

RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REFUSAL

DATE: 23 JULY 2026

REF: KH

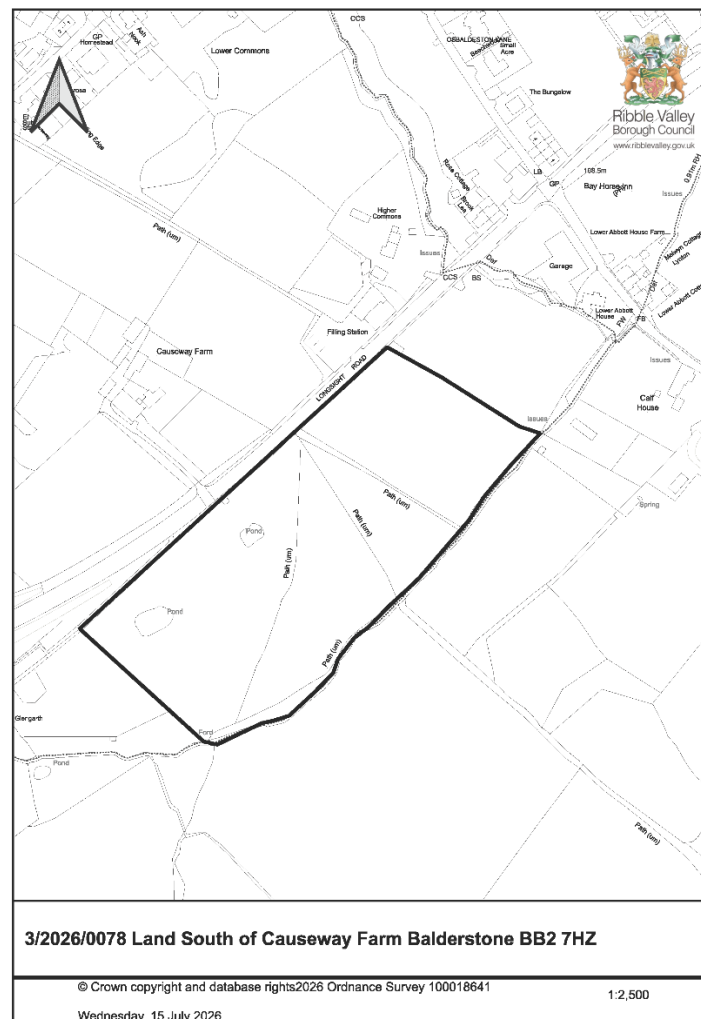
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APPLICATION REF: 3/2026/0078

GRID REF: SD 364463431559

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 85 NO. RESIDENTIAL UNITS WITH ACCESS APPLIED FOR OFF A59 LONGSIGHT ROAD (ALL OTHER MATTERS RESERVED) LAND SOUTH OF CAUSEWAY FARM, BALDERSTONE BB2 7HZ.



CONSULTEE RESPONSES/ REPRESENTATIONS MADE:

OSBALDESTON PARISH COUNCIL:

Strongly objects to the above planning application and will therefore be seeking a recommendation for refusal.

We fully endorse the objections raised by Balderstone Parish Council in their response of 1st June and in particular with the following points:

- A development of this size in open countryside will constitute a separate and isolated housing estate outside of the boundaries of Osbaldeston, Mellor Brook or Mellor.
- This is a greenfield site with local amenity value. The development of this site would have a significant impact on the character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the approval of this type of ribbon development along the A59 will set an unwelcome precedent for the rest of the Ribble Valley.
- Long term housing need in the area is already supported with the existing development within Mellor Brook.
- The increased traffic will have a knock-on impact to the safety of the A59 at the Osbaldeston crossroads and St. Mary's school.

MELLOR PARISH COUNCIL:

We wish to put in a stern objection to the planning application. Mellor PC objected on the following grounds:

- It is outside of the settlement area;
- It has numerous PROW going through the site, including a historical cobble path running through;
- Worry over setting a precedent for future developments;
- Loss of green space;
- Loss of habitat for protected newts (recorded on the site in 2025 on the protected species register)
- Loss of a wildlife corridor for resident deer which have been witnessed on the site often;
- Loss of nesting sites for owls, birds and bats. These have been spotted by locals, and documented on Facebook;
- Increased traffic on an already strained infrastructure;
- Loss of wetland, supporting insects, newts, birds etc;
- Drainage issues, leading to problems downhill of the site;
- Flooding risks, Mellor already has issues with flooding;
- Mellor already has huge amounts of new house building on its boundary;
- Loss of Village identity;
- Loss of a much used, much treasured local amenity;
- Risk of mental health issues to residents that walk the PROW, and benefit from the open space and wildlife on their doorstep;

For these reasons, Mellor PC object to any building structure of any type on this much loved, well used green space.

BALDERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL:

Balderstone Parish Council has considered the above application and has agreed to register its strong objection.

The principal concerns are that the area highlighted for development is in open countryside and outside the local settlement boundary. The application fails to make a case for the exceptional circumstances needed to allow any development in such an area. Indeed, this was on reason pertaining to the refusal of previous applications at this site.

The proposed number of housing units would have a profound effect on the character of the surrounding area. An estate of this size, at this location, would be incongruous, insular and would lack any integrated relationship with the villages of Mellor Brook, Osbaldeston or Mellor. Rather than form a natural extension to the existing settlements, this proposal would be a separate, isolated housing estate and introduce an overtly suburban form of development into a countryside setting.

There is already a housing development of over 100 units underway in Mellor Brook (South Ribble), with potential for further stages. This in itself will place significant strains on the locality's infrastructure. The application completely ignores this recognised profound change to Mellor Brook.

As highlighted in the Parish Council's previous objections to development at this site, there would inevitably be environmental degradation associated with both the buildings and related activity, including habitat loss and disturbance, increased vehicle movements, along with potential noise, air and light pollution.

There would be huge degradation in amenity value, with significantly impoverished access. The four footpaths crossing the site provide an important recreational walking route between Mellor Brook and Mellor giving walkers an opportunity to appreciate open countryside, which leads to spectacular vistas on the paths that assent to Mellor.

Whilst more a matter for the Highway Authority (LCC) it seems even from a lay perspective that the number of proposed housing units would generate traffic levels that would make access and egress onto the already extremely busy A59 difficult, if not hazardous. The site is not a genuinely sustainable location for a major housing development. Access can only be onto the A59 which, because of virtually continuous high daytime traffic flows is likely to discourage walking and cycling from the estate and reinforce dependence on private car travel.

This proposal would truly blight our area and should be refused.

LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY (LCC HIGHWAYS):

Lancashire County Council acting as the Highway Authority raises concerns regarding the isolated nature of the site where there is only a food convenience shop and a school within walking distance and these are suitably connected to the site due to pedestrians needing to cross the A59 which carried a high volume of traffic with speeds significantly higher than the posted speed limit.

Measures to mitigate the connectivity can be partly secured with off-site highway works including a signalised crossing on the A59 and new footways to the nearest bus stops for example. There are no measures proposed as submitted.

We consider that the application as submitted does not address the highway matters to accommodate the development traffic on the surrounding highway network.

Updated comments are expected and will be reported in the Late Items Report.

LCC EDUCATION:

Objection which will be withdrawn if the education requirements are met.

Request for contributions towards primary school places is not currently required. Request for contributions towards secondary school places of £365,651.

LCC consider the projected capacity of schools within a 3 mile radius of the site. Nearest secondary school to this development is 4.2 miles away (walking routes could be further) St. Cecilia's RC Technology College, Longridge.

LCC HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TEAM:

The HET is in agreement with the conclusions reached in para 8.1.5 of Lanpro's 2025 Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment. The HET is therefore of the opinion that the site does not warrant any further archaeological investigation.

LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY:

LLFA objects on the basis of an inadequate surface water sustainable drainage strategy which fails to demonstrate compliance with the priority hierarchy of runoff destinations as set out in the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems as well as failing to demonstrate that the proposed development provides adequate measures to measure everyday rainfall events.

NHS LANCASHIRE AND SOUTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (ICB):

Request a contribution of £55,937 towards the expansion of Oakenhurst Branch Surgery, Mellor.

UNITED UTILITIES:

No response received.

NATURAL ENGLAND:

No response received.

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT:

Raises concerns regarding habitat losses which have likely been underestimated and over-optimistic about possible on-site habitat enhancements. Questions whether the certificate provided for great crested newts (the DLL scheme certificate) relates to the current scheme or to the previous (different) application?

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:

Over 240 letters of representation have been received objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- Impact on A59 road safety as there already frequent speeding there
- Impacts on Longsight Road safety due to speeding and congestion
- Impact on protected species and habitats- bats, deer, badgers, over 52 bird species including owls and kestrels, as well as brooks and ponds.
- Loss of habitats for Great Crested Newts which are in ponds on the site.
- Traffic concerns as A59 is already extremely busy with regular traffic due to BAE and local schools.
- Destruction of greenfield countryside / green belt land
- Road noise is already significant
- Currently used as farmland so significant loss of agriculture
- Infrastructure not sufficient- not enough places at primary schools, secondary schools, shops and medical centres.
- Previous applications rejected for industrial and commercial use
- Development will spoil the green field landscape which leads up to Mellor Village on top of the hill.
- Concerns over loss of privacy and light due to overshadowing.
- Loss of trees including old and protected trees.
- No 'identified local need' due to lots of other development in the Mellor Brook / Balderstone area. Ribble Valley housing is oversupplied.
- Site would erode the rural character of the area and impact heritage and village community.
- Significant flood risk in area which hasn't been properly addressed especially in The Willows .
- Ground contamination from historic landfill site nearby.
- Conflicts with the Development Plan.
- Conflicts with the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Core Strategy Policies: DMG2, DMH3, EN2, DME2, DS1) as site is not brownfield, is not focused within Clitheroe, Whalley or Longridge, does not meet criteria for exceptions or new dwelling criteria, and damages the landscape character and intrinsic beauty of the countryside.
- Unsustainable assumptions on the use of public transport as there are limited public transport services in the area so most residence are forced to be car dependant. The proposal suggests residents will walk although the site is very steep and there are limited footpaths nearby.
- Development is outside any defined settlement boundary and exceptional circumstances aren't met.
- Inadequate parking, loading and turning into the development due to busyness and speed of A59, the other roads nearby are extremely narrow and windy.
- Branch Road will satisfy local housing needs and put stress on local services.
- Safety concerns due to diverted traffic due to development as Mellor Lane and Church Lane are not suitable for increased traffic volumes.
- Development is not sympathetic to existing local land uses in terms of massing, size, scale and style.
- Amenity loss as the site is used as a footpath for scenic walks by locals and tourists.
- Insufficient parking allocation within the development as walking, cycling and public transport is unfeasible in this area.

- Site is already misused as a landfill with complaints of litter, felling old trees without permission and piling rubble. This all impacts the local character of the area and causes ground contamination.
- Mellor is a village known for its rural character and this development would destroy that.
- The estate will be unaffordable to local residents so does not fulfil local needs.
- Road Safety concerns as Mellor is already used as a 'rat run' by drivers cutting through, the development will worsen this issue.
- Loss of 288 metres of Hedgerow Habitat of Principal Importance.
- Concerns on insufficient sewage infrastructure.
- Inadequate drainage and flood prevention.
- Traffic survey is inadequate and out of date (2022) as recent development has drastically increased traffic.
- Nearby roads are not wide enough to accommodate traffic safely.
- Detrimental visual impact to Mellor Moor and hill.
- Lack of demonstratable local benefit as the development does not need additional housing it needs services.
- Loss of valuable wildlife corridor between Abbott Brow to Mammon Wood.
- The Statutory Planning Consultation response (26th May 2026) recommended refusal due to inadequate Surface Water Sustainability Drainage Strategy and Inadequate Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- Serious concerns over light pollution and its impact on local wildlife especially the bat population.
- The proposed entrance to the site is at a dangerous and busy junction which sees frequent accidents many are severe with locals reporting alleged deaths.
- Traffic survey does not take into account the traffic caused by BAE and surrounding industrial estates with traffic jams that last 2+ hours occurring regularly.
- No local dentists accepting NHS patients due to overpopulation.
- Nearest doctors surgery that is not at capacity is in Blackburn so there is a complete absence of local doctors for new residents.
- Water and electricity supply is frequently disrupted due to lack of infrastructure with many residents keeping a stockpile of bottled water due to the frequency of outages and disruptions.
- Equality Act and Disability Considerations for residents with sensory issues and other disabilities as there will be an increase in traffic, noise, light and disturbances as well as a loss of quiet greenspace that people depend on for mental health reasons.
- Inappropriate location of development as there are areas better suited nearby including brownfield sites.
- Due to topography development will be extremely visible and intrusive damaging the rural character of the area and the experience of the wider landscapes.
- Archaeological impacts as there is a roman cobbled road which runs through the site, the destruction of this raises severe heritage concerns.

Members will additionally note that a ward councillor has requested that this application is determined by Planning and Development committee for the following reasons:

- Outside settlement boundary
- Incongruous development in open countryside;
- Sustainability – reliance on private motor vehicles;
- Doctors, schools, etc.;

- Ancient Woodland, Newts, PROW x 3;
- Highways/Traffic; and
- No community consultation.

1. **Site Description and Surrounding Area**

- 1.1 The application relates to an area of land outside of the defined settlement limits of Balderstone. The site is bounded to the northwest by the A59 and agricultural fields to the east and south. There are existing residential and commercial properties to the north and south, with the settlement of Osbaldeston to the north, whilst the settlement of Mellor lies to the south. The area is predominantly agricultural in nature largely defined by open fields and limited commercial and domestic development along the A59.
- 1.2 A number of public rights of way (six) cross the site at present which are FP030460, FP0304061, FP0304062, FP0304063, FP0304064 and FP0304065, these are proposed to be retained and/or diverted within the site. Bridleway 3-4-BW 70 lies adjacent to the site to the west.
- 1.3 A mains water pipe crosses the site from the northeast corner to the southeast which presents a 3m easement on either side as well as overhead electricity lines along the southeast boundary of the site.
- 1.4 There are two ponds within the site as well as a watercourse which runs along the eastern boundary. A number of trees and shrubs are on the site together with a hedgerow to the A59 western boundary.
- 1.5 The site is subject to several Tree Preservation Orders to the southeast part of the site.

2. **Proposed Development for which consent is sought**

- 2.1 The application seeks consent for outline permission for the following elements:
 - erection of up to 85 residential units including 30% affordable units;
 - provision of green infrastructure, including informal recreation areas and natural play;
 - creation of new native planting along boundaries and retention of existing landscape features;
 - Incorporation of attenuation basins as landscape features and sustainable drainage systems;
 - Delivery of at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 2.2 A new vehicular access would be created off the A59 Longsight Road to the northeast of the site.
- 2.3 An illustrative masterplan has been submitted which proposes areas for built form, surface water attenuation, woodland corridor, proposed green/blue spaces with mid-high risk surface water flooding, potential active travel routes and potential play area/village green separated by the re-routed public rights of way.
- 2.4 Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for later consideration.

- 2.5 Existing vegetation along boundaries will be retained and enhanced planting where possible with protection of the southern woodland through a managed buffer and supplementary planting to enhance screening and habitat values.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

3/2023/0148: Outline planning application for up to 9,290sq.m. of employment development. (Use Class B2 – General Industrial and/or Use Class B8 – Storage and Distribution) with access applied for off A59 Longsight Road (all other matters reserved) – Refused.

3/2024/0771: Outline planning application for up to 9,290sq.m. of employment development. (Use Class B2 – General Industrial and/or Use Class B8 – Storage and Distribution) with access applied for off A59 Longsight Road (all other matters reserved) – Refused.

4. **Relevant Policies**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN2 - Landscape
Key Statement EN3 – Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement EN5 – Heritage Assets
Key Statement H1 – Housing Provision
Key Statement H2 – Housing Balance
Key Statement H3 – Affordable Housing
Key Statement DMI1 – Planning Obligations
Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands
Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets
Policy DME5 – Renewable Energy
Policy DME6 – Water Management
Policy DMH1 – Affordable Housing Criteria
Policy DMH3 – Dwellings in the Open Countryside
Policy DMB4 – Open Space Provision
Policy DMB5 – Footpaths and Bridleways

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5. **Assessment of Proposed Development**

5.1 **Principle of Development:**

- 5.1.1 The application is for the construction of up to 85 dwellinghouses. The site lies outlines of the settlement boundary and is not an allocated housing site (HS2) and therefore the principle of housing in this location needs to be considered.
- 5.1.2 The site is located approximately 80m from the settlement boundary of Osbaldeston to the east, 240m from the settlement boundary of Mellor Brook to the West and 420m from the settlement boundary of Mellor to the south and is not an allocated housing site, therefore there is conflict with Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. However, a recent appeal decision at Chatburn (APP/T2340/W/25/3372635) confirmed that the Council no longer has a five year housing land supply and on that basis Policy DMG2 is considered out-of-date in so far as its purpose to restrict housing on sites which fall outside of the settlement boundary.
- 5.1.3 Key Statement H1 which sets out the required housing provision for the Borough is also out of date in this respect.
- 5.1.4 Key Statements DS1 and DS2 of the Core Strategy aim to steer development towards Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge as the most sustainable locations in the borough. However, whether a development is considered to be sustainable requires a site-by-site analysis looking at various aspects of connectivity and accessibility to nearby services and facilities.
- 5.1.5 In terms of local facilities and sustainable travel the suggested acceptable walking distances to common facilities are 200m (desirable) 400m (acceptable) and 800m (maximum) with schools 500m (desirable) 1km (acceptable and 2km (maximum). Walking neighbourhoods are typically characterised by a range of facilities within a 10 minute walk or 800m. An 800m walk references the former PPG13 guidance in respect of walking replacing short car trips, particularly those under 2km. Cycling is also a potential mode for shorter trips up to a threshold of 5 miles or 8km.
- 5.1.6 The nearest Primary School is St. Mary's RC School at Clayton le Dale which is approximately 450m (to the northeast) walking distance to the centre of the site, St. Mary's Church of England Primary School at Mellor is over 1.6km away beyond the recommended walking distance and without continuous footways along Mellor Brook and Mellor Brow. It is possible to reach this school by means of accessing the public footpath connections (FP0325060 to FP0325056) into Mellor, however this would be over 800m distance and up a steep hill. The settlement of Balderstone also has a primary school; however, this lies over 2.2m away to the northwest.
- 5.1.7 The nearest LCC secondary schools are St. Cecilias RC Technology College in Longridge approximately 6.5km to the northwest and slightly further away Longridge High School, St. Austine's in Billington is over 8km to the east of the site. A school Bus Service 616 operates on Longsight Road and serves Ribblesdale Secondary School in Clitheroe which results in approximately 33min trip.
- 5.1.8 There are high schools nearer to the site located within Blackburn with Darwen Unitary Authority including Pleckgate High School (4.1km) Westholme (4.5km),

Witton Park High School (5.9km) and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School (6km) to the southeast of the site, however, these are outside the control of LCC.

- 5.1.9 Mellor Brook, which is the nearest settlement, hosts facilities including a community centre (600m), bakery/shop (620m) and public house (680m). The settlement of Mellor is further away and contains a Community Centre (1.7km), two Public Houses (1.6km & (1.5km), GP Surgery and Library (2km), Post Office/convenience store, Pharmacy, Hairdressers and Beautician (all approximately 2km) together with two churches and playing fields/tennis courts which host various sporting facilities.
- 5.1.10 There is a Petrol Filling Station on Longsight Road located approximately 160m from the northeast of the centre of the site which contains a Spar convenience store. However, as this means crossing the A59 which has a high volume and speed of traffic enhanced infrastructure would be required to support walking at the site. There is no continuous footway on the A59 between the site and the school or a formalised pedestrian crossing point to the school and shop.
- 5.1.11 In this respect whilst there is a small convenience shop with the Petrol Filling Station on the A59 Longsight Road within 400m or a 5 minute walk of the site the rest of the facilities fall outside of the acceptable walking distances with the nearest Primary School 450m from the site and community facilities such as a community centre and public house in Mellor Brook between 600 – 700m away. The nearest Post Office, GP surgery and Library are sited in Mellor at least 2km away which is above the maximum acceptable walking distance. In terms of High Schools none of these are located within the 2km maximum with the closest 4km away In Blackburn which raises concerns in terms of accessibility and sustainability.
- 5.1.12 There are bus stops sited on the A59 Longsight Road approximately 165m from the site with services 280 (Preston – Skipton, hourly Mon-Sat, limited Sun service) and 25A (Mellor Brook – Blackburn, Mon-Sun 2 hourly daytime). These are subsidised by LCC and the site would be isolated and remote if these services were to cease.
- 5.1.13 The nearest train stations are located at Ramsgreave/Wilpshire approximately 4.5km to the east and Blackburn 5.3km to the southeast in measured directly, distances are much further by road. Again, these are beyond the maximum walking distances and would result in either use of the bus services or private motor vehicles in order to access these.
- 5.1.14 Cycling provision on the surrounding highway network is poor and improvements would be required in order to assist cyclists.
- 5.1.15 Therefore, in terms of sustainability the site does not benefit from good accessibility to such a degree that it would assist in reducing the reliance on private cars, particularly with regard to schools, health and provisions for a weekly shop. Even if some of these elements could be provided by delivery services this would still result in increased vehicular movements in order to facilitate everyday provisions for residents.

- 5.1.16 Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy attaches considerable weight to the provisions made for accessing the development by pedestrian, cyclists and those with reduced mobility (10.6 point 2) as well as promoting development within existing developed areas or extensions to them at locations which are highly accessible (10.6 point 3) by means other than by private car. Point 6 seeks to locate development in areas which maintain and improve choice for people to walk, cycle and use public transport rather than drive between home and facilities which they need to visit regularly. As mentioned above this site fails to deliver on these important issues which are also reflected in national policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.1.17 Chapter 9 Promoting Sustainable Transport of the NPPF is clear that development proposals should deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. Para 109 supports this by:
- a) making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities;
 - b) ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places;
 - c) understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;
 - d) realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;
 - e) identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and
 - f) identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.
- 5.1.18 NPPF Para 110 goes on to state that “significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering genuine choice of transport modes” and “opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”
- 5.1.19 Whilst Para 117 (b) states that development should “address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport”. LCC have suggested that improvements will be required in order to facilitate pedestrian access along the A59 with continuous footways for public access. A development of this scale should ensure that the needs of all future residents are met, however as previously referred to in this report, there are concerns over the accessibility and connectivity of the site to nearby services and facilities, which is fundamental to the success of the scheme and how well it can physically integrate with the surrounding area. The failure of the proposal to satisfactorily address these material considerations carries significant weight against the scheme.
- 5.1.20 It is clear that the matter of the sustainability of the site has not been addressed as detailed above and that opportunities for improving walking and cycling connections are limited, therefore, in this respect the proposal would fail to accord

with Key Statement DS1 and DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF Chapter 9 specific reference to para's 109, 110 and 117.

5.2 Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.2.1 The site is located on agricultural fields and is some distance from residential dwellings, however, it will be seen from residential viewpoints and as such consideration must be given in respect of the potential for the proposal to result in undue impacts upon existing or future residential amenities.
- 5.2.2 In this respect, regard must be given in respect of Causeway Farm (Grade II Listed) sited approximately 80m to the northwest, to the east are properties on Abbots Brow including Calf House Farm are approximately 100m to the East, Glengarth just over 85m to the southwest together with properties on Whalley Road 140m to the southwest.
- 5.2.3 There are also a number of properties along Whalley Road in Mellor Brook together with properties rising up Mellor Brow to the southwest ranging from no.'s 132 to 64 and Elswick Gardens which are orientated in a manner whereby their rear elevations and rear garden areas face towards the proposed development. Albeit these properties are between 200m and 400m away they would have clear, open views of the proposed development from their raised vantage points.
- 5.2.4 Taking into account the above interface distances none of the properties would experience any direct impacts, however, the elevated properties would have unrestricted open views of the development that will affect their outlook and the sense of openness currently afforded from their private garden areas and rear elevations.
- 5.2.5 Taking account of the above matters, the proposal would accord Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that the proposed development would result in no significant harm to the residential amenities of adjacent properties due to the distances involved.

5.3 Visual Impact:

- 5.3.1 The proposed development would represent a significant change in character from an open, grassed site to an estate-type housing development. The development would be clearly visible from the surrounding area and would represent a substantial incursion of development into the countryside.
- 5.3.2 The site is surrounded by open agricultural fields with the nearest built form (outside of the settlement boundaries) sited on Whalley Road to the west (six dwellings) and on Abbots Brow (eight dwellings) rising to the east of the site. There is some sporadic development along Longsight Road (A59) in the form of single residential dwellings and small scale commercial units such as the Petrol Filling Station, car dealership, public house and school. Due to the surrounding open fields the development on this site would not relate well to existing built form albeit that Mellor would be seen against the backdrop of the site due to its higher topography.

- 5.3.3 A Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted which sets out the methodology for the visual appraisal and the landscape and visual context of the site. This methodology is accepted.
- 5.3.4 The report assesses the proposals and provides landscape recommendation on that basis together with an impact assessment which considers the magnitude of change. It considers the impact on the landscape Character Impact within the 'Lancashire Valleys National Character Area (NCA) and the Undulating Lower Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Type and the Lower Ribble Landscape Character Area within the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment
- 5.3.5 The development has been designed so that it would relate to nearby housing at Mellor and Mellor Brook (to the southeast and southwest. Visually the site sits adjacent to the A59 within a tract of landscape that is less visible and less characteristic than the more rural, rising landform further southeast. The report concludes that scheme would not cause any adverse landscape or visual impacts on Lower Ribble Landscape Character Area whilst the change to residential use would result in a localised change to the agricultural site itself.
- 5.3.6 The report considers that with the mitigation proposed, the residential use could be accommodated and would not be an uncharacteristic change given the context of nearby housing uses and other types of development within the locality and along the A59 with adverse impacts on footpath users being inevitable due to proximity of built form within the proposed development. It considers that site represents ordinary, commonplace landscape features, not in favourable condition, within a much broader character area overall. With the more unique, and notable characteristics relating to landscape features much further afield, such as the settlement centres, vegetated valleys and industrial heritage and two ordinary pastoral fields within the transport corridor associated with the A59 which is a detracting and urbanising element with existing employment and residential development reducing the sense of open countryside character for this part of the landscape.
- 5.3.7 Mitigation such as retention of the existing field boundary hedgerows and trees which can be gapped up and strengthen; together with restrictions on maximum building heights; new screen planting to soften, screen and diminish visual prominence and the creation of green corridors for the public footpaths routes are proposed. These, together with soft landscaping will ensure the development is assimilated into its surrounding.
- 5.3.8 The site is not located within a landscape considered to be inherently 'valued' under the definitions set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. The fact that the site is undeveloped and open does provide a degree of locally valued visual amenity benefits for users of the public footpath and users of the A59. Views across the site are partially contained by the site boundary hedgerows and trees at the outer boundaries and internally within the site.
- 5.3.9 In terms of landscape sensitivity, the report states that combining the susceptibility and value of the landscape is considered to be a medium sensitivity to change and the wider LCA landscape is considered to be a medium sensitivity to change

temporary construction phase this is rated as a Major Adverse effect but would be short term, localised impacts on the Lower Ribble LCA.

- 5.3.10 With regards to the magnitude of change (impacts) according to the report residential development is not uncharacteristic within this part of the LCT. The existing agricultural grassland on site will be replaced with built housing development. A short section of hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site will be lost, as well a short section of the internal field boundary hedgerow, to facilitate vehicular access into and through the site. These features that are to be lost as a result of development are characteristic of the LCT but are not rare. The development will result in some change in private residential views as well as public views from the footpaths crossing the site.
- 5.3.11 Public views from the Public Rights of Way crossing the site will experience the greatest change with views across open fields being curtailed and interrupted.
- 5.3.12 The LVIA considers that the proposed scheme would result in Moderate-Minor adverse effects as only a small proportion of the landscape character area will be changed and no fundamentally defining features will be lost (a small area of privately owned agricultural land and short sections of boundary hedgerows).
- 5.3.13 Having reviewed the submitted LVIA it is not agreed that differing impacts would occur during construction and operational development phases in terms of moderate and minor as officers are of the view that the quantum of development proposed, together with its proximity to public rights of way, the A59 and residential properties would result in a detrimental impact on the users of the footpaths within and connecting to the site, as well as road users and nearby residents of a moderate to major adverse impact during construction and once the development is built out that would not be sufficiently mitigated by the existing and proposed planting as indicated in the illustrative Landscape Masterplan.
- 5.2.14 The impact on the landscape character of the site within the Lower Ribble LCA has been substantially downplayed in terms of the site and its visibility within the area, albeit this is localised, it is still a highly visible and important greenfield site which provides both pedestrians, cyclists and motor users with a visible break from any form of development with limited commercial usage and sporadic housing in a linear form along the A59 which does not expand further than frontage development which is then separated from the settlements by these important green fields spaces.
- 5.2.15 Overall, the proposal would result in conflict with policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 135 of the NPPF in so far as the introduction of a large-scale residential development onto undeveloped land is considered to have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. The scheme is not however considered to have any significant effects on existing trees or woodland within the site, including the ancient woodland, as such no conflict with policy DME1 is identified. Having regard to the LVIA, whilst the impacts are considered to be more localised these are not limited to mostly residential receptors, but include users of the public footpath network, bridleway and road users of the A59

Longsight Road and on this policy conflict is considered to carry significant harm against the development proposal.

5.4 Impact on Heritage Assets

5.4.1 Causeway Farm is Grade II Listed and sited across the site to the west. The Church of St Mary with Presbytery and School are also Grade II Listed and have been considered in the submitted Historic Environment Assessment which concludes that the proposed development would have no impact on the immediate setting of the listed buildings. This assessment is accepted and any impact would be limited which accords with Key Statement EN5 and policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.5 Impact on Trees

5.5.1 There are several Tree Preservation Orders on the southeast part of the site.

5.5.2 The application has been accompanied by an Outline Arboricultural Impact Assessment (IA) which identifies trees within and adjacent to the site, of which 7 individual trees and two groups are protected by Tree Preservation Order 7/19/3/224 (Whalley Road, Mellor Brook); no trees within a Conservation Area; no ancient woodland; no veteran trees, no trees within a community forest and around 874m of Hedgerow Habitats of Principal Importance.

5.5.3 The AIA identifies a total of 18 trees (three less than the previous application) within or adjacent to the site including category A and B trees, together with seven groups and three hedgerows.

5.5.4 The survey identified three hedgerows all of which meet the description of the Habitat of Principal Importance as well as tree groups G2 and G6 that are linear boundary features that also meet this description.

5.5.5 The final tree removal and retention would not be determined until the detailed design stage except for the tree removal that is necessary to facilitate detailed parts of the layout i.e., the access. These impacts are referred to in the report as known and anticipated effects.

5.5.6 There are no known impacts on trees covered by Tree Protection Orders. However, in terms of anticipated impacts the development will increase the likelihood of applications to prune or remove in the future and depend on the final proximity of Oak trees T10 and T11 to new dwellings. It is strongly recommended that the design process fully considers these protected trees and that appropriate Root Protection Zones are respected in order to retain these on the site.

5.5.7 The known effects on other trees within the site would be the loss of two Ash Trees T21 and T18 and the removal of part of hedgerow (H1) equating to 228m in order to facilitate the access together with a retained length reduced in height to 1.5m to accommodate the required visibility splays (this is likely to be around 40m).

5.5.8 Further tree and hedgerow removal would likely impact on Ash Tree T17 (Cat C3) and part of hedge H2 to accommodate an internal access road linking the two field

parcels and drainage easements. Hawthorn Tree T13 (Cat C) and Group 4 to accommodate the internal private drive as these are protected considered should be given to ensuring the layout is designed around these trees, Group G3 where parking and the permanent easement intersect with the group and removal of Trees T6 and T16 both Ash and T16 (Birch) due to their existing, deteriorating condition. (T2, T4 and T5 appear to have already been removed).

- 5.5.9 The amount of hedgerow to be removed which is Habitat of Principle Importance is a concern at over 200m and this would have a significant impact on the visual impact on the site. Even if this was replaced within the site the impact would not be immediately mitigated and therefore this would be contrary to Policies DME1 and DME2.
- 5.5.10 Any tree work would need to be undertaken outside the bird nesting season or after a detailed inspection by a qualified ecologist to confirm the absence of nesting birds prior to works.
- 5.5.11 The woodland located to the southwest of the site is part of a wildlife corridor which extends from Abbots Brow to Mellor Brook and then Mammon Wood. This would need to be considered as part of a habitat buffer/wildlife corridor with potential lighting schemes taking into account in terms of protecting wildlife habitat on and adjacent to the site.

5.6 Ecology

- 5.6.1 A range of ecology surveys and assessments of the site have been undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists to inform the application. The survey effort is acceptable and no further surveys need to be undertaken prior to deciding the application, although updated surveys will be required before any groundworks or construction works commence.
- 5.6.2 The proposal will not result in harm to specially designated nature conservation sites.
- 5.6.3 The site is dominated by modified agricultural grassland of rather limited nature conservation value, but there are more notable habitats present, including ponds, hedgerows, trees and ditches. Boundary habitats form valuable green corridors with the wider landscape.
- 5.6.4 It is proposed to retain these more valuable habitats, at least in part, as part of the overall scheme. To protect these more notable habitats during the construction a comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) will be required, this can be controlled by an appropriate condition attached to any grant of permission.
- 5.6.5 The highly protected amphibian great crested newt is known to be present on site and nearby. More common amphibians are also very likely to be present. At the time of the surveys the two ponds were dry at the time of survey and the pond which had previously been tested as good sustainability for Great Crested Newts was noted to have declined as a result of reduced water levels and was not able to be re-tested. Whilst a certificate from Natural England, under the DLL scheme,

has been submitted, this would appear to relate to the previous application for a different type of development and therefore, it is not clear if this can be transferred to this different type of development or if another mechanism/appropriate certificate would need to be applied for and obtained.

- 5.6.6 To protect other amphibians an Amphibian Method Statement should be submitted giving details of measures to be taken during works to avoid any possible harm to amphibians. This can be controlled by an appropriate condition.
- 5.6.7 The report states that the site has potential to support roosting bats and is likely to be of moderate value to foraging and commuting bats. Whilst the surveys undertaken so far have not identified any known bat resting places will be lost to the development, the application site is used by foraging bats. Bats are known to move between resting places frequently, and this particularly applies to tree roosts. If any of the mature trees identified as having some potential to support bats do in future need to be removed to facilitate a development then further bat surveys of these trees will need to be carried out.
- 5.6.8 The proposal fails to demonstrate that would not result in harm to protected species as outlined in the submitted Ecology Report. The submitted Bat Activity Survey is dated September 2022 and concerns were raised in regard to this. A supplementary letter from Etive Ecology was submitted advising that additional bat surveys would be prepared for each season (Spring/Summer/Autumn) to ensure that the baseline is accurate and up-to-date. No surveys have been submitted to date. There are also concerns relating to the submitted certificate (DLL) for the Great Crested Newts as this relates to commercial development and this application is for residential development. On this basis the proposal fails to demonstrate that it would adequately protect and enhance protected species and habitat on the site contrary to Key Statement EN4 and policy DME3 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.6.9 The development will result in some losses to bat foraging habitats, although habitats present on site and nearby which are of most value to bats (woodlands and ponds) will mostly be retained, and new landscaping can be introduced which could benefit bats. Nevertheless, all UK bats and their resting places carry a high level of legal protection and therefore other measures to conserve bats are recommended.
- 5.6.10 The development should avoid overly intrusive lighting of habitats of most value to bats and should incorporate new opportunities for bat roosting (bat boxes and integrated features for bats). This can be controlled by an appropriate condition.
- 5.6.11 Final landscape plans for the development should incorporate new features of value for roosting bats (e.g. integrated bat bricks, bat boxes etc.). This can be controlled by an appropriate condition.
- 5.6.12 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal states that there are no records or badgers within the 2km search area. Although no signs of badgers have been recorded on site, the site supports habitats suitable for use by badgers, and badgers are mobile in their habits. There have been reports of badgers which may venture closer to the site and therefore a precautionary survey for badgers should be undertaken

within one month of the commencement of any approved groundworks. Badgers and their setts carry a high level of legal protection under the terms of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

- 5.6.13 However, information suggests that this might not be accurate and therefore it would be appropriate to require a further walkover and reasonable avoidance measures to ensure that any potential use of the site or adjacent fields is fully addressed prior to any development commencing. This can be controlled by an appropriate condition attached to any grant of permission.
- 5.6.14 Precautions should be taken throughout site clearance works and groundworks to avoid harm to nesting birds, including ground nesting birds. No vegetation clearance required to facilitate the proposals should be undertaken during the optimum time of year for bird nesting (March to August inclusive) unless nesting birds have been shown to be absent by a suitably qualified person. All nesting birds their eggs and young are protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 5.6.15 A range of bird nesting boxes (including nesting boxes suitable for Swifts) should also be provided throughout the site as part of any final landscape proposals as a useful biodiversity enhancement measure.
- 5.6.16 The recommended CEMP (biodiversity) will go some way to protecting other wildlife during the course of any construction works. I am aware of credible reports that deer and foxes are present on the site and nearby. Neither foxes or deer are specially protected, but care should be taken during the course of any works to protect animal welfare at all times.
- 5.6.17 The invasive species Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* is present on site. Under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it would be an offence to cause these plants to spread in the wild. A Method Statement giving details of measures to be taken to control the spread of these species should be required to be prepared and implemented by Condition.
- 5.6.18 The proposal therefore fails to accord with Key Statement EN4 and policy DME3 in regard to the outstanding bat surveys and the validity of the certificate for the Great Crested Newts.

5.7 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 5.7.1 The development is required to achieve at least a 10% gain in Biodiversity as measured using a statutory Metric.
- 5.7.2 Current plans conclude that the development will be able to achieve a net gain in biodiversity on-site, mainly through habitat enhancement. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have questioned this conclusion –
- Hedgerow losses have likely been underestimated. Significant lengths of hedgerow will need to be removed to facilitate access visibility splays, and I would question whether it would be possible to retain the hedgerow which crosses the site, let alone enhance this hedgerow.

- Enhancing areas of grassland on the site may be difficult in practice, given that retained areas of grassland will be subject to pressures from the surrounding development.
- 5.7.3 GMEU has advised that the biodiversity metric provided to inform the application is revisited, and further assurance provided to the local planning authority that the required biodiversity gains will be able to be achieved.
- 5.7.4 Notwithstanding the above, if permission is to be granted to the development a Biodiversity Gain Plan and a long-term Habitat Creation, Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for retained, enhanced and re-created on-site habitats should be required to be provided by Condition, to secure on-site contributions to BNG. If off-site habitat units are required to achieve gains, full details of where and how these units will be secured should be provided as part of the Biodiversity Gain Plan.
- 5.7.5 As the on-site habitats proposed to be created or enhanced are likely to be regarded as significant, an S106 agreement should be required in order to properly resource the future indirect monitoring of the on-site Biodiversity Gains.
- 5.7.6 In this respect the authority cannot be certain that the proposal would align with the requirements of Key Statement EN4 which requires a net enhancement in biodiversity of a least 10% and whether this could be accommodated on the site and the mandatory BNG requirement.

5.8 Highway Safety and Public Rights of Way:

- 5.8.1 LCC Highways have raised objections to the proposal in respect of the proposed access to the development insofar that further information is required in order to ensure that a safe and suitable access can be provided for vehicles entering and egressing the site.
- 5.8.2 A Framework Travel Plan is submitted with the application. The Highway Authority disputes that the site provides options robust sustainable travel options as presented and that mitigation measures are considered to be required to address the immediate matters.
- 5.8.3 Lancashire County Council offer a Travel Plan support service whereby we oversee the progression from the Framework Travel Plan to the Full Travel Plan in line with agreed timescales and targets. To offer this service we would request a contribution of £6,000 based upon the number of dwellings.
- 5.8.4 Public Rights of Way FP0304060, FP0304061, FP0304062, FP0304063, FP0304064 and FP0304065 all cross the site. Separate comments have been provided by LCC PROW Team and will be included in the Late Items Report.
- 5.8.5 It is proposed to retain the existing footpath through the site; however, this would result in a significant change for users and does not enhance the experience for these users as claimed. This would clearly result in a significant change of

experience for the users and would deter walkers from utilising these Public Rights of Way.

- 5.8.6 The LVIA states that the impacts would be limited as the eyes would be drawn to the open space and surrounding fields rather than the build form this is clearly not the case and the proposal would conflict with policy DMG1 which requires proposals to consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access. Moreover, policy DMB5 seeks to retain, maintain and improve public rights of way particularly given the character of this rural area and the contribution these make to leisure, health and tourism.
- 5.8.7 Therefore, the development proposed would significantly undermine the level of openness experienced by users of the public rights of way to an unacceptable degree and fails to accord with policies DMG1 and DMB5 in this regard.
- 5.8.8 Lancashire County Council acting as the Highway Authority raises concerns regarding the isolated nature of the site where there is only a food convenience shop and primary school within walking distance, moreover, these do not have good connectivity to the site and would result in pedestrians crossing the A59 which carries a high volume of traffic with speeds significantly higher than the posted speed limit.
- 5.8.9 Measures to mitigate the connectivity can be partly secured with off-site highway works including a signalised crossing on the A59 and new footways to the nearest bus stops for example. There are no measures proposed as submitted.
- 5.8.10 It is considered that the proposed scheme as submitted does not address the highway matters to accommodate the development traffic on the surrounding highway network and that this would lead to conflict with NPPF para's 115 and 116 in this respect.

5.9 Affordable Housing/Housing Position

- 5.9.1 The applicant has submitted a commitment to meet the Core Strategy requirements in relation to overall housing mix and affordable housing provision on site. Policy H3 requires a minimum 30% of affordable housing - 85 units would equate to 25 affordable dwellings to accord with Core Strategy Policy H3.
- 5.9.2 15% of the proposed units should be for older persons. Within this a minimum of 50% should be affordable. Therefore 12 units should be designated for older persons housing and therefore the 15% is achieved. Of these 12, 6 would be affordable which meets the 50% requirement.
- 5.9.3 This aspect of the proposal would be acceptable and would need to be secured in a s106 agreement.

5.10 Drainage/Flooding Issues:

- 5.10.1 Paragraphs 181 and 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework require that applications which could affect drainage on or around the site incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff,

unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. These systems should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible and should:

- Take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- Have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards.
- Have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.

5.10.2 The Flood Risk and Coastal Change section of the Planning Practice Guidance reinforces the requirement for sustainable drainage systems to be considered at the start of the design process (Paragraph 055), and makes clear that planning applications need to be supported by a sustainable drainage strategy containing proportionate information on how surface water will be managed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk to others offsite (Paragraph 059). It reinforces the expectation that sustainable drainage systems meet appropriate minimum standards of operation, with clear maintenance and adoption arrangements proposed for the lifetime of the development (Paragraph 058).

5.10.3 The guidance also refers to the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems to inform decisions about the design, maintenance and operation of sustainable drainage systems (Paragraph 057). These Standards provide the most comprehensive and current guidance on minimum operational standards and are a material planning consideration.

5.10.4 The submission of a robust surface water drainage strategy is therefore essential to enable the Local Planning Authority to make informed planning decisions. Without it, it is not possible to confirm whether the proposed development satisfies the requirements of the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems, and therefore whether it complies with Paragraphs 181 and 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework or the Planning Practice Guidance.

5.10.5 In this case, the applicant proposes to discharge surface water runoff from this development to the watercourse. However, insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that all higher priority final destinations have been utilised to the maximum extent practicable. This includes non-potable use. Further evidence is therefore required to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1 of the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.

5.10.6 Further evidence is therefore required to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2 of the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems. This should include evidence that runoff from each positively drained surface, for at least the first 5mm of rainfall, is either collected for use, infiltrated into the ground, or else captured, conveyed and stored within SuDS features.

5.10.7 In this case, although a drainage strategy has been submitted, it is considered inadequate. It does not satisfy the requirements of the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems

5.10.8 Therefore the proposal fails to accord with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which requires that all development proposals provide adequate drainage strategies and Paras 181 and 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.11 Noise/Contamination Issues:

5.11.1 A Noise Impact Assessment CWF-BWB-ZZ-ZZ-RP-YA-0001_NIA_SO_P01 BWB reference 221383_001 has been submitted which concludes that the effects of operational noise would result in low impact and therefore mitigation measures are not considered necessary subject to the eventual site layout. This has been reviewed by RVBC Environmental Health who have raised concerns with the age of the baseline data (2022) whilst the report considers the noise levels with the likely increase in traffic. The issues resulting from this are:

- Any changes to nearby commercial operations will not be included in the last 4 years petrol station
- There is only one monitoring location (have considered DEFRA noise maps)
- They have modelled the LA_{max} noise as a point source - 6dB reduction per doubling of distance. Given the sites proximity to the A59 it should be modelled as a line source -3dB reduction per doubling of distance therefore they have provided a much lower LA_{max} levels at the houses the LA_{max} levels are fundamental especially at night in a bedroom Indoor sound pressure levels should not exceed approximately 45dB LA_{Fmax} more than 10-15 times per night.
- The worst-case scenario LA_{max} levels have not been used instead the report references a 90th percentile LA_{Fmax}, 15min measured during the nighttime. An LA_{max} should be an LA_{max}, for maximum protection of future residents this underplays any future loss of amenity. No justification has been provided for this in any standard and it is misleading.
- It is not clear why the noise report has monitored at 1.8m high as this would usually be 1.2m-1.5m which is representative of free field conditions

5.11.2 On this basis the submitted noise assessment fails to demonstrate that the proposal would be able to satisfactorily mitigate the potential for noise on the site.

5.11.3 A Phase 1 Site Investigation Report has been submitted which concludes that further investigations are required to determine whether pollutants are present on the site and appropriate remediate measures if this is proven to be the case. An appropriate condition requiring this can be attached to any grant of permission.

5.12 Open Space

5.12.1 Policy DMB4 requires all residential sites over 1ha. to provide adequate and useable public open space on a site-by-site basis. Green infrastructure should be multi-functional and encourage, where possible, walking and cycling opportunities.

5.12.2 A Parameters Plan has been submitted which sets out areas for the proposed built form, retention of existing ponds, footpaths and open space provision within the site. The amount of open space to be provided is important, however, this needs to be meaningful open space and not just undeveloped land within the site boundary.

5.12.3 No details of any proposed open space facilities or have the space would be utilised have been provided, however, this and future maintenance and management of the space could be controlled by appropriate conditions.

5.12.4 To ensure future residents are supported by appropriate leisure and recreation facilities, off-site contributions towards enhanced facilities would be required details of the proposed site are expected to be provided shortly and these will be included in the Late Items Report. The Council's formula for calculating contributions means an off-site recreation contribution of £216.90 per occupant is required to be secured in a S106 agreement. This equates to £57,153.15 based 85 x 4 bed dwellings although the precise figure will be calculated at reserved matters stage once the proposed housing mix is known.

5.13 Contributions

5.13.1 Contributions would likely be required from LCC Highways towards Travel Plan and public transport for a period of five years. Details of these have been requested and will be provided in the Late Items report.

5.13.2 NHS Lancashire & South Cumbria Integrated Care Board have asked for a contribution of £55,937 towards an extension of the current Oakenhurst Branch Surgery in Mellor.

5.13.3 LCC Education have requested a contribution towards local secondary school places at this time given the projected spaces available in schools to accommodate this development of £365,651.00. No primary school is requested at this time but this could increase to £81,800.00 dependant on applications pending decisions.

5.13.4 Contributions towards improvements of off-site leisure facilities of £57,153.15 would be required.

6. Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion

6.1 The delivery of housing and affordable housing to help meet the Borough's housing needs is a benefit that carries significant weight, however, the site is not within a suitable location for residential development having regard to the concerns about sustainability and access to facilities. Furthermore, the development of 85 houses is considered to result in significant adverse spatial, visual and landscape harm and unresolved issues relating to highways, ecology, noise and drainage. Overall, on balance, it is considered that the harm resultant from the proposed development would outweigh the economic and social benefits.

6.2 At the present time Ribble Valley Borough Council does not have a five-year housing land supply and in this instance it is necessary to consider the requirements of Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework and engage the tilted balance. In which case in order to justify a refusal of planning permission, the harm would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.3 The benefits of the scheme include the following:

- Up to 85 market dwellings towards the Councils' 5-year housing land supply which is considered to have significant weight;
- 25 affordable housing which is considered to have significant weight;
- 12 older persons housing which is considered to have moderate weight;
- Public open space which is considered to have low weight;
- BNG and Ecological enhancements which is considered to have low weight;
- Off-site highway improvements which are considered to have low weight;
- Economic benefits short term from supporting jobs in the construction industry and supporting the building trade which is considered to have low weight.

6.4 Therefore, when applying the tilted balance, the identified harm would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the combined benefits of delivering the proposed development.

6.5 As such the proposal is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would result in large scale residential development in an unsustainable location which would fail to provide satisfactory opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport leading to a dependence upon private motor vehicles contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policies DMG1, DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 -2028 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework which supports sustainable patterns of development.
2. The proposed development, by virtue of its overall scale and resultant loss and reduction of hedgerow adjacent to the road frontage would result in the introduction of an incongruous, unsympathetic, and discordant form of development, of an overtly suburban appearance, particularly when viewed from public vantage points along Longsight Road (A59) when approaching the site from both the western and eastern directions and from Public Footpaths FP0304060, FP0304061, FP0304062, FP0304063 and FP0304064 which cross the site. This would result in adverse long-terms and permanent visual and landscape harm. The resultant impact fails to respond positively to the inherent visual character of the area contrary to Policies DMG1, DMG2, DME2 and DMB5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028.
3. The proposal fails to demonstrate that would not result in harm to protected species as outlined in the submitted Ecology Report. In particular there are concerns about outstanding bat activity surveys and that the submitted certificate (DLL) for Great Crested Newts relates to a different type of development. Therefore, the proposal fails to demonstrate that it would adequately protect and enhance protected species and habitat on the site contrary to Key Statement EN4 and policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 -2028 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.
4. The proposed development would result in the loss of existing habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units, with insufficient details being submitted to demonstrate an appropriate strategy for achieving the statutory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) can be achieved.

5. The proposal fails to demonstrate that the proposed site access arrangements are safe and suitable to serve the development as such there are highway safety concerns contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 - 2028 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.
6. The proposal fails to demonstrate that the proposed site can provide appropriate drainage within the site that would ensure that the proposal does not result in flooding on or off the site contrary to Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. The proposal fails to demonstrate that future occupants of the proposed development would not be subject to unacceptable noise levels contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 as well as the National Planning Policy Framework.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://webportal.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2026%2F0078