

Response to RVBC Letter of 2nd March 2023
Re: Planning Application No: 3/2023/0160

Dear Ms. Hayes

I write in response to your recent letter of 2nd March 2023 which references some amendments to the plans on Malt Kiln Brow.

I have written before, setting out a significant level of disquiet regarding construction on this site.

The disquiet arises from the fact that with current plans for construction on the parcel of land on Malt Kiln Brow, we address and keep addressing just ONE segment of what was a HYBRID Application, embracing a number of proposed developments:-

- Restoration of Kirk Mill which was in a state of disrepair and the creation of a Hotel/Spa, Bar, Restaurant;
- 7 Holiday cottages on the old Berry's site;
- Kids' Club and Trailhead Centre;
- Re-location of the Village Cricket Club/ construction of new Cricket Pavilion;
- Construction of 60 residential dwellings, 4 of which would be on Malt Kiln Brow.

The Committee Meeting Notes of 13th November 2014 and the subsequent Inspector's Report of 16th March 2016 repeatedly refer to the importance of viewing the Application **as a whole**, since it includes a number of aspects which are co-dependent. I realise that we are going back a number of years but it is important to understand the justification governing the Inspector's decision to proceed with the various developments.

The Inspector's decisions of 2016 referred to the then NPPF and to Ribble Valley's Core Strategy. Given that the Application was a HYBRID Application, a decision had to be made in the round. Under consideration, and in line with National Policy was the **Heritage Value** to Chipping of the restoration of Kirk Mill and **the Economic Value** of establishing a Hotel/Spa with holiday cottages, Kids' Club and Trailhead Centre to compensate the village for the loss of Berry's Chairworks. Both of these considerations were weighed against the construction of 60 houses in a small village and the environmental impact such construction would have.

The Inspector cites DS1 of the Core Strategy which "sets out a development strategy for the Borough and states that for the Borough, the majority of new housing development will be concentrated in a strategic site.....It adds that in the Tier 2 Village Settlements (which includes Chipping) development will need to meet **proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits**. Taking account of the scale of the proposed development, in relation to housing.....the provision of 60 (houses) in

one settlement cannot realistically be seen as only meeting local needs. However, I do consider that it would deliver a **regeneration benefit.**”

The Hybrid Application clearly was not without its negative effects but, when judged against heritage value to the village as well as economic benefits, the advantages were seen as outweighing the disadvantages.

In respect of the land on Malt Kiln Brow for example, the Inspector states (19) “Whilst I accept that their appearance, design, precise siting could be such that their effects could be minimised, it seems to me that there would be some degree of imposition of these buildings on the undeveloped higher land on the margin of the Kirk Mill Conservation Area.”

Considering “the whole scheme”, however, the Inspector goes on to note (21) that “Whilst I have judged that there would be some negative effects from the 4 houses, when balanced against other factors, I consider that the scheme would have beneficial effects.”

The problem that arises from the 2016 decision, through to 2019 and up to the present is that **the rationale** for deciding the housing developments in Chipping have not borne fruit. The Hybrid Application has not delivered benefits to Chipping. What has been delivered is:-

- The relocation of the Village’s Cricket Club to provide a site for 56 houses;
- The development of Fellside, which apart from a number of bungalows to serve the needs of the elderly of Chipping, did not respond at all to local need.

The regeneration aspect which is cited by the Inspector as the *raison d’être* of his decision-making is conspicuous by its absence.

A valid question might be posed around the reason for the building of 56 houses on Fellside and the current proposed Application for four more houses on Malt Kiln Brow. This will be answered by the Lancashire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer reports under Policy/Principle contained in the Planning and Development Committee Meeting of 13th November 2014 where the Officer records:-

“At the launch of the project, the owners admitted that the sale of the land for 60dws was necessary to fund the renovation of the Mill.”

Under the Planning Obligations, as set out by the Inspector in 2016, it is stated “The developer would be obliged to undertake an agreed schedule of works to Kirk Mill before any dwelling can be occupied.” The Fellside Development, however, has been fully occupied for some time. Initial sandblasting was undertaken and possibly some pointing but since then no apparent work has been undertaken nor is it ever referred to as being earmarked for restoration.

In respect of the Hybrid Application, the Mill sadly has not been renovated therefore the Heritage Value to the village has not been realised. The construction of a hotel/spa and the development of the old Berry site for holiday cottages, Kids' Club and Trailhead Centre have not materialised therefore the Economic benefits to the village have not been realised either.

And yet, house building at the higher end of market value is now proposed without any visible plans in respect of **Regeneration**.

Lancashire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer asked a pivotal question which is axiomatic to the present disconnect between the Hybrid Application agreed by the Inspector in 2016 and the current Application for ONE segment of that Plan. The Officer asked, "Can we guarantee that if Planning Permission is granted and the land sold off to property developers, plans for Kirk Mill would still go ahead?"

Should the answer to this question be in the negative then the Inspector's reasoning, for the benefit of Chipping, its heritage and regeneration is invalidated. Furthermore, as a HYBRID Application, it is rendered incoherent.

In respect of your letter of 2nd March 2023, I would refer back to the Inspector's Report of 2016:-

"Whilst I accept that the appearance, design, precise siting could be such that their effects could be minimised, it seems to me that there would be some degree of imposition of these buildings on the undeveloped higher land of the margin of the Kirk Mill Conservation Area."

Yours sincerely

