

# Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe

## Landscape and Visual Appraisal



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Landscape  
Institute  
Registered  
Practice

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# Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe

## Landscape and Visual Appraisal

### 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken to support an outline planning application for up to 127 residential dwellings at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe, Lancashire.

The appraisal was commissioned by VH Land Partnerships Limited and was undertaken by DRaW (UK) Limited, a registered practice of the Landscape Institute, between August 2018 and November 2019.

The aims of the LVA were:

- to identify the key landscape and visual issues associated with the proposed development; and
- identify appropriate measures to mitigate any adverse effects.

#### 1.1 Appraisal Methodology

The methodology for the appraisal is based on:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3) produced by the Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; and
- 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' by Natural England, October 2014.

It should be noted that, in accordance with GLVIA3 there are differences between landscape and visual effects:

**Landscape Effects** relate to changes to the landscape as a resource. Taking into account its physical attributes, aesthetic/perceptual qualities and recreational value, which collectively define the landscape/townscape character. These changes do not have to be visible.

**Visual Effects** relate to changes in views and visual amenity experienced by people. Including inhabitants, workers, or visitors to recreational /tourist sites or the setting of cultural heritage assets.

## 1.2 Study Area

The study area for the landscape and visual appraisal has been informed by computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility mapping, limited to a distance of 2 kilometres (km) from the site boundary. It is considered that for a residential development of the type proposed there would be minimal landscape or visual effects beyond this distance.

## 1.3 Desk-Based Study

Information for the landscape and visual appraisal was gathered from the following sources:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2019;
- Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028, Adopted 2014;
- Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document, Adopted October 2019
- National Character Area Profile 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill ‘Natural England’;
- Landscape Character Assessment, Lancashire County Council, 2000;
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, Lancashire County Council, 2000;
- The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk));
- Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 scale site-centered digital raster map;
- 1:250,000 scale Agricultural Land Classification Map ‘Northwest Region’ (ALC002);
- Long term flood risk maps for the UK, Environment Agency ([gov.uk](http://gov.uk)); and
- Aerial photography: Google Maps (<http://maps.google.co.uk/>);

## 1.4 Field Study

Field surveys were undertaken in August 2018 to assess:

- The landscape characteristics;
- Views of the site from the surrounding areas;
- The location and sensitivity of visual receptors; and
- The potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

The surveys were undertaken from roads, bridleways, tracks, footpaths and publicly accessible viewpoints within 2.0 km of the site.

## 1.5 The Site Location

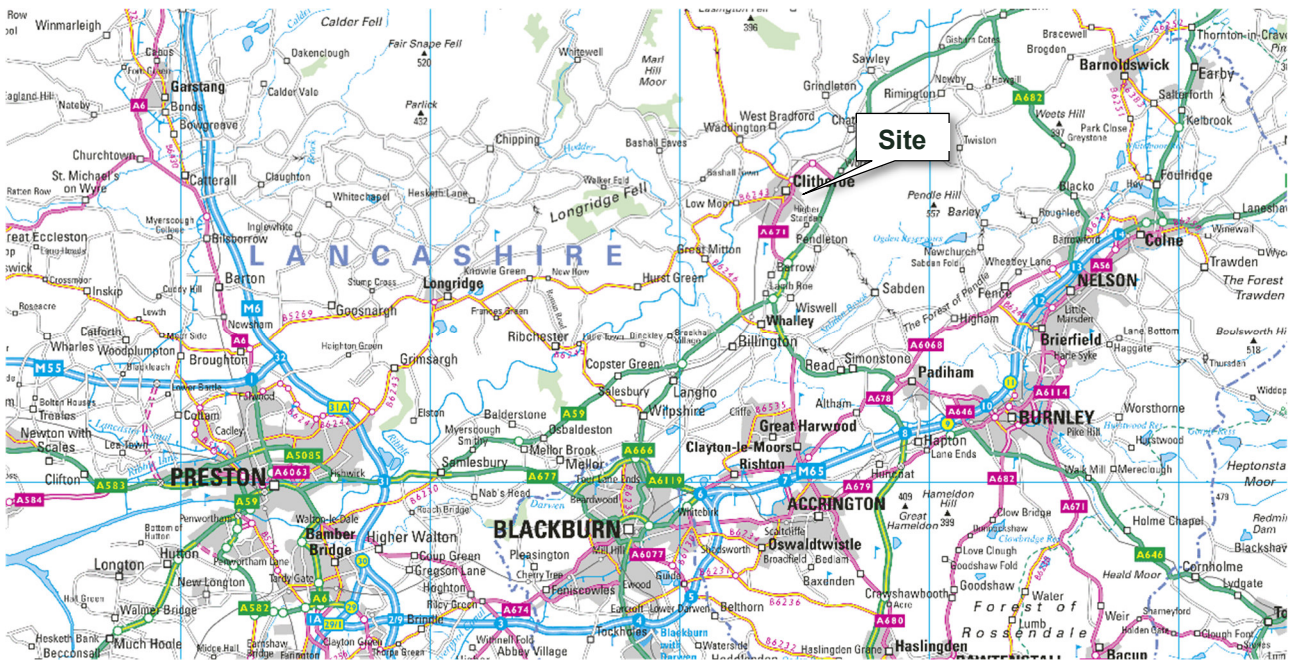
The site is located on the south-eastern edge of the Clitheroe, approximately 15 km to the northeast of Blackburn and 13 km northwest of Burnley, in the county of Lancashire.

The nearest postcode is BB7 1JB. The approximate grid reference is: E 375248, 441577.

The site covers an area of approximately 5 hectares (Ha).

Figure 1 shows the approximate site location and Figure 2 shows the site context.

**Figure 1: Site Location**



**Figure 2: Site Context**





## 2 The Proposed Development

The indicative layout is shown on Figure 3: Illustrative Masterplan (STEN Architects February 2020)

The proposals comprise residential development on agricultural land associated with the former Highmoor Farm, along with associated highways, green space and landscaping. Access to the site will be from Highmoor Park, a residential road to the west.

The 5 ha site has a net developable area of approximately 3.63 ha, which at a proposed density of 30-35 dwellings per ha equates to 109 to 127 dwellings.

For assessment purposes it is assumed the proposed dwellings would be two stories, with a height of 10 m and would be constructed from 'visually recessive' materials appropriate to the local setting (Details of the proposed layout and dwelling types would be subject to a separate reserve matters application, to be agreed by the LPA).

The assessment of landscape and visual effects, also takes into account the following mitigation measures, as shown on the Illustrative masterplan:

- The retention of the existing 'high value trees' within the proposed site layout;
- The creation of public open space between the proposed dwellings and the existing houses to the west of the site;
- The provision of a new pedestrian route which connects the PRoW to the north of the site with PRoW which passes to the south of Highmoor Farm; and
- The incorporation of additional screen planting along the site boundaries

The proposals exclude the redevelopment of the Highmoor farmstead which was subject to a separate planning application and approval in 2018.

Figure 3: Illustrative Masterplan (STEN Architects February 2020)



## 3 Landscape Planning Context

The following planning policies are relevant to landscape or visual issues:

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework, 2019

The Government's planning policies for England are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2019. Key policies relating to landscape or visual issues are:

#### **Paragraph 127**

Paragraph 127 sets out the aim of planning policies *to ensure that developments:*

- “a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

#### **Paragraph 170**

Paragraph 170 sets out the aim of planning policies to contribute and enhance the natural and local environment by *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, ... in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan”*

It also sets out the need to *“recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”*

#### **Paragraph 172**

Paragraph 172 advises that: *“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues”.*

#### **Paragraph 180**

*Paragraph 180. Sets out the aims of planning policies to “ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity*

*of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: ..... identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light”.*

## 3.2 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley 2008-2028

Planning policies of Ribble Valley Borough Council (the determining authority) are set out in:

- The Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028, Adopted 2014; and
- Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document, Adopted 15th October 2019.

### Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (Adopted 2014)

The following policies relate to landscape and visual matters:

#### **Policy DMG1: General Considerations**

The policy advises that *“in determining planning applications, all development must:*

*Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 ‘Building in Context Principles’ (from the CABE/English Heritage Building on Context Toolkit. <http://www.building-in-context.org/the-bic-toolkit>*

*Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.*

*Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.*

*Consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access.*

*Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*

*Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*

*Protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings.*

*Not result in the net loss of important open space, including public and private playing fields without a robust assessment that the sites are surplus to need. In assessing this, regard must be had to the level of provision and standard of public open space in the area, the importance of playing fields and the need to protect school playing fields to meet future needs.*

*Regard will also be had to the landscape or townscape of an area and the importance the open space has on this”.*

### **Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations**

Policy DMG2 advises that “development proposals in the principal settlements (Including Clitheroe) should consolidate, expand or 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”.

The policy goes on to set out criteria for housing outside the defined settlement areas and concludes.... “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”.

(NB the site lies outside the defined settlement boundaries)

### **Policy EN2: Landscape**

Policy EN2: Landscape, advises: “The Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials”.

The supporting statement (Paragraph 5.3) goes on to say:

*“Over 75% of the area is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outside these statutory areas the borough comprises extensive areas of open countryside much of which has an intrinsic value that contributes to the quality of the landscape in the borough. In addition, the founding principle of landscape character is that all landscapes have a value. The Council considers that it is important to ensure development proposals do not serve to undermine the inherent quality of the landscape. Particular regard, consistent with the designation as AONB, will be given to matters of design and impact with an expectation that the highest standards of design will be required. The Council will also seek to ensure that the open countryside is protected from inappropriate development. Developers should adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity”.*

### **Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection**

Policy DME2 states: “Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features including:

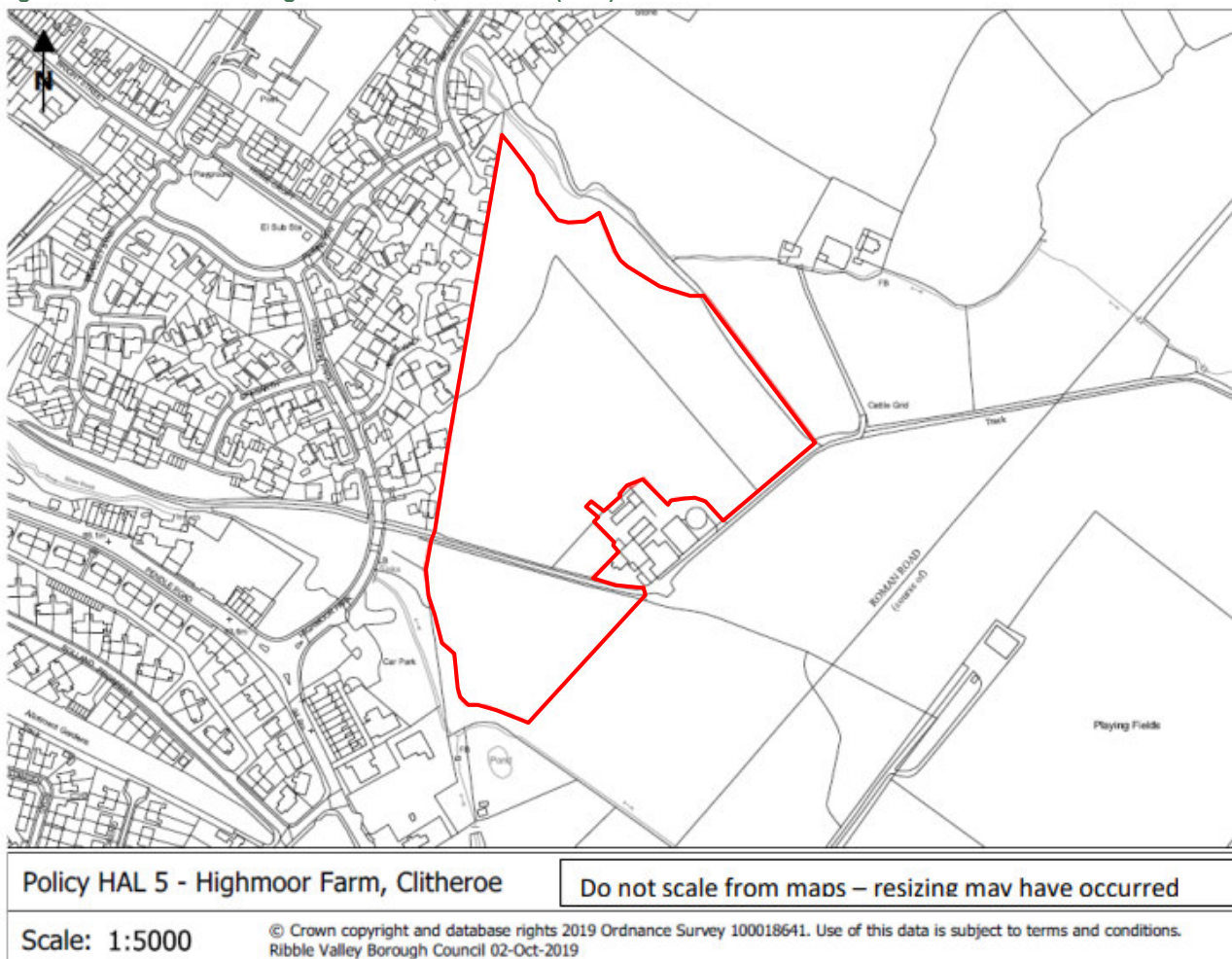
1. Traditional stone walls.
2. Ponds.
3. Characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures.
4. Woodlands.
5. Copses.
6. Hedgerows and individual trees (other than in exceptional circumstances where satisfactory works of mitigation or enhancement would be achieved, including rebuilding, replanting and landscape management).
7. Townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the Characteristic townscapes of the area.

- 8. Upland landscapes and associated habitats such as blanket bog.
- 9. Botanically rich roadside verges (that are worthy of protection)".

## Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document, Adopted 15th October 2019

The Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document, Adopted 15th October 2019 identifies a number of allocations sites in Ribble Valley for residential development, to meet housing requirements in the plan period (2008-2028). This includes Site HAL5 Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe, the boundaries of which are consistent with the application boundary (Refer Figure 4).

**Figure 4: HAL5 Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe (5 ha)**



### Policy HAL5

Policy HAL describes the allocation site as follows:

*“Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe*

The site is adjacent to the defined main settlement of Clitheroe. The site is located to the eastern end of Clitheroe, accessed initially off Pendle Road and then via a track leading from the main access into the ‘Highmoor Park’, ‘Abbot Walk’ and ‘Roman Way’ estate. The northeastern boundary is marked by a hedge and row of trees which partly follow a watercourse. A public footpath follows the route of the main access track to ‘Highmoor Farm’ and along the eastern access track which bounds the site and continues north-westwards along the northern boundary of the site. The development area excluding land at Highmoor Farm which has been granted permission for development (Application Ref. 3/2017/1221) and the flood zone with 10m buffer is approx. 5.0 hectares and the site capacity is 100 dwellings. The density and dwelling type will be determined to best meet needs identified in accordance with H2 of the Core Strategy and in accordance with Development Management criteria. Development of the site will be expected to make provision for local (including affordable) housing needs in accordance with the requirements of H3 and DMH1 of the Core Strategy”.

### 3.3 Landscape Planning Designations

This section should be read in conjunction with Drawing 01 (Appendix B). Table 1 sets out the relevant planning designations, protected heritage assets and other constraints within the site and the study area.

**Table 1: Relevant Designations, Protected Heritage Assets and Constraints**

Attribute	Present Within Site Boundary	Present within 2 km of the site.
<b>Landscape Designations</b>		
National Parks	None	None
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	None	Yes (Refer details below)
Special Landscape Area	None	None
Green Belt	None	None
Country Parks	None	None
<b>Protected Heritage Assets</b>		
World Heritage Sites	None	None
Scheduled Monuments	None	Yes (See below)
Conservation Areas	None	Yes. Clitheroe (Refer details below)
Listed Buildings	None	Yes (Refer details below)
Registered Parks and Gardens	None	Yes (Refer details below)
<b>Other Landscape Assets</b>		
Recreational Routes	None	Yes (Refer details below)
Public Rights of Way	Yes (Refer details below)	Yes (Refer details below)
Tree Preservation Orders	Yes (Refer details below)	N/a

## Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The study area lies partly within the Forest of Bowland AONB, which comprises two separate parts:

- The main upland block with heather moorland, blanket bog, and rare birds to the northwest of the site; and
- The prominent geographical landmark of Pendle Hill, to the east of the site.

The two parts are separated by the broad valley of the River Ribble, in which the site is located. At its closest point the AONB (Pendle Hill), lies approximately 1.2 km east of the site.

## Scheduled Monuments

There are two Scheduled Monuments within the study area:

- The closest 'Clitheroe Castle; medieval enclosure castle', Site Reference: 27747 is located at NGR 74231, 41659, approximately 770m to the west of the site: and
- Bellmanpark lime kilns and part of an associated tramway 180m north west of Bellman Farm, Site Reference, approximately 1.6 km northeast of the site.

## Conservation Areas

The Clitheroe Conservation Area lies approximately 490 m to the west of the site and includes the site of Clitheroe Castle, Clitheroe Gardens and several listed buildings.

The Conservation Area is split into three discreet areas. The site is potentially visible from a small part of 'Character Area 1 Clitheroe's Historic Core' (Refer Figure 5).

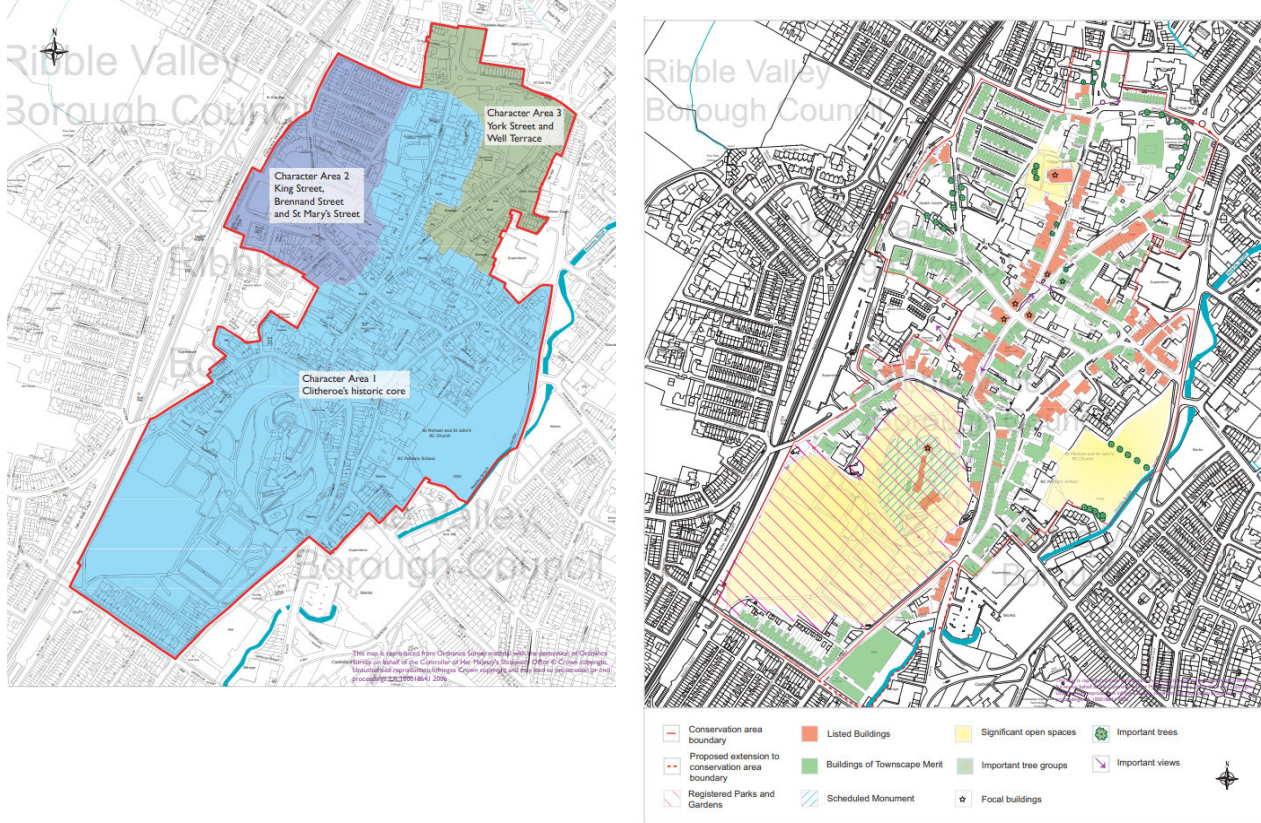
The Conservation Area Appraisal (2005) describes the views towards Pendle Hill as a key feature:

*"Views of distant uplands are one of the distinctive features of the conservation area. Looking east, Pendle Hill can often be seen..... good views of distant fells can be gained from St Mary Magdalene's churchyard and from the rear of the Rose and Crown in Castle Street".*

The townscape appraisal map shows the 'important views' within and out of the Conservation Area although, non are orientated towards the site (Refer Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Clitheroe Conservation Area and Townscape Appraisal Map showing 'Important Views'**



## Registered Park and Gardens

Clitheroe Gardens (Grade II Park and Garden) lies 744m west of the site. The garden is described as *“A castle mound, used as the grounds of a private residence, with garden terraces laid out in the early C19, the mound and adjacent land being developed for use as a public park in the 1920s”*, (Refer Drawing 01, Appendix B)

## Listed Buildings

There are several Listed Buildings clustered around the Grade I Listed Clitheroe Castle and town centre, although these are separated from the site by existing residential areas immediate west of the site. The closest Listed Building is the Grade II Ashgrove Shaw Cottage 300m to the west of the site. (Refer Drawing 01, Appendix B)

## Public Rights-of-Way and Recreational Routes

There are a number of public rights-of-way (PRoW) within the study area. Footpath 3-1-FP10 runs through the site south of Highmoor Farm. Footpath 3-1-FP9 runs along the northern edge of the site.

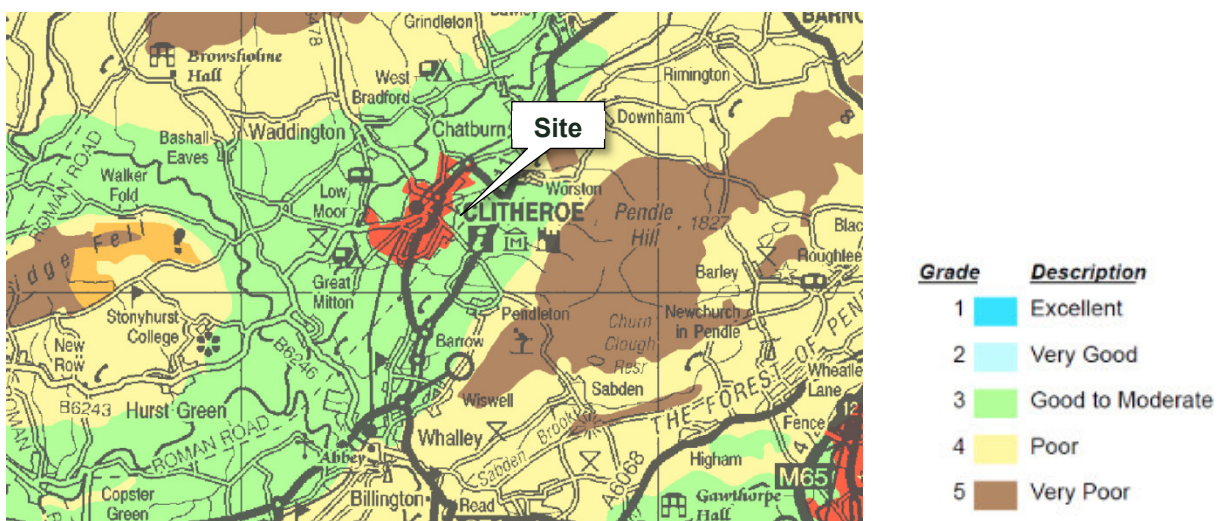
There are two recreational routes which cut through the study area:

- The Ribble Way a 117 km long-distance footpath passes through the northwest corner of the study area. The route follows the course of the River Ribble and is close to the Pennine Way Trail; and
- Regional Cycle Route 91 (Part of the Sustrans NCR), runs parallel to the A59, passing within 630 m east of the site (Refer Drawing 01, Appendix B).

## Agricultural Land Classification

According to the 1:250,000 scale Agricultural Land Classification Map ‘North West Region ALC002’ (Refer Figure 6), the farmland, within which the site is located, is Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’, (No distinction is made between sub-grades 3A, 3B or 3C).

Figure 6: Extract from the Agricultural Land Classification Map



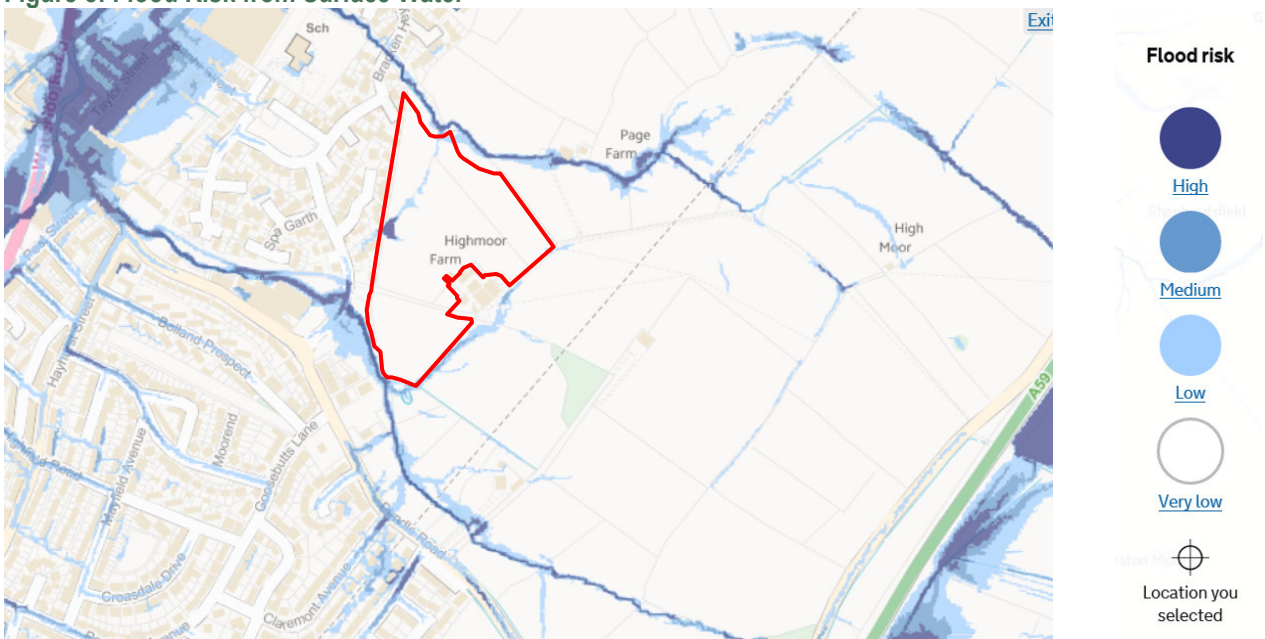
## Flood Risk

According to the Government’s ‘Long Term Flood Risk Information’, the site is at very low risk of flooding from rivers, reservoirs, or surface water. Minor watercourses at the southwest and northeast edges of the site (close to the site entrance) are prone to flooding, although this appears to be very localised and does not extend much beyond the stream channel (Refer Figures 7 & 8).

**Figure 7: Flood Risk from Rivers**



**Figure 8: Flood Risk from Surface Water**



## Tree Preservation Orders

Ribble Valley Borough Council's tree officer confirmed a single tree (T13, Ash) and woodland (W1, Mixed deciduous trees consisting mainly of Poplar Alder, Ash and Sycamore) in the northern part of the site are protected by 'Tree Preservation Order No7 North of Pendle Road Clitheroe, 1982'. These are shown on Drawing 01 and further details are provided in Appendix B

# Landscape Appraisal

## 4 Landscape Appraisal

### 4.1 Landscape Character

The landscape character is considered at three levels:

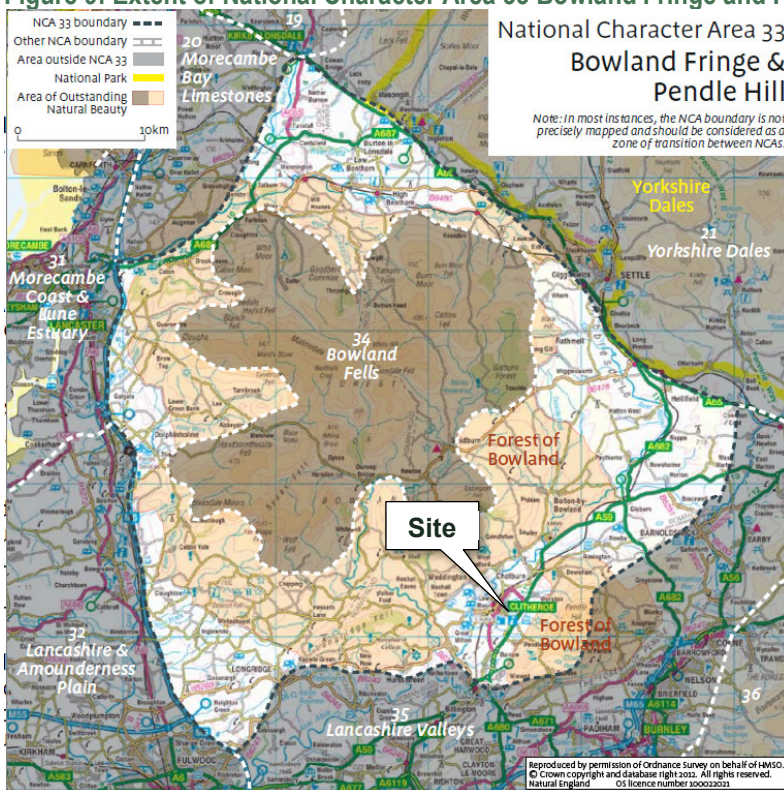
- National level, in relation to the National Character Area Profiles, produced by Natural England;
- Regional level, taking into account the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy for Lancashire, Lancashire County Council, December 2000; and
- Local level, based on field observations to confirm the key features and characteristics pertinent to the study area and the application site.

### National Character Areas

#### National Character Area 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill

The site lies within ‘National Character Area 33, Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill’ (Refer Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Extent of National Character Area 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill**



*The Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill National Character Area describes the area as “a transitional landscape that wraps around the dramatic upland core of the Bowland Fells, underpinned by Carboniferous geology. Over half of this NCA, along with the Bowland Fells, makes up the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty”.*

Key characteristics of NCA 33 Bowland Fringe Pendle Hill are described in the National Character Area Profile: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3522238>

The profile for NCA33 includes ‘statements of environmental opportunity’. SE01 states: *“Protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill NCA for its sense of place, historical and cultural heritage, tranquility, accessibility and recreational opportunities. For example by: Managing development (especially around the fringes of the NCA), in order to maintain the rural character of the landscape, tranquility and sense of remoteness. Protecting the area from development on ridgelines and hilltops, to maintain the predominantly open character of the Landscape”.*

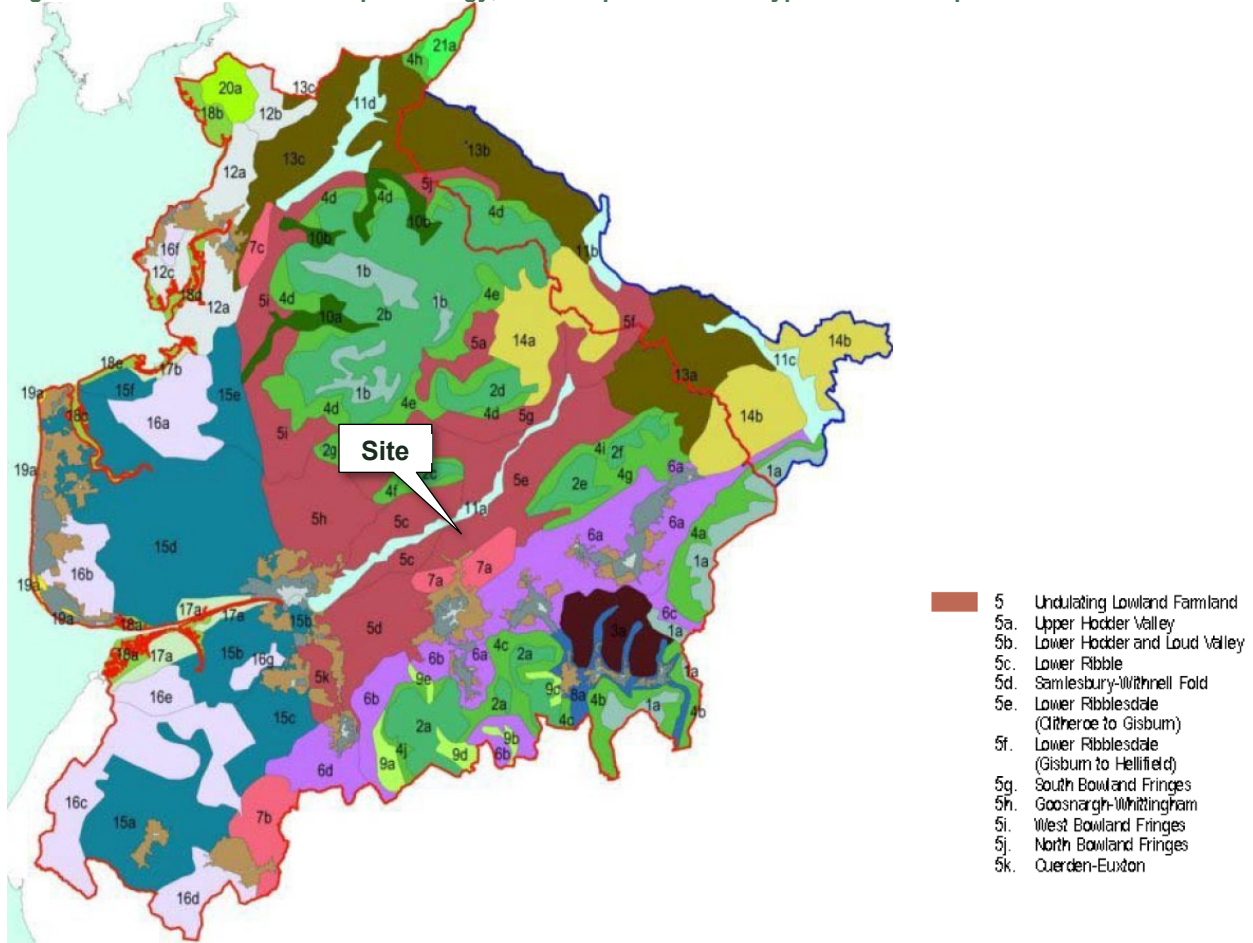
## The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire

‘A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire’ (Lancashire County Council, 2000), comprises two parts:

- ‘*Landscape Character Assessment*’ (which provides an objective description and classification of the Lancashire landscape), and
- ‘*Landscape Strategy*’ (which provides evaluation and guidance based upon the findings of Landscape Character Assessment).

The publications provide a detailed description of the Landscape Character Types, which are subdivided into smaller Landscape Character Areas. The site lies within Landscape Character Type 5 ‘Undulating Lowland Farmland’ and Landscape Character Area 5e ‘Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)’ (Refer Figure 10).

Figure 10: Lancashire Landscape Strategy, Landscape Character Types & Landscape Character Areas



## Undulating Lowland Farmland LCT5

The Key Environmental Features of LCT5 are described as:

- *“Wooded river corridors and gorges provide a sense of enclosure, sheltered habitats and distinctive patterns on the valley sides. Many are also historic sites for early water powered industry.*
- *Hedgerows and hedgerow trees define the field pattern in contrast with the moorland fringe farmland, where stone walls dominate over hedgerows. They also provide sheltered habitats which contrast with the moorland fringe farmland, where stone walls dominate over hedgerows. These hedgerows are important wildlife links between the wooded cloughs and outlying woodlands.*
- *Small mixed woodlands provide important habitats and cover for wildlife and contribute to the overall appearance of a ‘wooded’ farmland. They reflect an important phase in landscape evolution when 19th century estate woods and shelterbelts were developed for game shooting.*

- *Historic villages, stone bridges and stone walls reflect the local geology; many villages are clustered at river crossing points and there is a dispersed pattern of farms and cottages on the rural roads along the valley sides.*
- *Limestone outcrops and knolls (in some of the character areas) provide a sharp contrast to the gentler rolling formations of the grazing land and provide shelter for sheep. They are also important for biodiversity.*
- *Roman remains and roads reflect the importance of the area during Roman occupation - the routes of Roman roads are visible in sections of existing roads and tracks.*
- *Historic drove roads support woodland, scrub and tall herb strips.*
- *Country houses, and estates are important in terms of architecture and landscape design - they indicate the county's growing wealth in the 18th and 19th centuries".*

Under the heading 'Local forces for change and their landscape implications' the following issues are identified:

- *"The expansion of farm woodlands through the Elwood Initiative could be a positive force for change, linking wooded river corridors and increasing the number of small-scale mixed farm woodlands.*
- *A decline in mature hedgerow and parkland trees which are a valuable ecological resource and important hedgerow boundary markers. The presence of many trees provides the impression of a well-managed, healthy landscape. There is little evidence of regeneration in hedgerows or of new planting to replace existing ageing or declining trees.*
- *Increasing pressures for residential development on the edges of settlements, such as Ribchester, influences the landscape setting and approach to these small rural settlements. Many new developments use imported inappropriate materials such as red brick, which can be intrusive in this rural setting.*
- *Barn conversions and new developments centered around existing farm buildings may alter the scale and character of rural settlement and affect the intrinsic historic interest of the farms. Design guidance may ensure reasonable minimum standards of architectural design, but it is more difficult to control the overall appearance of gardens, fencing, access roads, driveways and power lines. There is a risk that this form of suburbanisation will have a detrimental impact on areas with a deeply rural character".*

Under the heading 'Conserve the distinctive settings to rural settlements' the following recommendations are included:

- *"Ensure new development on the edges of villages reflects the characteristic clustered form; development should be sited to retain views to landscape features and landmarks, such as church towers on the approaches to villages.*
- *"Avoid ribbon development which would disrupt the characteristic clustered form of settlements and the rural character of local roads.*
- *"Encourage tree planting as an integral part of new development, creating links with existing farm woodlands and the network of hedgerows.*

Under the heading ‘*Enhance the wooded character of the lowland landscape*’ the following recommendations are included:

- *“promote the planting of new woodland to link existing woods and hedgerows, aiming for a continuous network of trees, hedgerows and woods where this does not conflict with other habitats of biodiversity significance.*
- *encourage planting of small farm woodlands which are a feature of the lowland agricultural landscape and provide ‘stepping stones’ for wildlife between larger woodlands.*
- *promote the restoration where appropriate of semi-natural habitats to increase the resource and to develop linkage and corridors for wildlife.*
- *encourage use of species which are typical of the area such as lowland oak woods, alder in wetter places and ash woodland where the soils are moist and/or base-rich”.*

## LCA 5e Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)

The LCA 5e Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn), a sub-division of LCT5, in which the site is located is described as:

*“This area forms the southern valley side of the Ribble, between Copster Green and Gisburn, on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill. It is a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication routes along the Ribble Valley. The A59(T) runs the length of the area, linking the settlements of Copster Green, Whalley, Clitheroe, Chatburn and Gisburn. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry; the large cement works at Clitheroe is a prominent visual landmark for miles around. This character area is underlain by limestone and has some good examples of limestone reef knolls, particularly around Clitheroe; Clitheroe Castle is located on top of one of these knolls”.*

## 4.2 The Application Site and its Immediate Surroundings

The site is roughly triangular, covering an area of approximately 5 ha of ‘Grade 3’ agricultural land on the eastern edge of Clitheroe, which is currently used for grass production/grazing. Highmoor Farm is located on the eastern edge of the site and comprises a traditional stone-built farmhouse and outbuildings, with more recent agricultural sheds. The farmhouse, barn and outbuildings have planning permission for conversion to residential use (Planning Application Ref. 3/2017/1221).

The supporting information for the development of the farmstead identified the farmhouse and the old barn as ‘non designated heritage assets’.

Figure 11 shows the Highmoor Farm, for which proposals to convert the barns and outbuildings to five residential dwellings were approved in 2018.

The site is accessed via a narrow track from Highmoor Park, /Pendle Road. The track leads to Page House an isolated property to the north of the site and provides access to Highmoor Farm. (Refer Figure 12).



Figure 11: Highmoor Farmhouse and outbuildings on the eastern edge of the site.



## Topography

The site is gently undulating with an overall fall from east to west, affording long distance views across Clitheroe and the Ribble Valley to the east.

The highest point within the site (100m AOD) is the northeast corner (on the track towards Page Farm) and lowest point is the northwest corner (94 m AOD) towards the site entrance.

There are two minor watercourses adjacent to the site:

- Shaw Brook adjacent to the southwest corner, which flows underneath Highmoor Park adjacent to the site entrance; and
- a minor unnamed watercourse along the northern site boundary, which flows under Bracken Hey.

Neither of these watercourses, nor the associated flood plains are within the proposed development areas (Refer Figures 7 and 8).

## Vegetation Cover

Details of trees and hedgerows are provided on the Tree Constraints Plan (Bowland Tree Consultancy Ltd, October 2018).

The site includes, or is bounded by, a number of large broadleaf trees and native hedgerows which provide a moderate degree of shelter and visual enclosure. They also make a notable contribution to the scenic quality of the site and its surroundings.

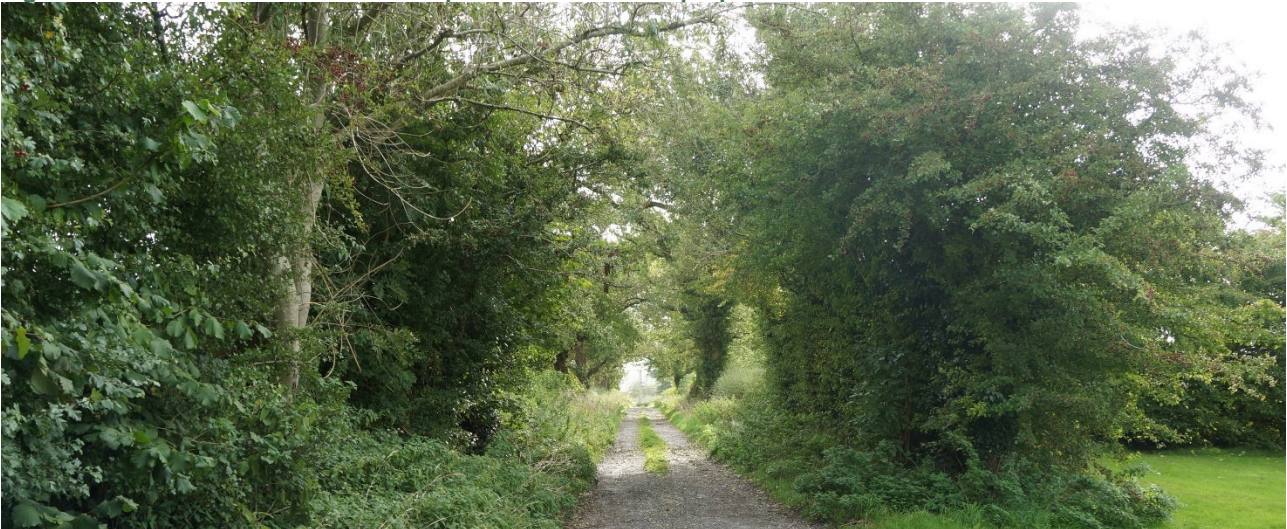
From a landscape perspective the main tree groups within the site are:

- Trees and hedgerows either side of the site access track (Footpath 3-1-FP10) between Highmoor Park and Highmoor Farm;
- Trees along the northern site boundary adjacent to Footpath 3-1-FP10;
- Trees and hedgerows along the field boundaries north of Highmoor Farm; and
- Semi-mature trees along the southwest site boundary.

#### **Trees either side of the main access track**

Trees either side of the main access track (Footpath 3-1-FP10) create an attractive approach to Highmoor Farm, Page Farm and the site (Refer Figure 12). The arboricultural report identifies a number of these as 'Category U' trees, i.e. they are in a poor condition and/or have a short life expectancy. However, it is proposed that the higher category trees and as many as the lower category trees as possible would be retained to maintain an attractive route through the site.

**Figure 12: Trees either side of the Footpath 3-1-FP10 at the proposed location**



#### **Trees along the north-eastern site boundary adjacent to Footpath 3-1-FP9**

A narrow strip of mature trees along the north-eastern boundary, particularly the dense group in the northern corner, make an important contribution to the scenic value of the landscape and create an effective visual barrier between the site, Page Farm and residential properties on Bracken Hey to the north. (Refer Figure 13). (The mitigation proposals include recommendations to progressively replant the trees to ensure long-term retention of the avenue).

**Figure 13: Mature trees on the northern site boundary adjacent to Footpath 3-1-FP9**



**Trees and hedgerows along Field boundaries north of Highmoor Farm**

The field boundaries north of Highmoor Farm are enclosed by hawthorn hedgerows, although they are intermittent, with frequent gaps filled with stock-proof fencing

A group of mature trees in the field corner form an attractive ‘island’ of vegetation within the site, which includes a protected Ash tree, although the Tree Constraints Plan identifies these (T22, T23 and T24) as category ‘U’/‘C’. i.e with a remain life of 10 years or less. (Refer Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Field boundaries north of Highmoor Farm**



**Dense vegetation on the southwest site boundary**

The southwest boundary is delineated by a dense group of semi-mature trees (G11) which make an effective barrier between the site and the public carpark, picnic area and residential properties

adjacent to the Pendle Road/Highmoor Park junction. The Tree Constraints Plan identifies this group of trees as being of 'moderate quality'. (Refer Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Semi-mature trees along the southwest site boundary**



## Built Form

There are no buildings within the site boundary (The buildings at Highmoor Farm are outside the application area). A single pole overhead transmission line crosses the southeast part of the site.

## Historic Context

Early edition OS maps indicate there have been very few changes within the site itself. The original fields and the field enclosures have not altered since the 1840s. The only notable change has been the construction of 'modern' agricultural storage sheds and silage pit at Highmoor Farm. (Refer Figure 16), which will be removed as part of the approved redevelopment proposals for the farmstead.

**Figure 16: Extract from the 1844 OS 6 Inch map and corresponding aerial view of the site 2015.**



The historic maps indicate that previously the site was relatively remote and more rural than it is today, being entirely surrounded by farmland. In the later part of the 20th Century the residential areas of Clitheroe expanded eastwards encroaching into the countryside east of the town, forming a 'hard urban' edge to the site.

Figure 17 shows 'modern' housing constructed on land adjacent to the western edge of the site.

**Figure 17: Modern housing adjoining the western site boundary**



## Recreational Value

The land within the site is within private ownership and is not a recreational resource, although there are two public rights-of-way through the site (from Highmoor Park and Bracken Hey) which link the residential settlements west of the site with Pendle Hill and the recreational routes within the AONB to the west. These routes (Shown on Drawing 01, Appendix B) are an important link between the town and the countryside, which should be retained and where possible, the long-distance views to Pendle Hill and to Clitheroe Castle should be maintained in accordance with the guidelines for 'Undulating Lowland Farmland LCT5' in the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire.

## 4.3 Landscape Sensitivity

The published landscape character assessments provide descriptions of the key characteristics of the landscape at a national and regional level. The latter includes recommendations on conserving the setting of settlements and retaining landscape characteristics, although no assessment of landscape sensitivity is provided.

It is considered that the study area as a whole is reasonably attractive, particularly towards Pendle Hill, which lies to the east of the site, within the Forest of Bowland AONB and which is highly sensitive to new development.

However, closer to the site there are a number of detracting features which locally reduce the scenic value and susceptibility of the application area and its environs:

The western part of the site is overlooked by ‘modern’ detached and semi-detached housing on the edge of Clitheroe. The suburban character of the housing estate with a ‘hard’, unbuffered edge to the settlement detracts from the semi-rural landscape to the east in which the site is located (Refer Figure 17).

In addition the recently constructed housing to the south of Pendle Road (Half Penny Meadows) approximately 350 m from the site extends the settlement boundary towards the A59, further increasing the susceptibility of the neighbouring farmland to accommodate further residential development.

High volumes of traffic travelling along on the A59 Trunk Road east of the site, generates ambient background noise which reduces the tranquillity of the landscape through which it passes and further reduces the susceptibility of the adjacent landscape to change.

In addition, the nearby telecommunication mast, sports pitches with dilapidated changing rooms to the east of the site also detract from the rural character of the area.

The site itself is not subject to any statutory protection, it is not within a National Park, AONB, Special Landscape Area, or Green Belt. Furthermore, there are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, or Listed Buildings, or Parks or Gardens of Historic Interest, within the immediate vicinity.

However, the site contains features which make a positive contribution to the setting of Clitheroe, namely the mature trees, perimeter hedgerows and the pedestrian links between Clitheroe and Pendle Hill to the east.

Overall it is considered that the semi-rural landscape within which the site is located is reasonably attractive and has some recreational value, although the lack of landscape designations and the prominence of the urban areas adjacent to it reduce the susceptibility of the landscape to further residential development.

## 5 Potential Landscape Effects

Table 2 below sets out the potential landscape effects, which may arise from the proposed development (Visual effects are assessed separately in Section 6).

The potential landscape effects are based on the illustrative masterplan (Figure 3) and assume the mitigation measures outlined in Section 8 are implemented as an integral part of the scheme proposals.

**Table 2: Potential Landscape Effects**

Attribute	Potential Landscape Effect
<b>Changes to Landscape Character Areas/Types</b>	
NCA 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill	The key objective of NCA 33 Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill is to protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character for its sense of place, historical and cultural heritage, tranquillity, accessibility and recreational opportunities. It highlights the need to avoid development on ridgelines and hilltops, to maintain the predominantly open character of the Landscape”. In this respect the development avoids ridges and hilltops and would be

	barely perceptible from Pendle Hill. The proposals would not affect the setting of any designated cultural heritage assets (refer visual assessment) and taking the NCA as a whole the reduction in openness of the landscape on the edge of an existing settlement would be minimal.
Landscape Character Type 5 & Landscape Character Area 5c	The development would inevitably have a suburbanising effect on the character of the semi-rural landscape to the east of Clitheroe. However, the proposed residential development would be of similar height and density to the existing residential areas west of the site and to housing recently constructed off Pendle Road to the southeast of the site. The proposals would extend an existing land use rather than introducing a new or alien characteristic. The development provides the opportunity to create a 'softer' edge between the settlement and the farmland than currently exists (Refer mitigation measures). In relation to the busy A59 Trunk Road which generates ambient background noise changes to the tranquillity of the landscape would be minimal. The use of vernacular building materials and dark coloured roofs tiles would aid landscape assimilation.
<b>Changes to the site and immediate surroundings</b>	
Landform	The proposed dwellings would be constructed 'at grade' and therefore there would be minimal effects on the existing landform. It is envisaged that the proposals would need to incorporate attenuation ponds to regulate surface water run-off. The size and location of these have not been defined at this stage.
vegetation cover	There would be a small loss of mature trees and hedgerows from the western end of the track leading from Highmoor Park to Highmoor Farm to facilitate the proposed site access, although the majority of the mature vegetation along this track would be retained, and/or selectively replanted. There would be some loss of intermittent ('gappy') hedgerows within the site although the more substantial hedgerows around the perimeter would be retained. No protected trees would be affected. The proposals would include a tree belt/hedgerow along the southeast edge of the site and subject to detailed design proposals would incorporate new trees and hedgerows within the proposed housing layout. In the long-term there is likely to be an overall increase in vegetation cover compared to existing.
Land use /built form.	The proposals would result in the permanent loss of approximately 5 ha of Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land (based on site observation it is thought unlikely to be 'best and most versatile', although a detailed ALC assessment would be required to confirm this). The proposals would not result in the demolition of any buildings, although the OHL across the southern part of the site may need to be divereted (depending on the housing layout).
Water courses/bodies.	The proposals would not affect the alignment of the existing water courses and the proposed development areas are outside the flood risk areas.

Footpaths, and  
Public Access

Pedestrian access through the site would be maintained. Potentially the setting of the northern path (Footpath 3-1-FP9) could be adversely affected where the proposed residential properties back on to the path, potentially creating an uninviting narrow alleyway enclosed by rear garden boundaries. This could be avoided by realigning the footpath to the front of the dwellings, either creating a shared access or by providing a footway alongside the road (Refer mitigation measures). The development could potentially obstruct some views of Clitheroe Castle, St Mary Magdalene Church spire and Pendle Hill from the existing footpaths, although this could be minimised by careful siting of the dwellings adjacent to the public right of ways, to be agreed at the reserve matters stage.



# Visual Appraisal

## 6 Visual Appraisal

The visual appraisal considers the effects on visual receptors that currently have views towards the site and therefore may be affected by the proposed development. The assessment was based on field observations made during site visits undertaken in August 2018 and informed by Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling.

### 6.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility

To identify the area from which the development may be visible and to help identify potential visual receptors, a computer generated ZTV was produced for the 2.0 km study area (Drawing 02, Appendix B). The proposed dwellings were modelled in three dimensions and superimposed on to a digital surface terrain model of the site and its surroundings ('OS Terrain 5', at 5m resolution); enabling a three-dimensional plot of the 'visible areas' to be produced, taking into account screening afforded by landform and major visual barriers. It should be noted that the ZTV represents a 'worst case scenario', taking into account only vegetation and structures in excess of 4 m high. In reality, considerable additional screening at eye-level would be afforded by intervening tree, hedgerows, buildings and walls.

The ZTV uses 'target points' for the proposed dwellings set at an indicative height of 10m above ground level, and assumes a viewer's eye level of 1.7 m. The ZTV is presented on a 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey base and the findings were verified in the field.

Drawing 02 indicates that apart from properties immediately adjacent to the site the proposed development would be substantially screened from the existing residential areas southwest, west, and northwest of the site i.e. the built-up areas of Clitheroe. Theoretical views may be possible from the rising ground towards the A59 and from more distant locations towards Pendle Hill.

The viewpoint appraisal (Refer Appendix A) indicates that the actual visibility from many of these locations would be negligible due to the distance from the site and the extensive screening afforded by vegetation around the site boundary, which is not included in the ZTV model.

It is also important to note that visibility does not necessarily equate to harm. A development could be visible without being dominant, or intrusive and may improve the character or composition of the view compared to existing.

### 6.2 Viewpoint Appraisal

An appraisal of visual effects was undertaken from nine viewpoints, selected to represent typical views from publicly accessible locations at varying distances and orientations from the site (For Viewpoint locations refer Drawing 02).

For each viewpoint the following information is provided:

- A representative photograph;
- A description of the existing view; and
- A qualitative assessment of the predicted visual effects.

The viewpoint appraisal is provided in Appendix A and the findings are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3 Summary of Viewpoint Assessment (Refer Appendix A)**

Viewpoint	Location	Summary of Effect on View
Viewpoint 1	Highmoor Park, by the junction with Pendle Road, looking northeast towards the proposed site access	The proposed access road would be partially visible where it joins Highmoor Park, although changes to the character and composition of the residential /parkland views along Highmoor Park, Pendle Road, or from the adjacent carpark/picnic area would be relatively small and would not change the suburban character of the view.
Viewpoint 2	Access track (Public footpath 3-1-FP10) from Highmoor Park to Highmoor Farm	The western end of the footpath would be replaced with a new access road, resulting in the removal of vegetation from a short section of the existing track. The changes would have an ‘urbanising’ effect on the setting of the PRoW, although the effects would be localised and would adjoin existing residential development (on Highmoor Park).
Viewpoint 3	Public Footpath northwest of Highmoor Farm looking west across the site towards Clitheroe Castle	The proposed development would increase the prominence of the settlement edge, although changes to the character or composition of the view compared to existing would be relatively small. Views of the castle from this section of path would be retained as existing.
Viewpoint 4	Unnamed Lane east of the site (Cycle Route 91) looking towards Clitheroe	It is unlikely that the proposed development would have any effect on the setting of the cycle route or views across the Ribble Valley.
Viewpoint 5	Recreation ground east of the site, looking towards Highmoor Farm	Where visible the development would be viewed against an urban backdrop/trees and would not change the character of the views. Neither would it obstruct the distant hills.
Viewpoint 6	Abbot Walk, looking southeast across the site towards Pendle Hill	The proposals could have an urbanising effect on the semi-rural views across open farmland to the east. Although this could be reduced by the provision of a ‘green buffer’ on the site boundary.
Viewpoint 7	Pendle Road, close to the junction with Claremont Avenue, looking northwest towards Highmoor Farm	The development is likely to have a slight urbanising effect on the semi-rural character of the views across the site, although it would not be apparent to the casual observer.
Viewpoint 8	Bridleway northeast of Pendleton, close to Mearley Hall, looking	The proposals would not affect the setting of the bridleway or materially change the character of the view compared to existing.

Viewpoint	Location	Summary of Effect on View
	northwest across the A59 towards Clitheroe	
Viewpoint 9	Clitheroe Castle looking east across the site towards Pendle Hill	The proposals would extend the built form beyond the settlement although they would have comparatively little effect on the character of the view compared to existing and would not change the overall character of the view, or the setting of the castle.

Of the nine representative viewpoints assessed, the only notable changes to the character or composition of the views compared to existing were:

- Viewpoint 2: Changes to the appearance of access track (Footpath 3-1-FP10) from Highmoor Park to Highmoor Farm, where the loss of trees to facilitate construction of access road could have an urbanising effect on a short section of the route (subject to detailed design proposals); and
- Viewpoint 6: Abbot Walk, where existing semi-rural, southeast views across open farmland, currently experienced by residents on the western edge of the site would be replaced by residential development.

In both cases the adverse effects could be minimised by the measures described in Section 8.

### 6.3 Residential Amenity

Figure 18 identifies the residential properties closest to the site, from which the proposed development may be visible. (It is important to note that in planning terms residents do not have a ‘right to a view’ and changes to such views, which are not publicly accessible, are not normally a material consideration in the determination of a planning application).

**Figure 18: Residential Properties with Potential Views of the Development**



Residents of the following properties may have potential views of the proposed development:

### **Properties to the west of the site, on Highmoor Park, Abbot Walk, Bracken Hey**

Properties to the west of the site, on Highmoor Park, Abbot Walk, Bracken Hey, which are orientated towards the site are currently afforded views across open farmland towards Pendle Hill (Ref Viewpoint 6). In particular No' 4 Highmoor Park, and Nos 10,12,14, 16,18, 20 Abbot Walk would experience a notable change. The proposed development will have an urbanising effect on the semi-rural views, experienced by these residents, although this would be minimised by incorporating green open space along the western edge of the site. This buffer would ensure a minimum separation distance of 25m between the new and existing properties, which in conjunction with the proposed planting, would prevent overlooking or overshadowing of the existing properties. It would also maintain the views of Pendle Hill currently enjoyed by residents.

### **Page Farm**

Page Farm, lies approximately 60 m north of the site. Views to the south, towards the site, are largely obscured by existing trees adjacent to the property. The proposed development would be partially visible from south facing windows, although the effects would be reduced in summer when the trees are in leaf (Refer Figure 19). The track to the farm, passes through the application site, consequently the approach to the property will become more urban in appearance than existing.

**Figure 19: Page Farm to the North of the Site**



### **No 55 Pendle Road and Pendle View House**

No 55 Pendle Road, (Figure 20) and Pendle View House, (Figure 21) are located adjacent to the southwest corner of the site, although they are both substantially screened by dense vegetation along the site boundary. The proposed development would be visible during the winter months and largely screened in the summer, when the trees were in leaf.

Figure 20: No 55 Pendle Road adjacent to the south west boundary



Figure 21: Pendle View House adjacent to the south west boundary



### **Highmoor Farm**

When completed the residential dwellings at Highmoor Farm (Farmhouse and the barns/outbuildings to be converted to residential use), will overlook the proposed development adversely affecting the semi-rural character of the visual setting of the farmstead, although screen planting around the farmstead would in time, 'soften' the views. (Refer Figure 3)

### **Templewood**

Templewood a large detached property 240m south of Highmoor Farm (accessed via a long driveway from Pendle Road) is surrounded by trees which obscure views of the site and the proposed development.

## 7 Potential Visual Effects

Table 3 below sets out the predicted visual effects resulting from the proposed development.

**Table 4: Predicted Visual Effects**

Visual Receptor	Predicted Visual Effect
Zone of Theoretical Visibility	<p>The ZTV indicates that theoretical views would be possible from farmland to the northeast, east and southeast of the site, with more distant views possible from the west facing slopes of Pendle Hill.</p> <p>Apart from the castle and properties immediately adjacent to the site the development would not be visible from Clitheroe.</p>
Views from Local Roads	<p>The proposed junction and site access road off Highmoor Park would be prominent for road users, although the character of the 'urban views' would not change. There would be no other notable views of the development from the local highway network, or from the A59 Trunk Road.</p>
Views from Recreational Routes and Public Rights-of-Way	<p>The development would not be visible from The Ribble Way to the west of Clitheroe. Theoretical views would be possible from sections of the Regional Cycle Route 91, east of the A59, although due to distance the effects would be negligible to non-existent.</p> <p>The semi-rural views from of two public rights-of-way which run through the site could potentially become more urban in character, requiring sensitive design to create attractive, 'open' routes through the development (Refer mitigation measures).</p>
Views from Forest of Bowland AONB	<p>The development would be theoretically visible from the high ground 1.5 km east of the site, which lies within the AONB. In reality it is unlikely the proposed dwellings would be visible above the surrounding trees and at this distance any potential effects would be minimal.</p>
Views from scheduled Monuments	<p>The development would be visible from Clitheroe Castle (Scheduled Monument). Field observations represented by Viewpoint 9 indicate that due to screening afforded by intervening trees and buildings, combined with distance, that the development would not be apparent to the casual observer and would not affect the setting of the castle. The development would not be visible from Bellmanpark lime kilns and associated tramway 1.6 km northeast of the site.</p>
Views from Conservation Areas	<p>Apart from a small area within the castle grounds Clitheroe Conservation Area lies outwith the ZTV and therefore would not be affected by the proposals. The development would not affect any of the key views and vistas in or out of the Conservation Area identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (Refer Figure 5)</p>

Visual Receptor	Predicted Visual Effect
Views from the Registered Park and Garden	Apart from a small area within the castle grounds the Registered Park and Garden lies outwith the ZTV and therefore would not be affected by the proposals.
Views from Listed Buildings	Apart from the Grade 1 Listed Clitheroe Castle, all the Listed Buildings lie outwith the ZTV, therefore their setting would not be affected. Due to distance and screening afforded by intervening vegetation/buildings the development would be barely perceptible and would not affect the setting of the castle. Views towards Pendle Hill would not be affected.
Residential Amenity	<p>The development would be partially visible from a number of nearby properties, although adequate separation distances, combined with screening afforded by intervening vegetation means there would be no overshadowing, loss of privacy, or obstruction of view for the majoring of residents.</p> <p>The only notable effects on residential views would be from properties on Highmoor Park, Abbot Walk and Bracken Hey which are orientated towards the site and current have views across open farmland to the east. The development could have an urbanising effect on these views, although this could be minimised by the mitigation measures proposed.</p>

## 8 Mitigation

This section should be read in conjunction with the Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 3).

As this is an outline application, to establish the principle of residential development on the site, detailed design proposals and mitigation measures would be subject to a separate ‘reserved matters’ application, which would be determined by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

The following mitigation measures should be considered at the ‘reserved matters’ stage to enhance the setting of the development and minimise the adverse effects identified:

- **Public Open space along the western edge of the site**

The incorporation of public open space along the western edge of the site, would provide a buffer between the proposed dwellings and the existing houses adjacent to the site, preventing adverse effects on residential amenity and maintaining open views to Pendle Hill for residents on Highmoor Park, Abbot Walk, Bracken Hey.

The new dwellings should be set back a minimum of 25 m from the existing properties along this boundary (or as appropriate to accord with minimum separation distances) and the incorporation of native trees at strategic locations would aid landscape assimilation and would provide valuable amenity space for residents.

- **Improved Pedestrian access to the Countryside**

A key objective of the LCT5 is to improve access from Clitheroe to the countryside and the AONB to the east. The following measures are proposed to maintain or improve access through the site:

The provision of a new footpath through the proposed public open space, connecting PROW 3-1-FP9 in the north with PROW 3-1-FP10 to the south, would improve the recreational value of the development by creating a recreational circuit within the site, as well as improving connectivity between the residential areas and the wider footpath network.

To prevent adverse effects on the setting of footpath 3-1-FP9 caused by rear garden fences, creating a narrow, uninviting thoroughfare along the edge of the site, it is recommended that the path is realigned to the front of the houses. This would create a more open and more desirable route through the settlement, avoiding containment of the footpath. The route could also be enhanced by appropriate 'landscaping'.

Tree and hedgerow planting alongside the proposed access road would compensate for the loss of vegetation from the western end of the existing farm track (Footpath 3-1-FP10). In addition, the management of the existing trees including the selective replacement of the category 'U' Ash with new native broadleaf trees would ensure the long-term retention of the 'avenue' and would maintain the setting of the pedestrian route.

- **Retention of trees within the site.** Retention of mature trees, particularly the higher value specimens, and the perimeter hedgerows would enhance the setting and amenity value of the new dwellings. It would also help screen the development from the surrounding areas.
- **Screen planting along the eastern edge of the site**  
Dense woodland/hedge planting along the currently un-delineated eastern site boundary between Highmoor Farm and the southwest corner would screen the new dwellings and would create a green edge between the development and the farmland to the east (Potentially creating a more attractive transition between the new settlement and the open countryside to the east, than currently exists).
- **Townscape Assimilation.** The use of building materials to reflect the local architectural style for the new houses would aid townscape assimilation and match the appearance of existing buildings in Clitheroe, particularly when viewed from surrounding high ground, including Pendle Hill.
- **Amenity planting.** A comprehensive external hard and softworks scheme, to create a high quality safe, healthy and attractive place to live.



## 9 Summary

A landscape and visual appraisal, of the proposed residential development has been undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect, in accordance with current best practice guidance.

### 9.1 Summary of Landscape Effects

The application site comprises approximately 5 ha of Grade 3 agricultural land associated with the former Highmoor Farm.

Policy HAL5 of the Housing and Economic Development Plan, (October 2019) identifies the site in as a potential location for residential development, to meet housing requirements in the plan period (2008-2028).

The site is not subject to any specific landscape designations and there are no designated cultural heritage assets within, or adjacent to the site. (The AONB, boundary lies some 1.7 km to the east).

The landscape within and around the site is reasonably attractive, although it contains a number of detracting features, which reduce its susceptibility to change. Most notably extensive residential areas adjoining the western edge of the site create a hard edge to the settlement and have an urbanising effect on the semi-rural landscape within which the application site is located.

The A59 Trunk Road east of the site generates background noise which reduces the tranquillity of the area. The nearby sports pitches, dilapidated sports pavilion, telecommunication mast and new housing at Half Penny Meadows also detract from the semi-rural landscape.

The positive characteristics of the site and the surrounding landscape are the perimeter hedgerows and mature trees which provide visual enclosure and increase the scenic quality of the area. The two footpaths which run through the site provide important links between Clitheroe and the AONB to the east.

The proposed development would extend the existing residential development eastwards, encompassing the Highmoor farmstead, which has planning permission for conversion of outbuildings to dwellings. The proposals would increase the extent of residential development, although they would not introduce a new, or an uncharacteristic land-use.

The potential adverse landscape effects would be the permanent loss of Grade 3 agricultural land and the localised loss of mature trees and hedgerows, particularly to facilitate construction of the proposed site access from Highmoor Park, although the tree survey indicates that these are in poor condition and have a limited life expectancy.

The proposals provides the opportunity to create a 'softer' more attractive edge to the settlement than currently exists, they would also increase the amount of native trees and hedges compared to existing and would increase the recreational value of the site through the provision of new public open space and increased connectivity to the wider footpath network.

## 9.2 Summary of Visual Effects

In terms of publicly accessible viewpoints there are comparatively few locations from which the development would be visible. Buildings, trees and hedgerows around the site combined with topographical effects would provide substantial screening and generally the proposed development would not be visible from Clitheroe or the elevated vantage points, including the Forest of Bowland AONB 1.7 km east of the site.

The proposals would not affect the visual setting of any designated cultural heritage assets, including Clitheroe Castle, and Clitheroe Conservation Area.

Two public footpaths which pass through the site, linking Clitheroe with the AONB, would afford walkers close proximity views of the proposed houses. The amenity value of these routes could be enhanced by planting hedgerows/trees either side of the footpaths, details of which would be agreed at the reserve matters stage.

In terms of residential views, the only notable visual effects would be the change in views experienced by residents on the edge of Clitheroe who currently overlook open farmland. Particularly those on Highmoor Park and Abbot Walk which overlook the site. The effects on these residents could be substantially mitigated by the provision of public open space between the existing and proposed dwellings. This would allow open views over the site towards Pendle Hill to be maintained as existing whilst preventing overshadowing, or loss of privacy. No adverse effects on residential amenity are predicted and it is important to note that residents do not have a right to a view and the effects on private views would not be a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

## 9.3 Compliance with Planning Policy

This section considers the proposals in relation to the landscape planning policies identified in Section 3.

### Compliance with National Planning Policy Framework

#### **NPPF Para 127**

The aspects of the proposed development, which determine whether it functions well, would be visually attractive, sympathetic to the local character, maintains a strong sense of place and would provide a safe, inclusive and accessible environment are largely dependent on the detailed site layout, architectural design and the external works. These issues would be agreed at the reserve matters stage, which would be controlled by Ribble Valley Borough Council.

#### **NPPF Para 170**

Sets out the requirements for protecting and enhancing 'valued landscapes', whilst no definition of 'value' is provided, the proposed development would not be located within a designated landscape and the proposals would not affect the setting of any protected cultural assets, including the Clitheroe Conservation Area, or the Trough of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

## **NPPF Para 172**

The site does not lie within a National Park and lies some 1.7 km from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It would not affect the setting of the AONB.

## **NPPF Para 180**

The proposed development would be appropriate for the location. The assessment has not identified any notable adverse landscape or visual effects.

It would be located on farmland next to existing residential development, on land to the east of Clitheroe, on which a large number of new houses have recently been constructed (Half Penny Meadows) and conversion of the outbuildings at Highmoor Farm immediately adjacent to the site has been approved. The site is also identified as a potential housing site in the Housing and Economic Development Plan, Adopted in October 2019.

## **Compliance with Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (Adopted 2014)**

### **Policy DMG1: General Considerations**

Standard of building design, details of size, as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials would be considered at the reserved matter stage.

The visual appearance and the relationship of the development to its surroundings, including impact on landscape character would also be largely dependent on the detailed design proposals, although based on the Illustrative Masterplan it is unlikely there would be any notable adverse effects on the surroundings or the wider landscape.

The development would be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses (i.e. residential use)

### **Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations**

In terms of consolidating, expanding or rounding-off development so that it is closely relates to the main built up areas, the proposed development would be enclosed on two sides (west and south) by existing housing. It would extend the existing settlement boundary eastwards, although compared to the nearby Half Penny Meadows development the incursion into open countryside would be minimal and the scale of the development would be in keeping with the existing settlement.

### **Policy EN2: Landscape**

The proposals would result in the permeant loss of farmland to the east of Clitheroe. This land is characterised by the adjacent residential properties which currently overlook the site and which form a 'hard' unattractive edge between the settlement and the farmland. The proposals provide the opportunity to create a 'softer' more attractive edge to the settlement than currently exists.

The proposals would not change the overall character of the landscape within the study area or the local environs. The building sizes, styles and materials have not been defined at this outline stage. A 'non-standardised approach to design' which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity would be promoted at the reserved matters stage.

### **Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection**

No significant harm to the landscape or landscape features has been identified. The existing farmland within the site contains comparatively few landscape features. Existing trees and perimeter hedgerows would be largely retained and new avenue trees and hedgerows would be planted to replace those lost to facilitate construction of the proposed site access.

Subject to agreeing appropriate mitigation measures at the reserve matter stage there is likely to be an overall increase in the amount and diversity of tree cover compared to existing.

### **Compliance with Policy HAL5 Land at Highmoor Farm, Clitheroe**

The proposed development will make provision for local (including affordable) housing needs in accordance with the requirements of H3 and DMH1 of the Core Strategy.

## **10 Conclusions**

Policy HAL5 of the Housing and Economic Development Plan, (October 2019) identifies the site as a potential location for residential development, to meet housing requirements in the plan period (2008-2028).

Apart from the permeant loss of Grade 3 Agricultural land the potential adverse landscape and visual effects identified could be eliminated, or substantial reduced, by a sympathetic layout which incorporated a buffer between the new and existing housing, protection of the public routes through the site and provision of compensatory planting to offset the localised loss of trees at the site entrance.

Overall subject to the implementation of these measures, which would be agreed with the council at the reserved matters stage the development represents an opportunity to make a notable contribution to the local housing supply, without adversely affecting visual amenity or the character and quality of the surrounding landscape.

# Appendix A

## Viewpoint Appraisal

# Appendix B

## Tree Preservation Orders

# Drawings

Drawing 01: Landscape Planning Context

Drawing 02: Zone of Theoretical Visibility





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