

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.							
Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	26/08/2026	Manager:	LH	Date: 26/8/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0214			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Site Notice posted:	08/04/2026	Site Notice Expired:	08/04/2026	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Proposed erection of 26 affordable dwellings with associated access, gardens, parking and landscaping.
Site Address/Location:	Land at Albany Drive Copster Green BB1 9EH

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Salesbury Parish Council – The PC object to the scheme on the grounds that the site is not located in a sustainable location with regard to accessibility and there is conflict with Key Statement DS1, DS2 and DM12, as well as Policies DMG2 and DMG3 of the Core Strategy. They note that the scheme has already been found to be unacceptable in principle and there are no material changes in circumstances. The affordable housing does not meet the exemption test of Policy DMH3. They also consider that the ecology report is out of date and contains false information, noting the development would result in urban encroachment into the countryside and would erode the distinct settlement edge as well as have ecological implications. Concerns are also raised with regards to substandard pedestrian infrastructure, lack of cycle lanes, increased traffic on rural roads, lack of public transport during evening and weekends. Other concerns relating to drainage are raised as issues from residents of Albany Drive and Brown Leaves Grove have informed PC of surface water drainage and sewerage problems. Residents are concerned that the peaceful nature of the area and property values will diminish.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	The Local Highway Authority (LHA) previously did not consider that the application had fully assessed the highway impact of the proposed development. As such, an addendum to the Transport Statement was submitted to the LPA for consideration. The LHA have provided updated comments. They consider that the submitted details have overcome the previous concerns and does not raise an objection to the scheme subject to conditions. Notwithstanding this, the LHA maintain the view that the site is outside of the recommended walking distances outlined within the LHA's Decide and Provide guidance on preferred walking distances. They also note that the nearby network lacks cycling infrastructure which may impact the suitability of key routes such as the A59 for less confident cyclists and the bus service is relatively modest which may limit the

	attractiveness of bus travel to future occupiers. As such, they acknowledge that there would be a high degree of reliance on private car. The LHA also maintain the view that the carriageway should formally end to the south where access to the agricultural buildings is proposed. They recommend that a 0.5m service strip/access arrangement should be accommodated between the road and the redline boundary as the current layout does not allude to an end in the carriageway.
Environment Agency (EA):	The EA have removed their objection to the proposal as the revised drainage details include a connection to the public foul sewer, rather than a non-mains foul drainage system. The EA also note that the site is within 500m of one or more industrial or waste management site that is regulated by the Environment Agency and the LPA must be satisfied that the land use is suitable for this location.
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU):	GMEU note that the preliminary ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken in early December, not an optimal time of year for undertaking botanical surveys. However they are aware of previous ecology surveys of the site carried out at a more appropriate time of year and given the current land-use and condition of the site they would be prepared to accept the overall assessment of the ecological status of the site. The proposal would not directly affect any designated nature conservation sites. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) is recommended to protect retained habitats. They also advise that an updated survey of the site for badgers is undertaken prior to any clearance/groundworks commencing. In addition, as the site is used for foraging bats, an appropriate lighting strategy should be secured by condition to avoid overly intrusive lighting. An informative is recommended for nesting birds. With regards to BNG, they note that the Metric provided with the application currently shows that the development will not be able to reach a 10% gain on-site, and therefore off-site habitat units will need to be sourced. They would advise that a comprehensive Biodiversity Gain Plan and a long-term Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be required to be provided by the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition which will apply to any permission which may be granted to the proposals. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must give full details of how and where off-site habitat units have been obtained. GMEU would regard the biodiversity gain provision to be significant, and therefore advise that management and monitoring of the habitat creation is secured by means of an S106 agreement.
RVBC Countryside Officer:	The Countryside Officer recommends a tree protection planning condition for Category A/B/C trees BS5837 identified and all remaining trees in category U with at least 10 years life span or trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm considered as unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories may be removed if posing a constraint to development or if considered to be in such condition that they may pose a threat to life and/or property. They consider the landscaping proposals present mainly traditional species i.e. Birch, Rowan, Hornbeam and cherry with some semi ornamental all of which would help to retain some resemblance of tree/landscape character if the development goes ahead, like wise the shrub planting, the new proposed hedgerow mix is traditional.

	The Illustrative landscape plan has identified that all area habitats within the site boundary are to be lost to development however new traditional hedgerow planting may well create sufficient post-development habitat creation and enhancement.
RVBC Environmental Health Officer:	The Environmental Health Officer recommended that a noise assessment and lighting assessment be submitted prior to the determination of the application. They also consider that if the proposal is to use Air Source Heat Pumps, details of these should also be provided to ensure there would be no unacceptable noise impact. Additional conditions are recommended relating to the control of noise/dust/fumes/vibration and construction hours/delivery times. The EHO raises no objections on noise grounds to the submitted noise assessment and notes that the Air Source Heat Pump details would constitute permitted development (Officer comment: they would not be PD if brought forward at the time of construction of the dwellings however a condition could secure the details).
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA):	Following the submission of additional information, the LLFA has now withdrawn its previous objection and recommends conditions relating to the submission of a Detailed and Final Surface Water Sustainable Drainage Strategy, a Construction Surface Water Management Plan, a Sustainable Drainage System Operation and Maintenance Plan and a Verification Report of Constructed Sustainable Drainage System. They have provided site specific advice which whilst does not constitute a formal objection, highlights areas that may benefit from further attention, either at this stage or in future submissions as follows: - The applicant will be expected to provide evidence of how the storage volumes have been derived based on the proposed discharge rate of 4.5l/s as well as evidence which demonstrates how the discharge rate of 4.5l/s has been calculated based on an appropriate contributing area at the detailed design stage. - There may be some areas like the proposed swale which will contribute to the drainage system, in which case these areas should be included in the contributing area.
Local Education Authority:	The Education Authority at Lancashire County Council consider that an education contribution is not required at this stage in regards to the development.
NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria:	Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) has assessed the implications of the proposal on the delivery of general practice services and are of the opinion that it would have a direct impact which would require mitigation. A contribution of £17,275 is required towards the expansion of Brownhill Surgery, Whalley New Road. The obligation should also include the provision for the re-imbursement of any legal costs incurred in completing the agreement.
United Utilities:	No response received.
CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Approximately 73 representations were received from third parties raising concerns on the following grounds: -	

- Albany Drive will become a feeder road
- Albany Drive does not have good enough visibility to cope with new dwellings
- Salesbury school has been forced to implement a one way system due to number of cars in and out of the school
- Proposal will worsen congestion
- Walking and cycling is not safe due to narrow/lack of pavements
- Cyclists are not realistically going to cycle on A59
- No local amenities close by
- Proposal would put strain on existing infrastructure
- Bus service is infrequent
- Concerns regarding noise disturbance to residents and wildlife and loss of habitat
- Development is excessive for its location and would harm the character of the area
- Concerns regarding loss of green space
- Albany Drive cannot cope with construction traffic
- Proposal would erode natural countryside – conflict with Key Statement EN2
- Massing and scale is excessive for the plot size
- Proposal would result in loss of privacy and overshadowing to neighbouring properties
- Application lacks sufficient evidence that surface water would be effectively managed
- Residents would be dependent on private car
- The proposal would result in an unsustainable pattern of development
- The benefits to housing supply would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm
- Gardens have flooded since the building of Brown Leaves Grove – development would worsen flood risk
- Proposal would result in too many cars on Lovely Hall Lane
- Works have already started at the site (formation of roadway)
- Surrounding developments have already made water pressure worse
- Planning has already previously been refused – no material change
- Many residents of Albany Drive are elderly
- The affordable housing does not constitute local need
- Location not suitable for elderly residents who may occupy the bungalows
- No information is submitted to demonstrate that suitable off-site habitat units are available for BNG
- Allowing this development would set a harmful precedent
- A housing scheme has already been dismissed at appeal
- Proposal would double number of houses in the hamlet
- Concerns existing bridleway would be used as a cut through
- Future residents on lower incomes would suffer financial implications due to lack of facilities within walking distance
- Proposal would not help sustain existing facilities or contribute to the vitality of local businesses as there are little in village
- Bus service is infrequent
- The proposal includes a potential secondary access into adjoining field
- Unclear within SCI how residents concerns have been incorporated into scheme
- Excavation could cause stream to build up with silt and clay
- Building heights not in keeping with surrounding area (predominantly bungalows)
- Proposal would result in harmful urbanising impact
- Nearest train station is not within walking distance and lacks parking/accessible parking

Lancashire Badger Group raise concerns that there are 7 setts within 2km radius of the site. It is unacceptable to isolate badgers from their foraging area or remove it completely – relevant surveys/investigations should be undertaken and mitigation put in place.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
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 & Woodland
Policy DME2: Landscape & Townscape Protection
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME5: Renewable Energy
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMH1: Affordable Housing Criteria
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB
Policy DMB4: Open Space Provision
Policy DMB5: Footpaths and Bridleways

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2026)

Relevant Planning History:

Adjacent to site

3/2015/0200

Outline application for the demolition of 19 Albany Drive and the erection of up to 9 units with access off Albany Drive and all other matters reserved
Refused and Appeal dismissed

Application site

3/2014/0307

The erection of up to 32 no dwellings and associated works
Refused and Appeal Dismissed

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises a piece of land located to the South of Albany Drive, Copster Green which is a small settlement located on the A59 Corridor. The site is surrounded by residential development to the North, and open grassland to the South, East and West with trees/hedgerows along the boundary. A farm track also runs from the site access along the western boundary to group of equestrian buildings. The site adjoins the settlement boundary of Copster Green which is a Tier 2 Village however it is located within the Open Countryside, outside of the settlement boundary. The surrounding area comprises single storey and 1.5 storey

bungalows to the North off Albany Drive and a mix of two storey and single storey dwellings to the North-West at Brown Leaves Grove.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks full planning permission for 26 affordable dwellings, which includes a mix of 2 and 3 bedrooms units, comprising bungalows, semi-detached and mews type dwellings.

The proposed tenure mix would include affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership. The final tenure housing split has not been provided at this stage. A letter of support from a Registered Provider has been submitted by the agent for the application prior to the determination of the application.

The submitted layout proposes 26no. affordable dwellings with a mix of affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership units. The scheme includes the provision of 12 no. bungalows, 10 no. semi-detached properties and a terrace of 4 no. properties.

The submitted layout proposes that the vehicular and pedestrian access to the site will be from Albany Drive where there is an existing field gate. The application also features a swale as part of the sustainable drainage strategy which runs along the western site boundary, along with the retention of some of the existing trees along the eastern and western boundaries and across the central section of the site.

The development will be arranged around a central spine road which will lead to 3 no. turning heads and two shared driveways within the site.

Principle of Development:

Spatial Strategy

The application site lies outside of the settlement boundary of Copster Green which is a Tier 2 which is identified within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy as a Tier 2 settlement. The application site immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary which extends down to the southern boundary at Brown Leaves Grove and Albany Drive.

Key Statement DS1 relates to new housing development and seeks to direct new housing development within an identified strategic site and the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge in addition to Tier 1 Villages which are the more sustainable of the Borough's 32 defined settlements. The same policy also requires development within the Borough's remaining 23 Tier 2 Village settlements to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits.

The site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of Copster Green which is a Tier 2 Village. However, as it is not located within the defined settlement, the site is located within the open countryside. The Planning Inspector for the appeal decision (appeal ref: APP/T2350/W/15/3134524) for Outline permission agreed that the site was located open countryside.

The site lies outside of a main settlement boundary and therefore Policy DMG2 is primarily engaged which requires development to meet one of the following criteria:

- *Essential to the local economy or social well-being;*
- *Development needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture;*
- *Development for local needs housing which meets an identified need;*
- *Development for small scale tourism or recreation appropriate to a rural area;*
- *Small scale use appropriate to a rural area where a local need for benefit can be demonstrated;*
- *Development compatible with the enterprise zone.*

Policy DMH3 is also engaged in parallel with Policy DMG2 given the site location. This states within areas defined as open countryside or AONB residential development will be limited to:

- 1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.*
- 2. The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.*

The development of the site for affordable dwellings is one of the exception criteria outlined in policies DMG2 and DMH3 which allows for development in the designated open countryside. However, this is based on the development meeting an identified need.

In this case the proposal is for 26 dwellings all of which would be classed as affordable. In terms of tenure the submitted Planning Statement states that all the units would be made available as affordable rent, rent to buy and shared ownership units and the agent for the applicant has provided a letter of support from a Registered Provider (RP) who are keen to support and deliver new homes at the proposed Copster Green site and have obtained initial internal gateway approval to move forward with the site, should planning permission be granted.

The planning statement states that since the previous appeals at the site, there have been a number of appeals (as noted in paragraph 6.28) allowed in the last 3 years where a 5 year supply has been lacking and an affordable housing need identified. They consider that significant weight has been given to the need for the delivery of affordable housing and to addressing the governments aim to boost the supply of housing.

The planning statement also states that affordable housing need has until recently been considered in a 2020 Strategic Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (SHENA) Report (Turley) setting out a housing need of 88 units per annum. This did not provide smaller area or settlement need figures.

In May 2025, the Council published a new Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (AHNA) (2025) which requires a total gross need of 323 affordable unit completions per annum /total net need of 230 units per annum. With regards to the Parish of Sailsbury particularly, the affordable housing need is 4 no. units and within the adjacent parish of Clayton Le Dale, the need is 11 units (as identified within the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment).

Policy DMH1 sets out the Affordability Housing Criteria for the Borough including eligibility and provisions for occupancy which ensures the development type and tenure would be limited to an identified local need. Additionally, the Council's approved strategy for negotiating affordable housing to ensure that Local Need is met is as follows:

“•Securing a 50/50 Tenure Split (50% social rent capped at Local Housing Allowance rate and 50% affordable home ownership)

•Shared ownership capped at 80% staircasing in designated protected areas

• Where discount market sale is accepted on site, this would need to be discounted at 40% in designated protected areas

• A local occupancy cascade approach will be applied which priorities people with a local connection to the Ribble Valley (or in the case of a rural exception site, which priorities people with a connection to that particular ward)”

Key Statement H3 states that:

“Affordable housing is broadly defined as that which is accessible to people whose income does not enable them to afford to buy or rent property suitable for their needs in the open housing market. Within the

settlement boundaries of Clitheroe and Longridge, on housing developments of 10 units or more dwellings (or sites of 0.5 hectares or more, irrespective of the number of dwellings) an element of affordable, local needs housing will be required on all schemes. The Council will seek affordable housing provision at 30% of units on the site.

The Council will use open book viability assessments, provided at the developer's cost, within its consideration of affordable housing provision particularly where thresholds are not being met.

In all other locations in the borough, on developments of 5 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.2 hectares or more irrespective of the number of dwellings) the council will require 30% affordable units on the site.

The Council will only consider a reduction in this level of provision, to a minimum of 20% only where supporting evidence, including a viability appraisal fully justifies a lower level of provision to the council's satisfaction. Providing housing for older people is a priority for the Council within the Housing Strategy. Within the negotiations for housing developments, 15% of the units will be sought to provide for older people on sites of units or more. Within this 15% figure a minimum of 50% would be affordable and be included within the overall affordable housing threshold of 30%. The remaining 50% (ie the remaining 50% of the 15% older people's element) will be for market housing for older people.

All affordable housing provided must be made available to those in housing need and will remain affordable in perpetuity. Developers will be expected to provide affordable housing on site as part of the proposed development unless Ribble Valley Borough Council and the developer both agree that it is preferable to make a financial or other contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing on another site. Older people's housing should meet the Lifetime Homes standard as a minimum."

When assessed against Policies within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, the number of units would be significantly greater than the number of affordable housing units identified for the Parish and as such, in terms of Policy DMG2, the scheme is not considered to meet a local need. Whilst it is acknowledged that 15 of the 26 units would meet an identified need over 5 years, and that without the scheme the Council would be dependent on other applications coming forward otherwise the need would be unmet, a scheme of this scale beyond local affordable need fails to meet the 'local needs housing' exception criteria in Policy DMG2.

However, the most recent NPPF published (2026) identifies a number of scenarios whereby development outside of a settlement boundary may be acceptable. Policy S5 of the NPPF relates to development outside of settlements and given that the site lies just outside of the settlement boundary, this policy is considered to be relevant to this application.

Policy S5 of the NPPF states that:

1. *Only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:*
 - a. *Development for: agriculture, horticulture and forestry; outdoor sport and recreation; allotments; cemeteries and burial grounds; mineral extraction and processing; engineering operations and infrastructure (including for transport, energy, water and telecommunications); roadside facilities in accordance with policy TR5; national defence and security; or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;*
 - b. *Development for rural businesses and services, including tourism, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary;*
 - c. *The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces;*

- d. *The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential);*
 - e. *Limited infilling within groups of houses;*
 - f. *An exception site as provided for in policy HO10, or development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;*
 - g. *Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or 25 The existing building is to be assessed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of this Framework. 25 travelling showpeople accommodation, provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12;*
 - h. *Residential and mixed-use development which would:*
 - i. *Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B)*
 - ii. *Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;*
 - iii. *Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and*
 - iv. *Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location.*
 - i. *The development of land allocated for that purpose in the development plan (where this lies outside settlements);*
 - j. *Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would:*
 - i. *Be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or*
 - ii. *Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy*
2. *In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.*
 3. *Development proposals comprising isolated homes, which are those lying outside settlements or groups of houses, should not be approved other than in accordance with policy HO11.*
 4. *Development proposals which do not fall within one of the categories set out in this policy should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal would substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including to the character of the countryside and in relation to promoting sustainable patterns of movement.*
 5. *This policy does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt or on land designated as Local Green Space, which should instead be determined in accordance with policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8 (as appropriate). However, where development would not be inappropriate in these locations (through the application of policies HC8 and GB7), proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, and applying paragraph 2 of this policy.*

Firstly, when assessing against criterion 1 of Policy S5, it is considered that sub criteria a-i are not relevant to the proposal.

In respect of sub criteria j, the most recently published five-year housing land supply figure for the Ribble Valley (base date of 31st March 2025) indicated that Ribble Valley Borough Council has a housing land supply of 6.2 years. However, a recent appeal decision (appeal ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3372635) has found that the

Council no longer have a Five-Year Housing Land Supply and the housing supply is calculated to be 3.45 years. Furthermore, an updated five-year housing land supply figure (base date of 31st March 2026) is due to be considered by Planning Committee on 27th August 2026 which, if approved, indicates that the Council has a housing land supply of 2.24 years.

In which case it is necessary to consider sub-section j(i) and (ii) of the NPPF. The development is considered to be physically well-related to the existing settlement and of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure. As such it is considered this scheme would fall within this exception.

As Policy S5 (1) states, developments falling within any of the exceptions should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects. This shall be discussed in more detail in the Planning Balance section of the report.

Turning to the rest of the criteria of Policy S5 of the NPPF, Criteria 2 and 4 shall also be discussed within the planning balance section of the report, where the benefits of the scheme shall be weighed against any adverse effects. Criterion 3 relates to isolated homes which is not considered to be relevant to this site, as the site is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Copster Green and would therefore not be considered an isolated location. Criterion 5 does not relate to this application as the site does not comprise Green Belt land or designated Local Green Space.

Also of relevance is Policy HO7 which states:

'In applying the policies in this Framework, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, as identified through needs assessments prepared for the area of the local planning authority and other relevant evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, homes needed for different groups assessed under policy HO1.'

Given that the scheme is for entirely affordable housing, this policy is engaged. As identified earlier in this report, the affordable need for Sailsbury is 4 dwellings, with an affordable need of 11 in the adjacent Parish. As such, notwithstanding previous concerns that the scheme would result in an overprovision of affordable housing within the Parish, the Council acknowledge that the granting of this permission would contribute to meeting the community's affordable housing needs.

This will be discussed later in the planning balance section of the report.

Sustainable Location

Key Statement DMI2 states that:

"New development should be located to minimise the need to travel. Also it should incorporate good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car'."

Policy DMG3 requires considerable weight to be attached to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from the development.

Policy TR3 of the NPPF also states that:

1. *So that development is located where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, enable good accessibility for different users and make the most of existing and proposed transport infrastructure, development proposals should reflect the following principles, taking into account the vision for the site, the type of development and its location:*
 - a. *Development proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement, in the context of the area within which they would be situated, should be in locations that are sustainable (or*

- which can be made so, taking into account planned improvements, including any provided for as part of the development itself). This means the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical;*
- b. Opportunities should be taken to utilise existing or proposed transport infrastructure in optimising the amount or density of development which can be accommodated in different locations, especially where this can support more walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use;*
 - c. Any significant adverse impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be mitigated to an acceptable degree using a vision-led approach;*
 - d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure should be identified, assessed and taken into account – including taking opportunities to avoid or mitigate any adverse environmental effects, and to secure net environmental gains such as reductions in air pollution; and*
 - e. In rural areas, opportunities to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport and enhance the connectivity of an area should be taken where they exist and can be supported by the development proposed.*
- 2. The Connectivity Tool (Connectivity Tool - GOV.UK) should be used alongside other relevant quantitative or qualitative evidence in assessing the connectivity of particular locations proposed for development.”*

Also of relevance is Policy CC2 of the NPPF which states that:

- 1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant to the proposal:*
 - a. Accord with policies TR3 and TR4 so that sustainable patterns of movement are 28 prioritised, opportunities are taken to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and infrastructure is provided to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles*

The site is located immediately adjacent to the settlement of Copster Green which whilst is located along the A59 Corridor, has limited key services and facilities. Copster Green is identified as a Tier 2 settlement but lacks any key services or facilities. The A59 corridor runs through Copster Green and the village has one restaurant. However, the settlement lacks key services and facilities such as local shop, primary school, village hall and a post office.

Having regard to the accessibility of the site for future residents, it is considered that residents would have to travel to other settlements for access to facilities such as supermarkets, schools and medical centres.

The Local Highway Authority have provided comments on the scheme with regards to sustainability. They note that the Transport Statement identifies that the site benefits from basic pedestrian infrastructure, with Albany Drive providing footways on both sides of the carriageway and street lighting, supporting safe and convenient pedestrian movement. However, current residents within the area and future residents of the site, do not benefit from segregated pedestrian provisions on Lovely Hall Lane as the road does not feature of a footway. Given the intensification of pedestrian movement from the development and to further encourage sustainable transport use, the LHA would expect a 2m footway be provided from the junction with Albany Drive and Lovely Hall Lane to the junction of Lovely Hall Lane with Longsight Road.

They have suggested that a new section of footway should be tied into the existing footway provisions along Albany Drive and Longsight Road, forming a continuous footway to the A59 where bus stops can be found.

However, the applicant's accessibility analysis is based on a 2 km walking catchment and identifies Copster Green Village Centre, Salesbury Village Centre, a primary school, local services, and bus stops on the A59.

The walking distances to a bus stop and walking distance to the nearest primary school (Salesbury Church of England Primary School) fall outside of the recommended walking distances (400m for bus and 800m for Primary School). They also acknowledge that the local network lacks segregated footway provisions which create safe pedestrian routes, so whilst the Transport Study concludes that the site benefits from good accessibility on foot, the assessment is primarily distance-based and does not fully consider the quality of pedestrian routes.

With regards to cycling opportunities, given the walking distance to local amenities, cycling could be a preferred option. However, the LHA note that the nearby cycling network lacks cycling infrastructure which may impact the suitability of key routes such as the A59 and Lovely Hall Lane for less confident cyclists. In addition, given that the proposed development is for affordable housing, with 12 units for bungalows. It is reasonable to consider that a large proportion of occupiers could be elderly residents or residents with mobility issues who may not find cycling a suitable method of transport. The Local Highway Authority acknowledge that cycling may not be an attractive method of transport for future occupiers of the site.

Turning to the bus services, the site is located approximately 550m from a bus stop which are served by routes 25 and 280, providing connections to destinations including Clitheroe, Blackburn and Preston. Service frequencies vary, with the 280 operating approximately hourly during the day and the 25 operating at a lower frequency of approximately every two hours, with more limited provision on Sundays. As such, whilst some users of the site may travel by bus to nearby towns to access key services and facilities, the frequency of the service is considered to mean that there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle, especially at weekends.

In terms of rail accessibility, Ramsgreave and Wilpshire station is located approximately 3.1km from the site and therefore falls within cycling catchment. The station provides regular hourly services to destinations including Blackburn, Manchester Victoria and Clitheroe. Whilst the availability of rail services is noted, the distance from the site means that access is unlikely to be achieved on foot and will instead rely on cycling, public transport or car based trips.

The applicant has provided a number of appeal decisions within the supporting statement whereby inspectors have considered the provision of frequent bus services within village locations would encourage sustainable transport methods. Whilst the content of these appeal decisions are noted, an assessment on sustainability is site and scheme specific and so they carry limited weight. Whilst there may be reference to the increased provision of online services, working from home and the provision of EV chargers, this should not justify allowing development to come forward in unsustainable locations, particularly schemes which would generate considerable traffic movements such as this.

It is important to recognise that an appeal (ref: APP/T2350/A/14/2222255) at this site was dismissed in 2014 on the grounds of the site being in an unsustainable location.

A second appeal was dismissed on an adjacent site (APP/T2350/W/15/3134524). This appeal included an element of affordable housing but was dismissed on the grounds of development being in conflict with Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the site being unsustainable located, with a reliance on private motor vehicle.

The bus services are not dissimilar now to that in the above appeal hearing and the Planning Inspector in 2015 considered the site would perform poorly with regards to accessibility to local services and they also noted that whilst the appellant had identified a range of services within a wider area, trips to reach them are likely to usually be made by car. The Inspector also noted that while there are bus stops close to the site, it appears that the bus services are limited.

As such, having regard to the distance of the site to nearby services in surrounding villages and towns, the lack of suitable/attractive walking and cycling routes, in addition to the infrequent bus services, the site is not considered to be in a sustainable location. Given the requirement to consider the needs of all users, including those with limited mobility, it is not considered that the application site is a suitable location for

new affordable housing and there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle to access schools, medical centres, shops and other services/facilities, contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policies TRA3 and CC2 of the NPPF.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that all development must:

- 1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*
- 2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*
- 3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.*
- 4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.*

Policy P3 of the NPPF states that:

- 1. Development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity. In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people).*
- 2. Within this context development proposals should:*
 - a. Provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution which could have an unacceptable adverse effect on health and the quality of life. Where necessary suitable mitigation measures should be incorporated to secure acceptable living conditions;*
 - b. Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to reduce pollution affecting the wider area (such as through traffic and travel management or improved external lighting);*
 - c. Sustain and contribute to compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives and targets for air pollutants including PM2.5. Development proposals should take account of Air Quality Management Areas and be consistent with the objectives of relevant Air Quality Action Plans, Clean Air Plans and Local Air Quality Strategies;*
 - d. Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise, not result in levels of noise exposure which would have a significant observed adverse effect, and maintain the character of tranquil areas (those areas that have remained relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason);*
 - e. Limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes (those areas entirely, or largely, uninterrupted by artificial light) and nature; and*
 - f. Assess and mitigate impacts where the development could have an unacceptable adverse effect on water quality, especially in relation to sensitive water bodies such as chalk streams.*
- 3. In applying this policy, it should be assumed, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that separate regulatory regimes for the control of pollution will operate effectively, as set out in policy DM7. This means that it will be appropriate to take into account emissions limits set through those other regimes.*

The 26 dwellings proposed are a mixture of single and two storey 2-3 bed terraced, semi-detached and detached houses and detached and semi-detached bungalows which are arranged around a central spine road. The site is bounded to the North by existing residential development and to the East, West and South is open fields with vegetation and trees along the site boundaries.

The site layout has been designed so that the proposed bungalows would be sited closest to the existing bungalows at Albany Drive and the two storey dwellings are closest to the two storey dwellings at Brown Leaves Grove. Two section drawings have been provided which show the land slopes up towards the rear of the site. The applicant has now provided section drawings which show the land levels in relation to the adjacent existing housing developments and show the distances to the site boundaries.

The Council raise concerns over the relationship with number 12 Brown Leaves Grove and Plot 4 of the proposed development. Section drawings have been provided which show that whilst the land levels at this part of the site are fairly level, the dwelling would be built very close to the boundary, leaving a gap of approximately 4.6m between the two flank walls of the properties. In addition, due to the siting of the dwelling within the plot, plot 4 would sit further forwards than number 12 Brown Leaves Grove and as such would fail to maintain a 45 degree line of sight from the first-floor windows. Given the height of the dwelling, being two storeys and the siting of the dwelling, meaning that the entire flank wall of Plot 4 would be forward of the front elevation of number 12 Brown Leaves Grove. As such, the Council raise concerns that the siting and size of the development would result in adverse overbearing impact and loss of light to the amenity of number 12 Brown Leaves Groves.

In addition, Plot 26 is sited rather closely to number 25 Albany Drive and would be sited on higher land than the existing property. However, due to the siting within the plot, it is not considered to result in any adverse impact on amenity.

The relationship between the proposed dwellings is also considered adequate with the dwellings arranged so that there is no direct overlooking from habitable room windows which together with the 1.8 m boundary treatment proposed to the rear garden boundaries would provide adequate screening. Whilst there are land level changes within the site, due to the separation distances, the retention of the existing vegetation within the central part of the site would help to provide additional screening between plots. Had the application been recommended for approval, conditions could be attached in order to control the specific boundary treatments.

Concerns have been raised by the neighbours with regards to the age of many of the residents of Albany Drive who are elderly and would be affected by the development during the construction stage and from the resultant additional dwellings. However, impacts from construction would be temporary and there is no evidence to suggest that occupants of the resultant affordable dwellings would result in noise, disturbance or anti-social issues over and above the impacts of housing generally, or that the adjacent existing dwellings are particularly more vulnerable to such impacts. Conditions could be added to any grant of permission to ensure the hours of construction/delivery to ensure amenity is protected from a noise perspective during the construction stage.

The Environmental Health Officer has provided comments on the scheme. They requested a noise assessment be provided prior to the determination of the application. This has now been provided and the EH Officer considers that the road noise should not result in any adverse noise impact. An assessment as to the cumulative impact of the proposed Air Source Heat Pumps has also been undertaken and the EH considers this to be acceptable and could be secured by condition.

In addition, the Environmental Health Officer had requested a lighting assessment up front to fully assess the impact of the development on existing and future residential occupiers. This information was requested by the Planning Officer prior to the determination of the application. However, the applicant has failed to provide the requesting lighting assessment. The EH Officer is satisfied that lighting can be dealt with via planning condition to protect the amenity of existing and future residents.

The Environment Agency have also raised that the site is within 500m of an intensive poultry farm. An odour assessment has not been provided as part of the scheme, however given the presence of nearby residential receptors and that the site is regulated by the Environment Agency rather than the Council, this would not warrant refusal of the scheme.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'.

Policy DMG1 also states that all development must:

- 1. 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.*
- 2. 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.*
- 3. 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.*
- 4. use sustainable construction techniques where possible and provide evidence that energy efficiency, as described within policy dme5, has been incorporated into schemes where possible.*
- 5. the code for sustainable homes and lifetime homes, or any subsequent nationally recognised equivalent standards, should be incorporated into schemes.*

Policy DMG2 also states that:

"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. where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build."

Furthermore, Policy DMH3 of the Core Strategy states:

'The protection of the open countryside and designated landscape areas from sporadic or visually harmful development is seen as a high priority by the Council and is necessary to deliver both sustainable patterns of development and the overarching Core Strategy vision.'

Firstly, it is noted that the site would provide a mix of bungalows and two storey semi-detached/terraced dwellings on the site. The dwellings comprise a mix of red brick and cream render and the majority of the dwellings appear to be well spaced within the site. However, the Council raise concerns with regarding to the distances to the north of the site between plot 4 and number 12 Brown Leaves Grove which would be sited very close to the boundary with the neighbouring residential development.

Policy DP3 of the NPPF states that:

- 1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.*

2. *To create well-designed places, development proposals should also reflect relevant aspects of the following principles, as appropriate to the nature of the development and its location.*

Of particular relevance is criterion 'e' which states that development should '*use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site's potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme*'.

The land levels change throughout the site, raising to a higher level towards the rear. As such, there are likely to be some views of the site from the surrounding area, including from the A59 and from the PROW which runs to the east of the site. The submitted section drawing indicates that part of the land levels would be increased to create a level platform for some of the houses, however these are not considered to be significant enough to harm to character of the landscape or surrounding area.

The relationship between the existing and proposed development appears cramped and lacks a sufficient soft landscaping buffer to create visual distinctiveness between built form to the north and the new residential development. Additionally, the proposed development appears cramped and lacks a sufficient soft landscaping buffer with the southern boundary which is a more sensitive development edge with open boundary / fields to the south. As such, it is not considered that the proposed development constitutes a high standard of design and would result in a cramped form of development that fails to positively respond to the character of the site. Whilst criterion 'e' of Policy DP3 (2) of the NPPF promotes creating compact forms of development to optimise the sites potential, this should not be at the expense of poor design that would fail to create distinctiveness between the two developments within the countryside.

Policy DMB4 also states on all residential sites of over 1 hectare, the layout will be expected to provide adequate and usable public open space.

The supporting statement indicates that the site would provide 0.07ha of public open space within the site. In terms of usable open space this is limited to an area of soft landscaping to the south of the site. It would be preferable if there was more open space within the site which included formal children's play equipment given the absence of a children's play area within the settlement of Copster Green. However, on balance it is considered that a POS contribution towards improvements to the children's play area at Salesbury Memorial Hall would be acceptable.

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the quantum of development proposed fails to accord with Policy DMG1 in that the proposal fails to meet criterion (2) which requires that development proposals be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its scale, density and layout. It also fails to accord with Policy DMG2 insofar that the proposal fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or respect the special qualities of the countryside area by virtue of its scale, density and layout.

Highways and Parking:

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that all development must:

1. *Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.*
2. *Ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.*
3. *Consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access.*

In addition, Policy DMG3 states that:

All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards.

Policy TR3 of the NPPF:

Any significant adverse impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, should be mitigated to an acceptable degree using a vision-led approach.

The LHA have provided comments on the scheme in relation to highways and parking matters.

Firstly, they note that there is an existing field gate into the site which will be replaced. The current access provides access to agricultural land as well as some agricultural buildings situated to the south and fall outside of the red edge. It is understood that access to these agricultural buildings and land will remain and a new access to this area is formed from the new internal road through the site. Given this information, they consider that the carriageway should formally end at this point, with a 0.5m service strip/access arrangements which should be accommodated between the road and the redline boundary and the current layout does not allude to an end in the carriageway and as such this should be addressed to ensure there is a clearly defined edge. However, the LHA does not recommend refusal on the above grounds.

The acceptability of an adopted road layout is subject to a Section 38 agreement in accordance with the Highways Act (1980). Given that the development will form a continuation of Albany Drive, the LHA are of the opinion that Albany Drive would benefit from an amended speed limit, reducing the speed limit to 20mph. A gateway should be provided at the start of Albany Drive, and a traffic calming scheme implemented to ensure speed compliance along its length. The developer has agreed to these amendments as shown on drawing SCP/251150/FIG 1. It is understood that the access will connect to the existing carriageway of Albany Drive, continuing a 5.5m internal road through the site and the LHA accept the 2m footway of either side of the main internal road and would allow for two-way movement into the site. The new access arrangements would require the applicant to enter into a Section 278 agreement and will be subject to detailed design approval.

The LHA previously requested that the footway around the access must also be supported by crossing facilities featuring tactile paving in line with inclusive mobility guidance or be continued for approximately 4m to the West of the access on Albany Drive, which would ensure continuous footway provisions. However, to ensure visibility, the vegetation to the West of the access on Albany Drive should be removed and replaced with a footway to ensure drivers and pedestrians can observe turning manoeuvres within the turning head and/or vehicles exiting driveways from No. 30 and 28. This will be required as part of a Section 278 scheme and subject to detailed design approval. With regards to access to Lovely Hall Lane, applicant has undertaken an automatic traffic count for a 7-day period during 22nd June to the 28th June 2026 which shows that Lovely Hall Lane has an average of 1,000 vehicle movements a day with the 85th percentile of vehicle speeds falling just below 30mph. The LHA consider that the slow traffic volumes and vehicle speeds are consistent with an environment where drivers are able to accommodate the presence of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

The trip generation presented within the Transport Statement utilises TRICS data filtered for privately owned residential dwellings within a comparable size range (13 52 units) and applying multi-modal weekday survey data. The derived trip rates generate a total of 16 two-way vehicle movements in the AM peak and 14 in the PM peak. The LHA has undertaken their own TRICS assessment for the site and received similar results. The LHA would not distribute the findings following this analysis and are of the opinion that traffic related to the site is unlikely to have a severe impact on the operation of Albany Drive or the surrounding highway network.

Turning to Highway Safety, the applicant concludes that there are no existing highway safety concerns within the study area. The LHA has undertaken its own review of the 5-year analysis of Personal Injury Collision shared by the Police and whilst there are no recorded PIC's within the immediate vicinity of the junction with Longsight Road (A58), there two PIC within 500m of the junction which fall outside of the study area. 300m to the north of the junction, a PIC took place on January 2023 at 7:40am and involved 4 vehicles, resulting in slight injuries to 4 adults. Notwithstanding this, the LHA do not have any concerns that the proposal would exacerbate the existing highway safety situation as there are no significant trends among the PICs. The LHA

is also aware that the junction of Lovely Hall Lane and Longsight Road features stop markings and signage that provide an additional safety feature to ensure vehicles come to a full stop and observe traffic on the network before manoeuvring onto Longsight Road.

A number of Off Site Highway Mitigation measures are recommended and the LHA would look to secure the following:

- Continuation between the existing footway and the proposed footway provisions on Albany Drive to the West of the access
- 2m footway on Lovely Hall Lane, linking to the existing footway on Albany Drive to provide a continuous footway to the A59.
- Signage improvements scheme at the junction of Lovely Hall Lane and Longsight Road, including speed, weight and stop signage.
- 20mph speed limit change and traffic calming scheme for Albany Drive
- Tactile paving to be provided at a number of existing crossing points, including as a minimum the junction of Albany Drive with Lovely Hall Lane and the junction of Lovely Hall Lane and Longsight Road.
- Upgrading the existing pedestrian refuge island on Longsight Road in line with Inclusive Mobility Guidance
- Upgrade bus stop ID 2500IMG2128 and bus stop ID 2500DCL470 to Quality Bus Stop standards.

The LHA raise no objections to the internal layout but note that it is expected that the highway be properly finished with kerbs and a vehicle crossing point which will be provided for access from the carriageway. Included within the site are shared private access arrangements. The LHA consider it important that transitions between adopted highway and private drives are clearly defined, with appropriate clearly defined boundaries.

Concerns were previously raised with regards to visibility splays within the site and the submitted Transport Statement indicates that appropriate visibility splays of 2.4m x 25m are achievable internally in accordance with a 20mph design speed. Drawing SCP/251150/D01 Rev A has been provided, which shows visibility at two junctions along the primary internal carriageway which are acceptable following amendments to the landscape design as noted within the Landscape Proposals, drawing 7767.01 Rev A. The LHA consider that vegetation adjacent to driveway access points should be retained at no more than 0.9m in height or be removed to ensure visibility splays remain clear, this will be subject to review and approval subject to a Section 38 agreement in accordance with the Highways Act (1980).

The LHA raised some concerns with regards to the bin storage areas within the site and that Plot 13 and 14's designated bin storage areas could not be accessed by the refuse vehicle. However, had the application been recommended for approval, an alternative location could have been secured by way of planning condition.

With regards to turning within the site, the LHA are satisfied that adequate turning facilities have been incorporated within the site via turning heads, and have been supported by swept path analysis for a refuse vehicle. Drawing SCP/251150/ATRO1 shows that a 4 axle refuse vehicle can manoeuvre around the site without any significant overrun, which would raise highway safety concerns.

Turning to parking, following the submission of amended plans, the LHA are satisfied that dwellings across the site would have acceptable parking and pedestrian access provisions.

The LHA also consider that a detailed construction traffic management plan will be required to be submitted pre commencement of development to ensure that the impact of the construction traffic is minimised and managed effectively on the adjacent highway network and prior to the commencement of development, a survey of the condition of Albany Drive must be undertaken, due to concerns over its current condition. The LHA have recommended a condition to secure the survey and any upgrade works.

Some concerns have been raised from the occupiers of neighbouring properties that a bridleway could be used as a cut through. However, the closest PROW is footpath FP0338009 which does not directly link to the development.

As such, taking into account the comments made by the LHA and notwithstanding concerns raised with regards to highway safety and traffic implications raised by local neighbours, subject to a number of recommended conditions, the proposal would comply with Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy

Landscape/Ecology:

Policy DME1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

‘Where applications are likely to have a substantial effect on tree cover, the borough council will require detailed Arboricultural Survey information and tree constraint plans including appropriate plans and particulars. these will include the position of every tree on site that could be influenced by the proposed development and any tree on neighbouring land that is also likely to be with in influencing distance and could also include other relevant information such as stem diameter and crown spread’.

The tree survey identifies a number of trees within the site, including two category A trees. These are mostly located along the eastern and western boundaries and includes Countryside Officer has provided comments on the scheme and note that common hawthorn hedge which runs east to west centrally through the site. Three individual trees and a small section of a tree group will be removed to allow for the development and associated infrastructure. Trees of low quality T1 and G3 (Category C2) and trees of moderate quality T12 (Category B2) are also to be removed, as the arboriculturist considers that some tree losses are required to enable the development.

The Countryside Officer has been consulted on the application and they recommend the inclusion of a tree protection planning condition for Category A/B/C trees to BS5837 for all retained trees. All remaining trees in category U with at least 10 years life span or trees with a stem diameter below 150 mm are considered as unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categorise may be removed if posing a constraint to development or if considered to be in such condition that they may pose a threat to life and/or property.

A number of trees are to be planted within the site to ensure replacement for the small number of trees which must be removed as a result of the development. This includes hedge planting including along the initial section of the road and other hedge provision is to be provided between the front gardens and parking areas of dwellings for amenity purposes. Other areas of planting as shown on the accompanying landscaping plans which include a wildflower meadow area within the southern Public Open Space section of the site. The landscaping plan identifies that this planting is to be made up of Emorsgate EM2 wildflower meadow.

The Countryside Officer notes that the landscaping proposals present mainly traditional species i.e. Birch ,Rowan, Hornbeam and cherry with some semi ornamental all of which would help to retain some semblance of tree/landscape character. Like wise, the shrub planting, the new proposed hedgerow mix is traditional which is considered to be acceptable.

Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy also states that:

‘Development proposals that are likely to adversely affect the following.... ‘Wildlife species protected by law’ will not be granted planning permission. exceptions will only be made where it can clearly be demonstrated that the benefits of a development at a site outweigh both the local and the wider impacts. Planning conditions or agreements will be used to secure protection or, in the case of any exceptional development as defined above, to mitigate any harm, unless arrangements can be made through planning conditions or agreements to secure their protection’.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) have provided comments on the scheme. They note that the development would not directly affect any sites designated for their nature conservation value and the site comprises mostly horse-grazed grassland of rather limited ecological value, but there are some habitats of higher value on and close to the application site, including hedgerows and trees. They advise that to protect retained habitats and as a general wildlife protection measure, if permission were to be granted, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (Biodiversity) is required to be prepared and, once approved, implemented in full.

They note that the preliminary ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken in early December which is not an optimal time of year for undertaking botanical surveys. However, they are aware of previous ecology surveys of the site carried out at a more appropriate time of year and given the current land-use and condition of the site they can accept the overall assessment of the ecological status of the site. There have been concerns raised by an amenity society regarding the potential harm that may arise to badgers which are known to be located within the vicinity of the site.

The ecologist notes that badgers are mobile in their habits and there is some habitat on the site of value to badgers. They advise that a precautionary updated survey of the site for badgers is undertaken prior to any site clearance or groundworks commencing. With regards to bats, they note that the site is used as a local foraging resource for bats and the loss of semi-natural habitats on the site may reduce this available foraging habitat. However, they note that the habitats of most value to bats (hedgerows and trees) will be largely retained, there is extensive bat foraging habitat in the wider area, new landscaping is planned which will have some value for foraging bats and it would be possible to install features of value to roosting bats on the site, including bat boxes and features integrated into buildings. As such, the development can proceed without causing long-term harm to local bat populations. However, the proposal should avoid overly intrusive lighting of habitats of most value to bats and should incorporate opportunities for bat roosting (bat boxes and integrated features for bats). This can be secured by condition.

A range of birds may use the site for breeding, including ground nesting birds. Some nesting habitat will be retained as part of the scheme, and new landscaping will benefit some bird species. As such, an informative is recommended to remind the applicant that under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. They also consider that it should be possible to install a range of bird nesting boxes throughout the site, post-completion, as part of any detailed landscaping proposals.

Turning to Biodiversity Net-Gain (BNG), the development is required to achieve at least a 10% Gain in Biodiversity as measured using a statutory Metric. The Metric provided with the application currently shows that the development would not be able to reach a 10% gain on-site, and therefore off-site habitat units would need to be sourced. The ecologist at GMEU advises that a comprehensive Biodiversity Gain Plan and a long-term Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) should be required to be provided by the statutory Biodiversity Gain Condition which will apply to any permission. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must give full details of how and where off-site habitat units have been obtained. They also regard the biodiversity gain provision to be significant, and therefore they advise that management and monitoring of the habitat creation is secured by means of an S106 agreement. Had the application been recommended for approval, this could have been secured by way of S106 agreement.

Flood Risk and Drainage:

Policy DME6 states that:

'Development will not be permitted where the proposal would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. Applications for development should include appropriate measures for the conservation, protection and management of water such that development contributes to:

1. preventing pollution of surface and / or groundwater
2. reducing water consumption
3. reducing the risk of surface water flooding (for example the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS))

As a part of the consideration of water management issues, and in parallel with flood management objectives, the authority will also seek the protection of the borough's water courses for their biodiversity value.

All applications for planning permission should include details for surface water drainage and means of disposal based on sustainable drainage principles. the use of the public sewerage system is the least sustainable form of surface water drainage and therefore development proposals will be expected to investigate and identify more sustainable alternatives to help reduce the risk of surface water flooding and environmental impact'.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and the surface water flood mapping identifies small areas of low to medium surface-water flood risk in the wider area, particularly around the Albany Drive / Longsight Road junction where local highway drainage constraints exist. The development site itself is predominantly within very low to low surface-water risk zones. The supporting statement indicates that the small risk area is retained in the landscaped area at the north and no housing or access areas of the site would be affected. There have been a number of concerns raised by the occupiers of neighbouring properties with regards to the scheme potentially worsening existing drainage issues.

The Environment Agency (EA) and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) originally objected to the scheme on inadequate drainage information. Further information has been provided and the EA and LLFA have since removed their objection. There have been a number of concerns raised from the occupiers of nearby residential properties regarding the increase in flood risk that may arise from the scheme. Noting that since the building of the nearby development at Brown Leaves Grove, there has been an increase in flooding in the area. However, the LLFA are satisfied that subject to conditions relating to the submission of a Detailed and Final Surface Water Sustainable Drainage Strategy, a Construction Surface Water Management Plan, a Sustainable Drainage System Operation and Maintenance Plan and a Verification Report of Constructed Sustainable Drainage System, the development would be acceptable and would not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The LLFA have provided site specific advice which whilst does not constitute a formal objection, highlights areas that may benefit from further attention, either at this stage or in future submissions, which includes comments that the applicant will be expected to provide evidence of how the storage volumes have been derived based on the proposed discharge rate of 4.5l/s as well as evidence which demonstrates how the discharge rate of 4.5l/s has been calculated based on an appropriate contributing area at the detailed design stage. They also note that there may be some areas like the proposed swale which will contribute to the drainage system, in which case these areas should be included in the contributing area. It is considered that this information can be included within the detailed design of the surface water management plan and dealt with at the discharge of condition stage.

Contamination:

A Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report has been submitted for the site. This study has identified through historical mapping data and review of records that the site has been used for agricultural purposes since 1844 and also shows that the existing access track that runs along the northern and western boundary has been present from 2003. There is no made ground indicated to be present on-site or records of contamination on the land or coal mining activity in the area. A phase 2 site investigation is recommended from which a remediation strategy could be formulated along with verification proposals if necessary. This could be secured by planning condition prior to development commencing, if permission were to be granted.

Contributions:

A summary of the contributions required is as follows: -

Public Open Space

Policy DMB4 states that the Council will negotiate an off-site leisure contribution on a case-by-case basis. Concerns about the quality and accessibility of public open space (POS) on site have previously been raised within the design section of this report. Furthermore, no formal children's play facilities are proposed on site.

Therefore, it is reasonable for a development of this scale to make a contribution towards improvements to existing play facilities in the Parish. Policy DMI1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides the policy framework / justification for such requirements. POS contributions are calculated based on the impact of the proposed development on the Borough's current provision and its identified future needs. A total cost figure of open space, sport and leisure requirements has been used to generate a per head contribution that relates overall resident numbers to the overall combined costs of the various open space requirements.

Applying the Council's cost per head figure to this development, it would result in a contribution requirement of £11,365.56. This would be collected by the Council and passed onto Salesbury parish council towards improvements of the play area at Salesbury Memorial Hall.

Education

An education contribution is not required at this stage in regard to this development.

NHS

NHS Lancashire & Cumbria Integrated Care Board has requested a contribution to mitigate against the impact on delivery for the amount of £17,275 towards the expansion of Brownhill Surgery, Whalley New Road. Unlike the education and POS contributions, Policy DMI1 of the Core Strategy does not provide a policy framework for upholding such requirements. However, the NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance do provide such a framework where the contribution requested / formula provided is demonstrated to be directly related to the development which the LPA considers has been satisfied.

Highways

The Local Highway Authority require several highway mitigation schemes to support movement in and around the site, as well as enhance sustainable transport means, actively supporting and encouraging use for future residents. This includes the implementation of the following schemes:

- 2m footway on Lovely Hall Lane, linking to the existing footway on Albany Drive to provide a continuous footway to the A59.
- Signage improvements scheme at the junction of Lovely Hall Lane and Longsight Road, including speed, weight and stop signage.
- 20mph speed limit change and traffic calming scheme for Albany Drive
- Tactile paving to be provided at a number of existing crossing points, including as a minimum the junction of Albany Drive with Lovely Hall Lane and the junction of Lovely Hall Lane and Longsight Road.
- Upgrading the existing pedestrian refuge island on Longsight Road in line with Inclusive Mobility Guidance
- Upgrade bus stop ID 2500IMG2128 and bus stop ID 2500DCL470 to Quality Bus Stop standards.

The applicant has confirmed their support to such contributions and mitigation schemes.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

For the reasons outlined above the proposed development, by reason of the quantum of development proposed fails to accord with Policy DMG1 in that the proposal fails to meet criterion (2) which requires that development proposals be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its scale, density and layout. It also fails to accord with Policy DMG2 in that it fails to be in keeping with the character of the landscape or respect the special qualities of the countryside area by resulting in a cramped form of development along the northern boundary by way of inadequate soft landscaping buffer, representing poor design.

The proposal would also result in an adverse impact on neighbour amenity to the occupiers of number 12 Brown Leaves Grove by way of overbearing impact and loss of light, contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Lastly, due to the location of the site, the proposed scheme would result in a reliance on private motor vehicle, being sited in an unsustainable location, which is not within easy walking distance of key services or facilities and would be in a location without good access to public transport. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

The Council is not able to demonstrate a Five Year Housing Land Supply and Criterion 1(j) of Policy S5 of the NPPF states that development should be approved which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure.

As the development would accord with this criteria, Policy S5 allows for it to be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.

Criterion 2 states that in applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

Having regard to the benefits of the scheme, the proposal would deliver affordable housing which would contribute to an identified affordable housing need. As such, in accordance with Policy HO7 of the NPPF, this is given substantial weight. In addition, the development would provide 26 dwellings which would help contribute to the Councils Five-Year Housing Land Supply as the application is for full planning permission. As such, this is given significant weight. Other benefits are identified insofar that the scheme would provide an improved footpath to Longsight Road and upgrade works to a bus stop which would have wider benefits for the local community. However, this is given low weight, along with the provision of Public Open Space which is of low quality and does not provide any children's play equipment. Some economic benefits would arise through the provision of jobs during the construction phase but again, this would be given limited weight given it would be temporary.

The site is in an unsustainable location (as previously identified by the Planning Inspector) and is not considered to be within walking distance to local schools and amenities site do not benefit from segregated pedestrian provisions on Lovely Hall Lane as the road does not feature of a footway. The nearest primary school to the site, Salesbury Church of England Primary School, which is approximately from the site, exceeding the 800m recommended walking distance. Similarly, the site is within the upper threshold of 2000m to other local amenities such as supermarkets and convenience stores and the local network lacks segregated footway provisions which create safe pedestrian routes. As such, due to the constraints of the surrounding area and the distances to nearby services and facilities, walking as a method of sustainable travel is unlikely. Copster Green also lacks a frequent bus service and Longsight Road offers limited cycling

provision so it is likely that walking, cycling and bus would not likely be an attractive method of transport for future occupiers of the scheme and there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle.

As such, this fails to accord with Key Statement DMI2 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. For the purposes of assessing the scheme under Policy TR3, the development, comprising 26 dwellings which would likely include families could generate a significant amount of movement as Copster Green is a small settlement whereby the Parish of Salesbury has a population of 421 (based on figures taken from the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment) and as such, the proposal would fail to also comply with Policy TR3 of the NPPF which states that in the above case, the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical.

Whilst substantial weight must be given to the benefit of providing affordable housing and contributing towards an unmet need, this is considered to be outweighed by the unsustainable location of the site for the above reasons, and would deem the application site (as previously assessed at appeal) an unsuitable location for the provision of affordable housing to meet the travel needs of future occupiers. As such, the significant harm that would arise from the unsustainable location of the development, along with other harm identified on visual and neighbour amenity grounds is considered to substantially outweigh the benefits of providing affordable housing within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:

01:	The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy TR3 of the NPPF insofar that approval would lead to the creation of up to twenty-six new residential dwellings in an unsustainable location whereby there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle by occupiers of the dwellings to access key services and facilities.
02:	The proposed development by reason of its design, scale and layout would represent poor design which would result in a cramped form of development that fails to positively respond to the character of the area. This is contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy DP3 of the NPPF.
03:	The proposed development would result in an adverse impact to the amenity of the occupiers of 12 Brown Leaves Grove by reason of harmful overbearing impact and loss of light, contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy L3 of the NPPF.