are to be removed provide sub-optimal roost potential, with the majority of the dwellings in the area providing a more suitable habitat. The removal of the garages will not impact upon any foraging or roost habitat for bats and no signs of current or historic use were found.
- 5.23 The scale of proposed new house will not consequently impact on any local bat population. No further survey efforts are required, nor is any mitigation necessary. On the above basis, the application complies with the requirements set out under Key Statement DME3.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the demolition of the existing garages and the erection of a single dwelling, to the land at the rear of Davis Street, Longridge. The Applicants, who own the land and live locally, intend to occupy the dwelling.
- 6.2 Whilst private leases on the garages were not renewed in 2016 as a result of the landowner's intention to apply for planning permission, the re-instatement of the site's role could represent a bad neighbour use. No existing planning controls limit either the hours or intensity of use and this fall-back position represents an important material consideration in favour of the development. Moreover, the design of the existing garages, which abut boundary walls, severely limits the quality of outlook for a number of properties which surround the site.
- 6.3 The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act makes clear that planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Whilst the site is constrained by the existing development which surrounds it, the opportunity for the LPA to secure an improvement to neighbour amenity via a change in land use is a material consideration which should be attributed significant weight in planning decisions. The proposed scheme consequently offers gains for the community and secures the effective use of previously developed land, which is encouraged through the Development Plan and NPPF. A pragmatic approach has to be taken by the decision-taker towards such sites.
- 6.4 The proposed design and layout has sought to ensure that future and existing occupants of buildings will enjoy a good standard of amenity. Habitable room windows have been located where they are the furthest from adjacent rear residential elevations and existing boundary walls will prevent the direct overlooking of the rear garden. The potential for some overlooking of the proposed dwelling exists but is by no means considered unreasonable to an extent that would prevent a planning approval.
- 6.5 The LPA is also encouraged to attribute material weight to the Victorian character of the area, which features high-density housing where some level of overlooking is to be expected between properties. It is clear that the LPA has taken a pragmatic approach towards development proposals put forward in similar circumstances and referral is made in particular to the dwellings now constructed at Severn Street, Longridge (approved under Ref: 3/2009/0821). In this instance, the benefits of redevelopment were acknowledged and the application supported.

- 6.6 The LPA is consequently justified in applying a flexible approach to separation distances to the land off Davis Street, bearing in mind the wider improvements that will be delivered to the local setting. In this respect, the design is such that it is well within the spirit of Policy DMG1 and Chapter 6 of the NPPF. The LPA's initial comments regarding this matter within the pre-application response (Ref: RV/2016/ENQ/00121) were unsubstantiated.
- 6.7 The scale and appearance of the dwelling is also considered to be acceptable, given the site's limited prominence. The design achieves a balance of modern and traditional materials. Reference has been made again to the development at Severn Street, Longridge, where tile roofs and red brick wall buildings have been introduced to a less prominent part of the Longridge Conservation Area. Indeed, given the poor quality and condition of the garages at the site, the appearance of the dwelling as currently proposed represents a significant improvement above what exists.
- 6.8 By securing a new use for the land, the application will also reduce the potential number of vehicle movements to and from the site. Spaces have been provided on the proposed site plan for the parking of two vehicles and swept paths clearly indicate that room exists for manoeuvring. An assessment of this matter must be made against Paragraph 32 of the NPPF and in this instance, the site is located so as to increase opportunities for sustainable travel. As such, the proposed access arrangements cannot be considered to have a severe impact on the local highway network and the development represents an improvement over the fall-back position for the re-instatement of the garage use.
- 6.9 The potential for the proposed development to impact upon protected species has been explored. The Bat Survey report which accompanies the application concludes that the application complies with the requirements set out under Key Statement DME3.
- 6.10 Consideration should also be given to the modest but important contribution that the development proposal will make to the supply of homes within the Ribble Valley. The ability to regenerate previously developed land to assist with the Government's aims to boost significantly the supply of homes was recently emphasised within the Housing White Paper. The current application therefore represents an important opportunity for the LPA to seize in support of this aim.
- 6.11 Both the NPPF and Key Statement DS2 direct the LPA to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the assessment of planning applications. In this instance, the proposed development will deliver economic, social and environmental improvements by securing:
- Appropriate housing growth in line with the development strategy for the Ribble Valley (economic);

- Development that is well related to Longridge Town Centre and promotes the use of sustainable modes of travel (social); and
- Significant improvements to the amenity of neighbouring occupants as a result of both the change in the use of the land and the removal of the garages which reduce the quality of outlook (environmental).

6.12 In light of these factors which define the term 'sustainable development' and the clear benefits that will result from the proposal, the planning application should be approved.

JWPC Limited

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