

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN RESPECT OF A RETROSPECTIVE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A STANDALONE OFFICE POD FOR THE PURCHASE OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND AN ASSOCIATED AREA TO TEMPORARILY STORE PURCHASED MOTOR VEHICLES

AT

**CLITHEROE CRICKET CLUB, CHATBURN ROAD,
CLITHEROE, BB7 2AS**

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Our Client: Clitheroe Cricket Club
Our Ref: CCC/1183/3659/GH
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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	Page 3
2.	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	Page 3
3.	THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	Page 4
4.	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	Page 5
5.	PLANNING HISTORY	Page 6
6.	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND ASSESSMENT	Page 7
7.	OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION 3/2022/0947	Page 14
8.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	Page 14

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by Clitheroe Cricket Club to submit a retrospective planning application on their behalf for the change of use of land located within the grounds of the cricket club for the siting of a standalone office pod for the purchase of cars, the creation of an earth bund around the pod and the use of five existing parking spaces in connection with this use.
- 1.2 Planning permission has previously been sought for the proposed development under application 3/2022/0947 which was refused in December 2022, following which the office pod moved off site and relocated at the Clitheroe Homebase. However, following the closure of Homebase the office pod returned to Clitheroe Cricket Club in February 2025.
- 1.3 Following the return of the office pod the Council's planning enforcement officers have been in contact with the Cricket Club and this resulted in a pre-application enquiry being submitted and dealt with (ref RV/2025/ENQ/00075) and further discussion with officers resulting in the submission of this planning application.
- 1.4 The communications with the planning department that have taken place in order to get a better understanding of the reasons for the proposed development being unacceptable have resulted in them identifying their principal concern as being the visual impact of the office pod in views from Chatburn Road and Longsight Avenue. In response to this the cricket club have created an earth bund around the office pod and planted shrubs on it which provide significant screening.
- 1.5 We do not consider that the proposed development results in any visual harm to the character of the area, it has been demonstrated that appropriate landscaping can overcome any perceived harm, which is something that officers failed to consider when determining the last planning application and the more recent pre-app enquiry.
- 1.6 The income generated from this use of a small part of the cricket club's property is of significant importance to the financial viability of the club and its positive work of social inclusion in sporting activity that is provided to residents of the Borough. The income generated from this development funds the club's junior section and the loss of this . This is a material consideration that has to be considered when determining the application, which appears to have been overlooked in the past.
- 1.7 We set out in this Planning Statement, background information about the operation of the cricket club and the benefit that this development provides to it, a description of the site and surroundings and the development that has taken place and for which planning permission is now sought, we review the relevant policies and guidance and set out an assessment of the proposal against the relevant national planning guidance and local planning policies and we comment on the previous planning application and pre-app enquiry.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Clitheroe Cricket Club is a Community Inclusive Club (CIC), this means that it is a cricket club that actively works to create a welcoming environment for all members, regardless of their background, abilities, or beliefs. It focuses on inclusive practices that welcome women and girls into the sport and hosts community events that promote community engagement and inclusivity, such as social gatherings and special occasions. Being a CIC enables the cricket club to access funding to improve

the facilities at the club and to become a community asset to the local area but being a CIC does also result in additional expenditure for the club.

- 2.2 The cricket club supports the Clitheroe Tennis and Bowling Club, financing the rates, insurance, utilities and changing room facilities. In addition, Ribble Valley Runners, Ribble Valley Ramblers, Ribble Valley Responders, a mountaineering club, Slimming World and Ribble Valley Baby Clothes Shop use the facilities with the cost being borne by the cricket club. In addition to the cricket club facilities being used by its own members they are used by Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, Bowland School and Pendle School and they host the Ribble Valley Schools Festival. The club also recently hosted a Lancashire v Yorkshire U16's game.
- 2.3 While the club has benefited from grant funding from the National Lottery and Sports Direct, this has also resulted in increased expenditure by the club, and it has not just given rise to a receipt of funds free of obligations. This alongside increasing maintenance and operational costs has led to the club being more dependent on securing income streams from outside of the club itself including grant and sponsor income streams. The club also supports other charities; it was recently the start and finish location for the East Lancs Hospice Walk which enabled the club to donate £5,000 to the Hospice.
- 2.4 The club provides access to cricket for male and female players and for boys and girls and they pay for coaches to take training sessions for all players. The level of membership at the club has been on a rising trajectory and the club now has five adult male team's 1st to 5th teams; one lady's team; eight junior boy's teams 1 x U7's, 2 x U9's, 1x U11's, 3 x U13's, 1 x U15's and 1 x U18's; and two junior girls' team. Before last year there were no girls' teams at the club, they had one team last year and now have two which demonstrates the success that is being achieved of increasing inclusion.
- 2.5 During the season the cricket club is a busy place with the 1st and 2nd team playing on Sunday, and the 3rd and 4th teams playing on Saturday, while the midweek team play all of their matches away, the 5th team plays less frequently and their games fit in around the other teams' games. The U9's and U11's play on Saturday and Sunday morning, the U'13's, U'15's and U18's play on Monday. Senior training on Wednesday, junior training on Thursday and junior training on Saturday morning.
- 2.6 If there is a bad weather during the summer this can significantly impact the revenue of the club through reduced takings and playing fees.
- 2.7 The application proposal is required to provide an essential income stream to allow a community cricket club to continue and prosper and ultimately bring enjoyment and health and well-being benefits to the local community and allow this to continue in the future.

3. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site is land that forms part of the grounds of Clitheroe Cricket Club which is located on Chatburn Road (A671) and approximately 0.5km to the north of the town centre.
- 3.2 The property that is owned by the cricket club, comprises the cricket pitch, a club house, Clitheroe Bowling Club, Clitheroe Tennis Club and Clitheroe Leisure and parking areas.

- 3.3 There is a significant amount of advertising around the cricket pitch promoting the many local sponsors who support the club together with two large white timber barriers.
- 3.4 Vehicular and pedestrian access is gained from Chatburn Road at the eastern corner of the property.
- 3.5 The cricket club is situated within a predominantly residential area, with Clitheroe Royal Grammar School situated approximately 300m to the north east and there are a number of commercial uses along Chatburn Road heading towards the town centre.
- 3.6 According to the Ribble Valley Borough Council Local Plan Policies Map (adopted October 2019), the site is located within the defined settlement boundaries of Clitheroe and lies in an area designated as Open Space provision under Policy DMB4. For ease of reference, an extract of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Local Plan Policies Map is set out in Figure 2 below.
- 3.7 The site is located in Flood Zone 1, at low risk of flooding from fluvial sources and is in an area at very low risk of flooding from surface water flooding. There are no statutory heritage assets within or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 3.8 The site does not fall in a National Landscape designation, nor is it covered by any nature conservation designations.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development is the siting of a standalone office pod which is used in connection with the purchase of motor vehicles by We Buy Any Car, the creation of an earth bund around the pod and the use of five parking spaces where the cars that are purchased are parked until they are driven away from the site.
- 4.2 The office pod is located in the southern corner of the cricket club to the side of an internal access road which leads from the entrance to a building owned by the cricket club and occupied by Clitheroe Leisure and an area of car parking.
- 4.3 The application is retrospective and the development that has taken place can be seen on site. This is the second time that the activity has taken place on the site the office pod having previously been brought to the site on 17 November 2019, however following a refusal of permission under application 3/2022/0947 it moved from the cricket club to the car park of Homebase until Homebase closed down in early 2025 following which it returned to the cricket club at the beginning of February 2025. We are not aware that the siting of the office pod at Homebase attracted any enforcement activity by the Council.
- 4.4 The earth bund around the office pod was created and planted on 10 January 2025 and it provides significant screening from view from Chatburn Road and Longsight Avenue. The club undertook this work following advice from Mr Kilmartin to screen/camouflage the office pod.
- 4.5 The internal layout comprises of the main office and an entrance area located on the eastern elevation. This request for pre-application advice is supported by a Floor

Plan which details the internal layout of the office pod. The supporting Site Plan illustrates the location of the office pod within the wider site of Clitheroe Cricket Club.

- 4.6 The office pod comprises of a single storey, compact, modular prefabricated unit of a modern design incorporating a flat roof combined with white and green steel and stainless-steel cladding. The office pod is 3.60m in length, 2.40m in width and 2.65m in height and has a footprint of 8.64 m².
- 4.7 The windows comprise of PVC frames with glass panels. The exterior is branded with the We Buy Any Car logo and phrases. There are no external lights on the office pod. The area to store motor vehicles amounts to five parking spaces where cars are stored temporarily, they are located to the west of the pod as shown on the plans that accompany the application.
- 4.8 The hours of opening are 10:00 - 19:00 Mondays to Fridays, 09:00 - 18:00 on Saturdays, 10:00 - 17:00 on Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 4.9 Vehicular access will continue to be via the site's existing access from Chatburn Road. The same access is currently used by Clitheroe Cricket Club, Clitheroe Leisure, Clitheroe Tennis Club and Clitheroe Bowling Club.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 According to the Ribble Valley Borough Council planning application search facility, the site has been subject to a range of planning applications dating back to 2004 predominately to support the Clitheroe Cricket Club's development.
- 5.2 Planning application 3/2004/0538 was an application for '*Erection of safety netting on steel posts to prevent balls going onto private property. Safety netting to be removed in winter months*'. The application was registered on 13 April 2004 and approved with conditions on 15 June 2005.
- 5.3 Planning application 3/2005/0876 was an application to '*Demolish and re-build existing tennis pavilion*'. The application was registered on 21 October 2005 and was approved with conditions on 22 November 2005.
- 5. Planning application 3/2009/0981 was an application for '*1) Replace an old canopy for a new larger one at the gable end of the Bowling Club House. 2) Erection of a new canopy in the middle of the top edge of the Bowling Green*'. The application was registered on 20 November 2009 and was approved without conditions on 23 December 2009.
- 5.4 Planning application 3/2012/0995 was an application for an application for advertisement consent for '*three illuminated hanging banner signs advertising Carter Leisure Club and the Cricket Bowling and Tennis Club*'. The application was registered on 13 November 2012 and refused on 10 December 2012.
- 5.5 Planning application 3/2013/0190 was an application to '*display 2no. illuminated hanging signs*'. The application was registered on 8 March 2013 and was approved with conditions on 22 May 2013.
- 5.6 Planning application 3/2016/0348 was an application for '*Proposed alterations to existing vehicular access*'. It was registered on 12 May 2016 approved with conditions on 18 August 2016.

- 5.7 Planning application 3/2022/0159 was an application for '*Removal of condition 2 of 3/2004/0538 (safety netting)*' The application was registered on 28 February 2022 and was approved without conditions on 5 April 2022.
- 5.8 Planning application 3/2022/0321 was an application for '*Proposed hard paving area on existing cricket playfield fields*' The application was registered on 21 April 2022 and was approved with conditions on 22 June 2022.
- 5.9 Planning application 3/2022/0947 was an application for '*Retention of unauthorised standalone office for car sales and area to store vehicles*' The application was registered on 24 November 2022 and was refused on 16 December 2022. The reason for the refusal of the application was stated to be:
- The proposed development, by virtue of its overall design, level of visual prominence and elevational language, would result in the introduction of an incongruous, unsympathetic, and discordant form of development, that fails to respond positively to the inherent visual character of the area or the inherent defining characteristics of the immediate streetscene.*
- 5.10 A request for pre-application advice was made on 2 July 2025 and given the reference RV/2025/ENQ/00075 the request for advice was accompanied by a statement which set out in detail the significance of benefits of the development to the economic viability of the Cricket Club, however when the advice was provided on 25 July 2025 it was that the impact of the development in its current location was unacceptable.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND ASSESSMENT

- 6.1. Local Planning Authorities are required by section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to determine planning applications in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. If it is to be approved, a development must satisfy as far as possible guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) and the relevant policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 (adopted 16 December 2014).
- 6.2 We set out below extracts from the relevant documents to facilitate the assessment of the application proposal against the appropriate policies and guidance.

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY (Adopted Dec 2014)

- 6.3 The Ribble Valley Borough Core Strategy sets out the overarching strategy, policies and long-term vision for Ribble Valley, with the Key Statements providing the strategic framework for development within the Borough which guide the delivery of sustainable growth, housing provision, environmental protection and infrastructure improvement. We set out below the Key Statements and Policies of the Core Strategy that we consider to be relevant to the determination of this planning application.

Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy)

- 6.4 This key statement sets out the Development Strategy for Ribble Valley. It outlines where the majority of new development will be directed to which for housing and

retail and leisure development will be mainly in the three principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley with a smaller scale of development being allowed in the nine Tier 1 settlements. With the main employment areas being Barrow Enterprise Site and Samlesbury Enterprise Zone.

- 6.5 The application proposal is located within the settlement boundary of Clitheroe, and this is one of the three principal settlements into which new development will be directed. The location for the proposed development would therefore in principle appear to be an acceptable one.

Key Statement DS2 (Sustainable Development)

- 6.5 This key statement states:

“When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

- 6.6 There are no specific policies that directly deal with the development that has taken place and under such circumstances Key Statement DS2 requires the Council to grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise taking into consideration the adverse impacts of doing so. As we will demonstrate in this Planning Statement the adverse impacts of allowing the development to proceed were limited when it was previously considered and the creation of an earth bund and landscaping have now significantly reduced this limited impact whereas the benefits derived from allowing the development are quite considerable as outlined in Section 2 of this Planning Statement.

- 6.7 The proposed development is very sustainable because the sales pod is located within the settlement boundary of one if not the most sustainable settlements in the Borough, which means that someone can bring their vehicle to be assessed while they are already visiting the town centre to deal with other matters and if they sell their vehicle they have a range of public transport available within walking distance to provide them with a means of transport other than a private car to enable them to

return home. People employed by We Buy Any Car will also have good access to public transport to travel to and from their place of work.

Key Statement DMI2 (Transport Considerations)

- 6.8 This key statement states:

“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.

In general, schemes offering opportunities for more sustainable means of transport and sustainable travel improvements will be supported. Sites for potential future railway stations at Chatburn and Gisburn will be protected from inappropriate development.

Major applications should always be accompanied by a comprehensive travel plan.”

- 6.9 The comments made in paragraph 6.7 above apply equally to this policy. The access to the site from the public highway is safe and has no known adverse impacts in relation to highway safety or capacity.

Policy DMG1 (General Considerations)

- 6.10 This policy outlines a range of criteria relating to the design, access, amenity, environment and infrastructure which all development will be expected to comply with. It states that *“this policy helps deliver the vision for the area and gives an overarching series of considerations that the Council will have regard to in achieving quality development.”*
- 6.11 The office pod is minimal in scale measuring only 8.64m² it is set back from Chatburn Road with a tall stone wall forming the boundary to the property and there are a number of mature trees between the pod and Chatburn Road. An earth bund has been created around the office pod and planting has taken place on the bund which will as the new planting grows provide increasing screening in views from Chatburn Road and Longsight Avenue.
- 6.12 There is a safe access to and from the office pod and sufficient parking to enable its proper functioning without any adverse impact on the other users of the facilities that are provided on the premises.

Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations)

- 6.13 This policy outlines further strategic considerations relating to development. Policy DMG2 assists in the interpretation of the Development Strategy and underpins the settlement hierarchy for the purposes of delivering sustainable development. The development complies with this policy as the development proposed is a type of development that is appropriate within a principal settlement.

Policy DMG3 (Transport & Mobility)

- 6.14 This policy relates predominately to major development proposals; however it states that all development will be required to provide adequate car parking and serving space in accordance with the current standards. Adequate parking is provided for the proposed development.

Policy DMB4 (Open Space Provision)

- 6.15 This policy provides guidance in respect of open space provision on new development sites which is not relevant to this application, it also deals with the potential loss of existing public open space as states:

“The Borough Council will refuse development proposals which involve the loss of existing public open space, including private playing fields which are in recreational use. In exceptional circumstances and following a robust assessment where the loss of a site is justifiable because of the social and economic benefits a proposed development would bring to the community, consent may be granted where replacement facilities are provided, or where existing facilities elsewhere in the vicinity are substantially upgraded. These must be readily accessible and convenient to users of the former open space areas.

It is important to protect existing recreational areas from development. Within defined settlements public recreational land will be identified on the proposals map.”

- 6.16 As was acknowledged in the officer’s delegated report in respect of application 3/2022/0947

“In respect of the above (Policy DMB4) whilst the proposal seeks retrospective consent for the retention of the siting of a ‘sales cabin’ on land that benefits from a DMB4 designation, the area of land that will be utilised for the siting of the cabin is minimal (approximately 3.6m x 2.4m). As such the cabin does not undermine the usability of the designated Existing Open Space (EOS) nor would it result in undermining the operation of the facilities associated with the designation”.

- 6.17 The siting of the office pod will not result in the loss of any existing public open space or private playing fields that are in recreational use, therefore the approval of the application would not be contrary to this policy.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF 2024)

- 6.18 The NPPF 2024 (amended in March 2025) is the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making in England. The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied in decision-making and plan making.

- 6.19 Chapter 2 of the NPPF relates to ‘Achieving sustainable development’. Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

- 6.20 Paragraph 8 states:

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental), which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- *“An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right*

places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- An environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

- 6.21 The existing use is considered to respond to all three overarching objectives of achieving sustainable development as defined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- 6.22 In relation to the economic objective, the existing use of the pod represents economic investment within a local area which is experiencing growth. The office pod is operated by We Buy Any Car Limited and represents an important part of their portfolio, allowing their growth and investment in the Ribble Valley area to be continued, while the existing use has resulted in employment opportunities for people in the local area. In turn the cricket club receive rental payment from We Buy Any Car and this rent is of significant benefit to the cricket club and its continued economic viability.
- 6.23 In terms of the social objective, the development provides essential financial support to the cricket club. The cricket club is a Community Inclusive Club (CIC) this status enables the club to access funding to improve the club's facilities and to become a community asset to the area. Although the club has benefited from grant funding from the National Lottery and Sports Direct specific criteria have to be met to secure this funding which has resulted in additional expenditure for the club. This coupled with increasing maintenance and operational costs has led to the club being more reliant on income streams from outside of the club. The income received from We Buy Any Car Limited is becoming more and more crucial to maintain the cricket club's viability and the extent of inclusion that they are able to offer and support. The cricket club, tennis club and bowling club offer numerous social benefits for local people, including fostering a sense of belonging, improving social skills, and promoting mental and physical well-being. Participation in cricket, either as player or volunteer, can assist in boosting confidence, especially for young people, and create opportunities for social interaction as advocated by paragraph 96 of the NPPF.
- 6.24 In relation to the 'environmental' role, the development delivers a sustainable, modern building, adjacent to the strategic road network and in a location that enables those who have sold their cars to We Buy Any Car to use public transport to return home after dropping their car off if they wish to do so.
- 6.25 Based upon the above, the application proposal does without doubt constitute sustainable development for the purposes of the NPPF. The range of social, economic and environmental benefits arising from the development are significant and in our professional opinion clearly outweigh any perceived harm and these public benefits weigh heavily in the planning balance that has to be applied when considering the determination of the application.

6.26 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states:

*“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).”*

6.27 Paragraph 11, in relation to decision taking, states:

“For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”

6.28 Chapter 4 of the NPPF concerns ‘Decision-making’, Paragraph 39 states local planning authorities should *“approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”*.

6.29 We Buy Any Car have office pods situated within ten football, cricket and rugby clubs throughout England with no associated issues with planning permission being secured. One such example includes Trowbridge Rugby Club. Wiltshire Council granted planning permission (reference PL/2024/02230) to Trowbridge Rugby Club dated 01 December 2024. In the case officer’s delegated report officers concluded that the *“modest office pod and land use would not result in material harm and does not have conflict with the policies of the development plan”*. It is clear that the siting of this type of development has been found to be a sustainable form of development and one that should be supported by the Council.

6.30 Chapter 6 of the NPPF relates to ‘Building a strong, competitive economy’. Paragraph 85 states *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt”*. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

6.31 Chapter 6 clearly identifies that the Council when weighing the planning balance should take into account the economic benefits that arise from the development.

6.32 Chapter 8 deals with ‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’. Paragraph 96 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.*

6.33 By approving this planning application that Council will be taking a positive approach to enabling the cricket club to achieve the objectives of this national guidance.

6.34 Chapter 9 of the NPPF concerns ‘Promoting sustainable transport’. Paragraph 116 states:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.

6.35 There will be no unacceptable impact on highway safety as a consequence of the approval of this planning application.

6.36 Chapter 11 relates to ‘Making effective use of land’. Paragraph 124 details planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

6.37 The proposed development utilises land that in part would otherwise be unutilised and therefore promotes the effective use of land.

6.38 Paragraph 128 states:

“Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs”.

6.39 This clearly offers support for the approval of this application.

7. OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF APPLICATION 3/2022/0947

- 7.1 In determining planning application 3/2022/0947 it is clear from the delegated report and the reasons given for refusing the planning application that little or no consideration was given to the economic benefits of the development, particularly in respect of the benefits that would accrue to Clitheroe Cricket Club a Community Inclusive Club that provides significant benefits to the local community.
- 7.2 The officer report is focused on the perceived negative impacts of the development without any reference to the benefits arising from the development and how they should be considered when weighing the planning balance.
- 7.3 Having identified a perceived adverse visual impact arising from the development there is no consideration as to how this could be mitigated in order to achieve a positive outcome. This lack of engagement is contrary to the guidance contained in paragraph 39 of the NPPF.
- 7.4 The office pod is located within the grounds of Clitheroe Cricket Club and is for the most part only viewed in that context, in this regard the visual character of the area is defined by an extensive array of advertising banners around the cricket pitch advertising the services of the local businesses that sponsor and support the cricket club's activities. There is also signage for the other businesses that operate from the property and two large white moveable protection barriers. Within this context it cannot be argued that the office pod is incongruous, unsympathetic or discordant.
- 7.5 In terms of the phrase 'elevational language' used in the reason for refusal I cannot understand the meaning of this expression and a search of the internet for a meaning in the context it which it is used in unavailable.
- 7.6 The level of visual prominence of the office pod was very limited in views from outside of the premises, this is because there is a tall stone boundary wall along the boundary with Chatburn Road and established trees between the pod and the road. However, any limited views from this direction and from Longsight Avenue are now significantly reduced following the creation of an earth bund and landscape planting that has been undertaken by the cricket club.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The development proposed is very small scale, it involves the siting of a standalone office pod within the grounds of the cricket club which has a gross external area of approximately 8.64m² and the use of five of the existing car parking spaces. It also includes the creation of a landscaped earth bund around the office pod which has been carried out in order to overcome the Council's only reason for the refusal of application 3/2022/0947, which was stated as being due to the visual impact of the pod in views from Chatburn Road and Longsight Avenue.
- 8.2 We have highlighted within this Planning Statement the importance of the income generated by this small-scale activity to the economic viability of the cricket club whose costs are increasing all the time while at the same time they are increasing the inclusivity of the club which in turn requires additional expenditure on improving the facilities and providing coaching.
- 8.3 The determination of this planning application which undoubtedly constitutes sustainable development requires a consideration of both the positive and the

negative impacts that arise from its implementation, the planning balance. Given the significant reduction of any adverse visual impact now that there is a landscaped bund between the pod and Chatburn Road and Longsight Avenue and the significance of the positive benefits economically and socially, we can see no justification in terms of planning policy for the refusal of the application.

G Hoerty

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