

Appeal Decision

Inquiry Held on 13-16; 19-23; 26-30 April & 17 & 18 May 2021

Site visit made on 6 May 2021

by S R G Baird BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 3rd February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N2345/W/20/3258912

Land at Bushells Farm, Mill Lane, Goosnargh, Lancashire PR3 2BJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr G Gornal and the Community Gateway Association against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref 06/2018/0884, dated 8 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of up to 140 dwellings (45% affordable) and associated works.
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Preliminary Matters

1. Accompanied by a Masterplan, the application was submitted in outline with all matters other than access reserved. A S106 Agreement was submitted providing for affordable housing (AH), open space and financial contributions for public transport improvements and additional Primary and Secondary School places.
2. This appeal was heard in conjunction with 6 others, 3258890, 3258894 and 3267524 – land north and south of Whittingham Lane, 3258896 and 3258898 – land at Swainson Farm, and 3257357 – land to the North of Old Rib Farmhouse, Longridge. These appeals are the subject of separate decisions.
3. Apart from the Longridge (3257357) and land north of Whittingham Lane, (3267524) cases, the remaining appeals (3258890; 3258894; 3258896; 3258898 & 3258912), share a reason for refusal (RfR) – conflict with the development plan. The local planning authority's (lpa) Statement of Case for these appeals includes a reference to addressing the impact on the character of the village and open countryside. Following my request for clarification, the lpa confirmed that it would pursue a second RfR based on, cumulative impact but not landscape and visual impact (Annex A).
4. At the Case Management Conference (CMC), the lpa confirmed that concerns regarding cumulative impact related only to the character of Goosnargh and do not relate to harm in respect of, infrastructure capacity, character of the landscape/visual amenity and townscape character/visual amenity.
5. In July 2021, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was issued. Although paragraph numbers changed, the revisions were not material and the parties were not asked for comment. Two further matters arose, which were material and comment was sought. These were, an appeal decision in relation to residential development on land to the south of Chain

House Lane, Preston issued on the 24 June 2021, and an updated Housing Land Position Statement (HLPS) as of 31 March 2021. Briefly, the HLPS concludes that based on the development plan housing requirement, the lpa can show a 15.3-year supply of housing land or, based on local housing need (LHN) based on the Standard Method (SM) there would be a 6.1-year supply. The responses have been taken into consideration.

Decision

6. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

These are:

- (1) whether the proposal conflicts with the development plan;
- (2) whether the development plan policies most important for determining these appeals are out-of-date, with reference to (a) whether the lpa can show a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites and (b) consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework);
- (3) the effect on the character of the village; and
- (4) whether the conclusions on matters 2a and 2b or any other material consideration would justify allowing the appeals.

Reasons

Issue 1

7. The development plan includes the Central Lancashire Adopted Core Strategy July 2012 prepared as a joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Preston, South Ribble and Chorley and the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (LP) adopted in July 2015.
8. Of the various JCS and LP policies listed as being relevant, it is agreed that JCS Policy 1 – Locating Growth, JCS Policy 4 – Housing Delivery and LP Policy EN1 – Development in the Open Countryside are the most important policies for the determination of these appeals.
9. JCS Policy 1 seeks to concentrate growth and investment in a hierarchy of 6 broad locations starting with: (a) the Preston/South Ribble Urban Area; (b) Key Service Centres (KSC); (c) Strategic Sites; (d) Urban Local Service Centres; (e) Rural Local Service Centres and (f) Other Places. This spatial strategy seeks to direct development to more sustainable higher order centres and minimise development at lower order centres.
10. For the purposes of JCS Policy 1, development proposals at Goosnargh fall to be considered against part (f) – Other Places. Here, development will typically be small scale and limited to appropriate infilling, the conversion of buildings and proposals to meet local need, unless there are exceptional reasons for larger scale redevelopment schemes. The appellant accepts that is this scheme is not small scale and there are no exceptional circumstances to justify development of the scale proposed. Whilst the spatial strategy acknowledges that some greenfield development will be required, it is to be directed to the fringe of the main urban area. Goosnargh, as a rural village

and at the bottom of the spatial hierarchy does not count as a main urban area. This proposal conflicts with JCS Policy 1.

11. JCS Policy 4 – Housing Delivery, is statement of the minimum annual requirement the JCS seeks to achieve.
12. The site is in open countryside and LP Policy EN1 says that development, other than for specific categories, will not be permitted. The appellant accepts that its proposal does not accord with LP Policy EN1.
13. Drawing the above together, the proposal does not accord with the most important policies of the development plan and as such there is conflict with the development plan when read as a whole.

Issue 2

5-year Housing Land Supply

14. A 5-year housing land supply (HLS) has 2 elements, the requirement, and the supply. At the close of the inquiry, whilst the supply was agreed, the requirement and how to calculate it was not. The appellant's position is that the JCS Policy 4 requirement should be used, which then showed a 4.95-year supply. The lpa says that the requirement should be based on Local Housing Need (LHN) calculated by using the Standard Method (SM), which then showed a 13.6-year supply. The updated HLPS using the JCS Policy 4 requirement shows a 15.3-year supply of housing land or, based on LHN shows a 6.1-year supply.
15. Framework Paragraph 74 requires the lpa to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of 5-years' worth of housing against the housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against LHN where the strategic policies are more than 5 years old. Adopted in 2012, the plan is more than 5 years old and as such Footnote 39 applies. This says, *"...unless these strategic policies have been reviewed and found not to require updating"*. Paragraph 005 of the Housing Supply and Delivery chapter of Planning Practice Guidance¹ (PPG) reiterates the Framework Paragraph 74/Footnote 39 position adding *"...or the strategic housing policies have been reviewed within the last 5 years and found not to need updating"*. Where strategic policies are more than 5 years old or have been reviewed and found in need of updating, LHN calculated using the SM should be used in place of the strategic requirement.
16. Demonstrating a 5-year HLS is a key feature of national planning policy and the application of Framework paragraph 11 (d) in decision-making. Commonly referred to as the "tilted balance", paragraph 11 (d) says that where the most important policies for deciding a proposal are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole. Framework Footnote 8 confirms that where a lpa cannot show a 5-year HLS, the most important policies will be considered out of date.
17. JCS Policy 4 lists the minimum housing requirement for Preston as 507 dwellings per annum (dpa). The balance of the policy deals with delivery

¹ Housing Supply & Delivery, Paragraph 005 Reference ID: 68-005-20190722.

performance and ensuring a continuous forward looking 5-year supply in locations that are in line with the spatial strategy.

18. In 2017, the JCS authorities, informed by a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, agreed a Joint Memorandum of Understanding and Statement of Co-operation relating to the Provision of Housing Land (MOU 1). The purpose of MOU1 was to confirm an agreed approach to the distribution of housing prior to the adoption of a new plan. MOU1 set out that, (a) the JCS Policy 4 housing requirement did not need to be updated and should continue to be used until a replacement plan was adopted and (b) the MOU was to be reviewed no less than every 3 years and when new evidence renders it out-of-date.
19. Up until early 2020, to underpin decisions on housing applications, the Ipa used the JCS Policy 4 requirement. On this basis a 5-year HLS could not be shown and JCS Policies 1 and 4 were considered out-of-date and the tilted balance was engaged. The Ipa's approach changed following a December 2019 appeal decision² in South Ribble. There, the Inspector concluded that, (a) MOU1 was not a review for the purposes of the Framework and (b) the introduction of the SM to calculate LHN was a significant change which, justified its use to determine the housing requirement. Following this appeal decision, the Ipa reconsidered the appellants' proposals and concluded that, (a) using the SM, a 5-year HLS existed, (b) the tilted balance was not engaged, and (c) there was conflict with an up-to-date development plan.
20. The above appeal decision was subject to a High Court Challenge and a judgement³ by Mr Justice Dove (MJD) in August 2020. The judgement identified that, (a) the Inspector's reasoning that MOU1 was not a Review for the purposes of the Framework was inadequate and (b) a conclusion as to whether there had been a significant change following the introduction of the SM was a planning judgement reasonably open to her, albeit with the rider that *"...other conclusions might reasonably be reached by other Inspectors"*. Although they came to different conclusions on how to determine the requirement figure, this is, in my view, what the Inspectors in the Cardwell Farm⁴ and the redetermined land South of Chain Lane appeal decisions did based on the evidence before them.
21. The parties agree that MOU1 is a Framework paragraph 74/Footnote 39 review. The appellant submits that neither Framework paragraph 74, Footnote 39, nor PPG⁵ advice on what housing requirement should be used to calculate the supply, refer to significant change. Thus, having been reviewed in the last 5 years, the JCS Policy 4 requirement should be used until a new plan has been adopted. Simply put, the Ipa's case is that the introduction of the SM and the implications for the housing requirement is a significant change. On this basis, it is appropriate to apply LHN to calculate the housing requirement for Preston.
22. The Cardwell Farm Inspector applied the JCS Policy 4 requirement, albeit at paragraph 33 of the decision letter (DL) said there may be a justification to revert to LHN but that a decision to depart from the outcome of a Framework

² APP/F2360/W/19/3234070 – Land to the South of Chain House Lane, Whitestake, Preston.

³ Wainhomes (North-West) Limited & Secretary of State for Housing Communities & Local Government & South Ribble Borough Council [2020] EWHC 2294 (Admin).

⁴ APP/N2345/W/20/3258889.

⁵ Reference ID: 68-005-20190722.

paragraph 74/Footnote 39 review would need to be supported by a robust process. At DL 41, the Inspector concluded that Preston's decision to withdraw from a revised MOU⁶ and revert to using LHN did not constitute a Framework Review. The Inspector in the redetermined land south of Chain House Lane decision concluded that it was appropriate to calculate the housing requirement against LHN using the SM. This conclusion was based on the difference between the LHN figure and JCS Policy 4 amounting to a significant change in circumstances. Both decisions are currently the subject of challenges.

23. The appellant's approach treats sections of the Framework and PPG as silos to be applied in isolation. However, Framework, paragraph 3, reminds the decision-maker that, "...the Framework should be read as a whole...". To my mind, that approach must also apply to PPG.
24. Framework paragraph 74 and PPG paragraph 00513 do not refer to significant change. However, it strikes me that without applying a holistic approach to the Framework and PPG, MJD could not have concluded as he did at paragraph 45 of his judgement. Here, he is, "...satisfied that the conclusion reached ... that there had been a significant change pursuant to the PPG arising from the introduction of the standard method, was a planning judgement reasonably open to her based on a correct interpretation of the PPG..." The PPG advice he refers to is in the Plan-Making chapter and as such he is applying the holistic approach to published guidance. Moreover, PPG paragraph 062⁷ notes, "Where a review was undertaken prior to publication of the Framework (27 July 2018) but within the last 5 years, then that plan will continue to constitute the up-to-date plan policies unless there have been significant changes as outlined below". This appears to me to be a clear reference back to PPG paragraph 005. Thus, taking the Framework and PPG in the round, it is open to me to consider whether JCS Policy 4 is out-of-date based on whether circumstances have changed significantly.
25. JCS Policy 4 is based on a manual redistribution of the housing requirement set out in the 2008 Regional Strategy for the North West. The methodology used was derived from the then extant Planning Policy Guidance and demographic trends between 1998 and 2003. Whilst the age of the policy is not, on its own, indicative of it being out-of-date, the base evidence is and the methodology for calculating LHN has materially changed.
26. Whilst the above in themselves could be regarded as significant changes, what is important is the practical implication of the change. Here, using the SM to calculate LHN almost halves Preston's annual requirement. PPG⁸ indicates that LHN will be considered to have changed significantly in a situation where the plan was adopted prior to the SM being implemented based on a number significantly below that generated by the SM. This reference is an example and not, in my view, meant to prevent the converse position being considered a significant change in circumstances.
27. Having regard to the totality of the evidence, including the decisions in the Cardwell Farm and land South of Chain House Lane cases, the difference

⁶ MOU2 adopted in April 2020.

⁷ Plan-Making Chapter.

⁸ Plan-Making, paragraph 062.

between the housing requirement in JCS Policy 4 and that generated by the SM is a significant change that renders this policy out-of-date.

28. However, if the above analysis is wrong and the appellants' submissions regarding Framework paragraph 74 and Footnote 39 are correct, the appellants do not dispute that based on the updated HLPS there is now a deliverable 5-year HLS⁹ irrespective of whether this is based on the requirement in JCS Policy 4 or LHN using the SM. Therefore, for reasons associated with the HLS, the tilted balance is not engaged.

Consistency with the Framework

29. There are other routes that can engage the tilted balance i.e., whether policies are out-of-date¹⁰. The parties agree this is a 3-stage approach. Stage 1 is the identification of the most important policies. Stage 2 is to assess each of the policies applying the Framework to determine whether they are out-of-date. Stage 3 assess all the most important policies to reach a conclusion as to whether taken overall they could be concluded to be out-of-date. Before undertaking this assessment, it is necessary to look at the context of these policies.
30. The Framework provides the context for the JCS indicating that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through 3 overarching, economic, social, and environmental objectives. These objectives are to be delivered through the preparation and implementation of development plans and the application of Framework policies. The foreword to the JCS sets out that it was prepared and adopted in the context of the Framework to provide, single strategy for Central Lancashire.

JCS Policy 1

31. JCS 1 seeks to concentrate growth and investment according to a hierarchy of established settlements and strategic sites. JCS Policy 4 is out-of-date. However, like the Inspector in the land at Pear Tree Lane, Chorley decision¹¹ I agree the fact that JCS Policy 4 is out-of-date does not, on its own, mean that the spatial strategy for the location of housing is out-of-date. The JCS plan period is 2010 to 2026 and the plan-making authority is required to keep its plan(s) under review at least once every 5 years (Framework paragraph 33). This is in recognition that, amongst other things, the housing requirement might change. Thus, whilst the numbers might change that does not necessarily mean that the spatial strategy is out-of-date. This is particularly so as JCS Policy 1 is not a fully-fledged development management policy, in that it does not define settlement boundaries or limit development to sites within settlements.
32. It is submitted that if JCS Policy 1 and the spatial distribution associated with it, is not fit for purpose in one authority it would be out-of-date for all. The basis for this point is the apparent inability of Chorley to meet its LHN within the scope of JCS Policy 1. This submission is supported by reference to Chorley's contribution to the Issues and Options (I&O) Consultation Paper

⁹ See paragraph 5 above.

¹⁰ Wavendon Properties Limited and Secretary of State of Housing Communities and Local Government and Milton Keynes Council [2019] EWHC1524 (Admin)

¹¹ APP/D2320/W/20/3247136.

November 2019 for the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP). There, to meet the housing requirement, some 15% of the sites identified by Chorley relate to JCS Policy 1(f) sites, the bottom of the hierarchy. I cannot agree with the appellant that, proposals put forward by Chorley in the I&O paper, demonstrates that JCS Policy 1 is out-of-date. The I&O process forms the very early stages of the replacement plan for which there are a significant number of unknowns. These relate to, amongst other things, the shape of the spatial strategy and not least the extent of the housing requirement going forward. Thus, this early stage of the process cannot be used to retrofit a conclusion that the JCS spatial strategy is out-of-date.

33. Having reviewed all the evidence and submissions made regarding JCS Policy 1, the key question to ask is, does this policy constrain the ability of the lpa to deliver an adequate supply of housing such that further housing sites located at the lowest order settlements are required. The lpa can show a healthy HLS of some 15-years and in this context, JCS Policy 1 cannot be seen to be constraining the delivery of housing.

34. Drawing all this together, I consider that for the purpose of determining these appeals, JCS Policy 1 is not out-of-date or inconsistent with the Framework.

Local Plan Policy EN1

35. The development plan is to be read as a whole and LP Policy EN1 must be read with JCS Policy 1, LP Policies AD 1 a and b – Development within Villages and LP Policies HS4 and 5 - Rural Exception Housing. In this context, LP Policy EN1 is a spatial policy designed to deliver the spatial vision of the JCS to create sustainable patterns of development and minimise the scale development at lower order locations.

36. The submission that LP Policy EN1 is inconsistent with the Framework's approach to the protection afforded to the countryside relies on reading the policy and its supporting text in isolation. This approach leads lead to a conclusion, albeit a flawed conclusion, that the primary purpose of this policy is to protect the character and appearance of the countryside. I have no doubt that the appellants' conclusion was, in part, boosted by a similarly flawed approach and conclusion adopted by the planning officers in the various reports to the Planning Committee. The report says that LP Policy EN1, "*... seeks to protect areas of open countryside from unacceptable development which would harm its open and rural character and limits development to...*". Moreover, this flawed understanding was carried forward at the inquiry under cross-examination during the site-specific session for the Swainson Farm cases.

37. Whilst the supporting text highlights the importance of protecting the open and rural character of the countryside, there is nothing in the policy that requires the decision-maker to undertake an assessment of the landscape and visual impact of a proposal and exercise a judgement as to the influence a development would have on the openness and/or rural character of an area. This is the approach that the Inspector in the Cardwell Farm decision took, where although LP Policy EN1 was referred to as a relevant policy, it did not feature in his assessment of the effect on character and appearance. Rather, when dealing with character and appearance, his consideration was limited to testing the proposal against JCS Policy 21. Indeed, there is as, far as I can see, no LP policy deals with landscape and visual impact. These matters are

covered by JCS Policies 13 and 21. Whilst it is axiomatic that a restriction on built development in the open countryside would protect openness and character, it is not, in my view, the purpose of LP Policy EN1. The purpose of the policy is to support the spatial strategy of the JCS in directing development to more sustainable higher order centres.

38. Again, a key question is, does this policy in combination with JCS Policy 1 constrain the ability of the lpa to deliver an adequate supply of housing. Given the lpa can demonstrate a healthy HLS of some 15-years, LP Policy EN1 in combination with JCS Policy 1 cannot be seen to be constraining the delivery of housing. On this basis, LP Policy EN1 is neither inconsistent with the Framework nor is it out-of-date.
39. Drawing all the above together, JCS Policies 1 and 4 and LP Policy EN1 are the most important policies for determining these appeals. Although, JCS Policy 4 is out-of-date, JCS Policy 1 and LP EN1 are not. Taking the suite of policies in the round, the most important policies are not out-of-date, and the tilted balance is not engaged.

Issue 3

40. The lpa does not suggest that in isolation this scheme would adversely affect the historic character of the village. The essence of the lpa's case is that (a) the cumulative scale and speed of growth, would be inconsistent with the origins and form of the village and (b) result in a ring of modern, "...anyplace..." estate development distinct from how the remainder of the village is appreciated preventing the historic, natural, and organic growth of the village from continuing. Thus, the relationship between the historic core and its rural surroundings would be lost. In relation to (a) above, residents expanded on this point to include the adverse impact of multiple construction sites over a potentially protracted build-out period.
41. In terms of its origins, other than commenting that Goosnargh dates from the 13th Century, when St Marys Church was built the lpa says nothing more about the origins of Goosnargh and how this is reflected in how the village is seen today. In this context, I can see no linkage between the development of this site or any of the other sites that would compromise or detract from an appreciation of the origins of Goosnargh.
42. Historic development is shown through a series of Ordnance Survey maps dating from the 1840s to the present day. This suggests that between the establishment of the church and the 1840s, the pace of change was slow. That reflects the times and was not unique for most of the country, prior to and even during the Industrial Revolution. Now the scale of demand for development and the pace of change that requires, reflects current times when there is an acknowledged need to build significant numbers of houses.
43. The map series suggests that between 1846 and the 1930s other than the development of the County Lunatic Asylum, later renamed Whittingham Hospital, which was physically and visually separated from the village, the development and form of Goosnargh was dominated by linear development and the formation of a historic/civic hub and a commercial hub. The historic/civic hub is centred at the junction of Goosnargh Lane and Church Lane with the commercial hub centred at the junction of Whittingham Lane and Church Lane.

44. A significant change has been the closure of Whittingham Hospital and its redevelopment as a substantial residential area. The Masterplan envisages residential development between Henry Littler Way and existing development on the south side of Whittingham Lane. With these developments, this site no longer represents an outlier to Goosnargh, but rather a significant element of and an extension to the village.
45. Given the above, the development of Bushells Farm and the other Goosnargh appeal sites would continue the way Goosnargh has developed especially in recent years. As to historic form, notwithstanding the Beacon Drive and more recent back-land developments, those entering and leaving Goosnargh via Goosnargh Lane, Church Lane and Whittingham Lane would continue read the village as a largely linear settlement. Given the degree of separation and the lack of any direct visual relationship between the appeal sites and the historic/civic hub at Goosnargh Lane/Church Lane, there would no material direct or indirect effect on the historic form of the village. Moreover, given the Holme Fell development is located next to the school and church, the link between the historic core and its rural surroundings has already been compromised. Given the separation referred to above, none of the appeal sites would have a material effect on that relationship.
46. Given the separation between the sites and as none would be seen together either from within the sites or on the existing approaches to or routes through the village, the only way the developments could be appreciated as encircling the village would be on-plan. The lpa couple with this concern with a reference to “*anywhere*” style developments. Given these schemes are for outline permission with scale, appearance and layout reserved matters and the Framework/National Design Guide arms the lpa with the tools to achieve high quality development commensurate with the place, this accusation demonstrates a disappointing lack of confidence by the lpa in its development management abilities. The lpa submits that these developments would prevent smaller sites, with less impact coming forward. I cannot see how this is the case, if a small site is suitable for development, no rational reason has been provided to explain why it could or would not come forward for consideration on its individual merits.
47. As to the concerns highlighted by residents, with any form of development impacts are to be anticipated. What is important is that these would not be permanent and how issues are dealt with when they arise. Planning conditions relating to construction management are sought, which would give the lpa the ability to act.
48. Drawing all the above together, the development of Bushells Farm alone or in combination with the other 5 sites would not have an unacceptable cumulative impact on the form and historic associations of Goosnargh as a rural village.

Other Considerations

Landscape and Visual Impact

49. JCS Policy 13 seeks to ensure that development conserves and where possible enhances the character and quality of the landscape. JCS Policy 21 seeks to ensure that new development is, amongst other things, well integrated into existing settlement patterns. Whilst Framework, paragraph 174, indicates that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be

recognised, it does not seek to protect, for its own sake, all countryside from development; rather it concentrates on the protection of valued landscapes. Although the lpa does not suggest that this development in isolation or in combination with other permitted and proposed developments would have an unacceptable landscape and visual impact, it is a concern of residents.

50. The nature of site and local topography is such that there is a moderate level of intervisibility across the site largely from Mill Lane and the public footpath on the eastern edge of the site. That said, generally, intervisibility is limited by hedgerows and field trees that filter these views. There is low intervisibility with land outside the site due to existing housing and buildings on Whittingham Lane, Church Lane and Mill Lane. The landscape sensitivity of the site and adjoining land to residential development would be medium/high. Taking account of landscape mitigation and the low levels of intervisibility, the magnitude of change in the landscape due to the development would be medium and the overall landscape impact would be moderate.
51. Visual impacts arising from the development, identified as significant would be largely confined to the public footpath along the eastern edge of the site. The visual impact from Mill Lane and Church Lane where the site can be glimpsed through gaps of varying width between houses on its eastern side would be moderate. Drawing this together, this development would not have a significant detrimental landscape and visual impact. The development would not conflict with the purposes of JCS Policies 13 and 21.

Biodiversity

52. JCS Policies 18 and 22 and LP Policies EN 10 and 11 seek to protect, enhance, and manage biodiversity features. The application was accompanied by an Ecological Assessment assessed by The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit for the lpa who, subject to the imposition of conditions has no objection.
53. The main habitat within the development footprint comprises arable land, of low ecological value and any loss would be negligible. Existing boundary habitats include hedgerows, trees, a small pond and a wet ditch that are of some local wildlife interest. These features would be retained and reinforced as part of the landscape design for the scheme, which include additional areas of greenspace within and on the margins of the site. Reflecting the intensive agricultural management of this site, no reptiles, particularly the Great Crested Newt, or evidence of their presence were identified during the survey. I have no reason to dispute the appellants' submissions that the habitat enhancement measures would represent an overall gain to local biodiversity. In these circumstances, there would be no conflict with the objectives of the Framework, JCS Policies 18 and 22 and LP Policies EN 10 and 11.

Heritage

54. In line with the Framework, JCS Policy 16 and LP Policy EN8 seek to protect heritage assets and their setting. The junction of Mill Lane and Church Lane is characterised by a group of Listed Buildings (LBs) and buildings on the lpa's local list of non-designated heritage assets. These are Bushells House and the stonewall/gate piers (Grade 2* & Grade 2), The Grapes Inn (Grade 2), the former Bushells Arms (Grade 2), Goosnargh School (Grade 2) and St Marys Church (Grade 2*) located to the rear of Bushell House. The group of buildings have historic and aesthetic significance in that their facades remain

- largely unaltered. Only the Grapes Inn and Bushell House have direct views over the open fields of Bushells Farm with the houses along Whittingham Lane visible. The development would not have a direct effect on the fabric of any of the Listed Buildings, rather the potential effect would be on their settings.
55. The site lies to the south and south-east of the LBs, albeit the housing area would be located some 135m to the south of Mill Lane. Other than the access road, which would run along the side of the house on Bushells Farm and join Mill Lane opposite the side garden of Bushell House, the land on the southern side of Mill Lane would remain open.
56. Although Historic England have no objection in principle to the development, 2 concerns are raised. The first is the functional nature of the design and finish of the proposed access and the second is the potential for development of the open land between the proposed access and Bushells Hospital Cottages to the east. Dealing with the latter issue first, although the appellants' Heritage Statement refers to a large part of this area as being within the application boundary, this is an error. Only an area wide enough to provide for the access road and landscaping either side is included within the application boundary. The remaining land is outside the red line area and no development is proposed within the open areas to the east of the access. As to the access, although this is not a reserved matter, the access drawing indicates the proposed finishing materials would be the subject of agreement with the lpa at the reserved matter stage. Given the main part of the residential development would be set well back from Mill Lane, an appropriate layout and design of properties commensurate with the historic character of the group of LBs could be achieved. There would be no harm to the setting of this group of buildings.
57. The non-designated heritage assets front onto Church Lane and include Makinson Row, a terrace of 5 houses, the former clubhouse for Goosnargh Football Club and a few individual dwellings further south. The development would be well separated from the dwellings on Church Lane by a large area of open space to the south of the farm buildings and a linear green space along the rear of the Church Lane properties. In this context the wider development would have no impact on the settings of these properties.
58. Access from Church Lane through the site of the former clubhouse to serve a car park for use by patrons of the village hall and parents collecting children from the primary school is proposed. The former clubhouse is a timber building in poor visual and most likely structural condition. Whilst its loss is regrettable, I agree with the planning officer's assessment that the building is neither of significant merit nor does it contribute to the character of the area. The car park access would be adjacent to Makinson Row. Although these properties date probably from the early 18th century they have been heavily and unsympathetically altered through the addition of relatively modern porches, rendering/painting, and the insertion of modern windows. In this context, the development would have negligible impact on the historic or aesthetic significance of these buildings.

Highways

59. Neither the lpa nor Lancashire County Council as the Highway Authority (HA) object to these, or any of the Goosnargh schemes on traffic or highway safety grounds. Other than relying on Transport Assessments (TA) submitted with the various planning applications and joint written responses responding to matters raised by interested persons, the appellants in all the Goosnargh appeals did not present evidence on highway matters. Following an assessment of third-party representations, the lpa sought further advice from the HA and National Highways¹² (NH), the strategic highways authority, on the cumulative impact of the Goosnargh schemes.
60. Policy ST2 – General Transport Considerations is the most relevant. This seeks to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the free flow of traffic on the highway network. Framework paragraph 110 (b) seeks to ensure safe and suitable access to a site can be achieved and paragraph 111 indicates that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe.
61. Residents submit that the estimates of traffic generated by the various developments is based on inappropriate TRICs data. Here, correspondence between the HA and the lpa at the time of the applications suggests that the TAs were thoroughly scrutinised by the HA. In this context, I am confident that had the HA a concern about the robustness of the data this would have been raised. In my view, the submitted TA is robust, proportionate and provide a sound basis on which to assess this scheme.
62. The Transport Assessment (TA) shows that the existing highway network in the vicinity of the proposed development site operates satisfactorily albeit at school drop-off and collection times there is short-term congestion on Church Lane and at the Mill Lane junction. Traffic flows on Goosnargh Lane and Mill Lane are low. Given that Whittingham Lane is the one of the main routes from the A6 to Longridge, traffic flows are materially higher. The local roads have a good safety record with no evidence of any significant highway safety problems that would be materially affected by traffic generated by the development.
63. The development would be served by a new 2-way access onto Mill Lane and an entrance-only access off Church Lane to serve a community car park. Estimated 2-way flows at the junction with Mill Lane are 74 vehicles in the AM peak and 69 in the PM peak, corresponding to slightly more than 1 vehicle per minute. These flows do not appear excessive nor, having regard to existing surveyed flows would they result in material increases outside normal variations of daily traffic flows or result in a material change in traffic conditions. In these circumstances, I have no basis to conclude that there would be unacceptable conflict with traffic using the existing junctions.
64. Significant concern is raised regarding increased traffic on Church Lane, where short-term congestion at school drop-off and collection times is exacerbated by on-street parking, resulting in pedestrian vehicle conflict. The development would be within convenient walking distance of the primary

¹² Formerly Highways England.

school located off Church Lane and the proposed 40-space community car park to the rear of Bushells Farm would provide a convenient location for parents to drop off and collect schoolchildren. Whilst the appellants have no control over the parking behaviour of parents at drop-off and collection time, the proposed community car park has considerable potential to reduce existing levels of vehicle/pedestrian conflict on Church Lane and improve highway safety.

65. The development would be located close to the existing bus service that operates along Church Lane and Whittingham Lane to allow trips by public transport between the proposed development and Longridge and Preston. There are also school bus services that operate through Goosnargh to transport schoolchildren and young adults to secondary schools and colleges in the Longridge and Preston areas.
66. The development would be well located for pedestrian access to the existing shops and amenities in Goosnargh including the Post Office, the convenience store on Whittingham Lane and the village hall. The Masterplan includes walking and cycling connections to promote active travel for existing, and future, residents on journeys to and from the primary school, the shops and amenities. Therefore, the development would be accessible by sustainable transport and accords with the Framework.
67. NH is responsible for the strategic road network, which includes the M55 motorway and its slip roads with the A6. The HA is responsible for county roads, which includes the A6 roundabout with the M55. Whilst NH felt unable to respond on the highway impact of all or any combination of schemes on the strategic road network, the HA undertook a cumulative assessment, which post-dates the NH response. The HA concludes that the appeal schemes could be accommodated on the wider road network and do not object to this scheme or any of the appeals based on severe cumulative impacts on the A6/M55 roundabout.
68. Drawing the above together, the development would not have significant adverse impacts on the operation, or safety, of the highway network and includes proposals that would improve the parking provision in the village and improve pedestrian and cycle connections in the village. This development, on its own or together with others, would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the free flow of traffic contrary to the objectives of the Framework or LP Policy ST2.

Locational Sustainability

69. Although the village does not contain a significant range of facilities, there is a primary school, a village hall, 2 public house/restaurants, 2 convenience stores, one of which includes a post office, a pharmacy, a hairdresser, and a hot food takeaway. These facilities would provide for the day-to-day needs of the development. All these facilities are acknowledged by the lpa as being within walking and cycling distance of the site.
70. Within a reasonable walk of the sites, there are bus-stops and there are 2 bus services linking the village to Preston city centre, Longridge and Blackburn. There are 2 services per hour on weekdays and at the weekend providing access to the full range of services and employment. The journey to Preston is around 29 minutes, 14 minutes to the hospital and the journey to Longridge

is around 19 minutes. The S106 Agreement provides for financial contributions for service enhancements increasing the opportunity for journeys other than by car. In this context, the site is in a sustainable location, albeit at the bottom of the spatial hierarchy.

Flooding and Drainage

71. JCS Policy 29 seeks, amongst other things to reduce the risk of flooding. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, an area deemed to be the lowest flood risk i.e., having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding. That said, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is aware of significant surface water flooding issues adjacent to a watercourse immediately north of this site. The Environment Agency map detailing flood risk from surface water shows a high risk of flooding along the length of this watercourse as it flows to the west. The high-risk areas are on the access road to Bushell's Hospital Cottage, the junction of Mill Lane and a large area near Bradcroft and Bradcroft Cottage. The LLFA's observations are consistent with submissions made by residents.
72. Following the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and a Surface Water and Foul Water Drainage Strategy, both the LLFA and United Utilities (UU), who has a responsibility for the public sewers, have no objections to the development subject to the imposition of conditions.
73. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) indicates that the primary flood risk is from surface water. Controlling surface water discharge from the development would be key in reducing the risk of localised flooding. The eastern boundary of the site includes a watercourse that discharges into the watercourse located north of the site. Neither of these are considered to pose a flood risk to the site and the intention is that surface water would be drained to the watercourse to the north of the site. This watercourse also takes surface water from the Holme Fell development and would take surface water from the Swainson Farm developments. In this context, given the nature and scale of flooding shown in the photographs of Mill Lane, the residents' concerns are wholly understandable.
74. Here, the key condition required by the LLFA is that no development would start until details of the design, based on sustainable drainage principles, and implementation of an appropriate surface water sustainable drainage scheme have been approved by the lpa. The proposed condition is comprehensive and as part of the detail to be approved includes details of discharge rates and volumes (both pre and post development), temporary storage facilities, the methods employed to delay and control surface water discharged from the site and most importantly, the scheme should demonstrate that the surface water run-off would not exceed the pre-development greenfield run-off rate. It is not the appellants' responsibility to improve the existing drainage situation rather to ensure that the status-quo in terms of surface water drainage is maintained to ensure that there is no flood risk on or off the site from the development.
75. Notwithstanding the above, residents point out that the Holme Fell development has exacerbated flooding associated with this watercourse. The implication being that the SuDs scheme implemented for that development has not worked. There are 2 points to note here. First, the EA flood risk map already shows a high risk of flooding along the length of this watercourse as it flows to the west. However, it is not the developer's responsibility to improve

the existing drainage situation but rather to ensure that the status-quo is maintained. Second, it is the lpa's responsibility to ensure that the SuDs condition has been implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and if not whether it is expedient to take enforcement action.

76. Reference is also made to inadequate sewer capacity and overflowing at times of heavy rain. Given the age of the properties on Goosnargh Lane, Mill Lane and Church Lane, they may be drained on a combined system. Sewer flooding is generally caused by surface water discharging into a combined system and exceeding its capacity. This happens happen during and following extreme rainfall events causing the sewerage system to back-up. From the evidence, this is what appears to be happening.
77. Conditions sought by UU, who are responsible for the sewerage system, are that the development would be drained on separate systems and that no development is started until a surface water drainage system based sustainable drainage principles (SuDs) has been agreed with the lpa. Key elements of a SuDs scheme are, that surface water discharge from the development does not directly or indirectly discharge into the public sewerage system and the peak flow and volume of run-off is limited so as not to exceed existing flow rates. The appellants' surface water drainage proposal is that run-off would be attenuated and the discharge to the watercourse to the north would be restricted to the equivalent of pre-development run-off rates.
78. Drawing the above together, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, there would be no conflict with the objectives of JCS Policy 29.

Overlooking

79. Dwellings at the southern end of Church Lane and houses on Whittingham Lane would back on to the proposed residential area. Whilst most of the dwellings have deep rear gardens, the Masterplan shows a swathe of open space along the western and southern boundaries of the site. At the reserved matters stage, the layout could be designed to ensure there would be adequate separation between the existing and proposed dwellings. Thus, there would be no loss of privacy through overlooking.

Benefits

80. The development would provide up to 140 dwellings of which up to 63 (45%) would be affordable homes (AH) in compliance with JCS Policy 7 which requires 35% in rural areas. The development would be undertaken by Community Gateway Association (CGA), a not-for-profit community business that has been established to meet Preston's housing needs. The lpa accepts there is a, "*...clear and pressing need for more affordable housing...*". However, the lpa submits that the weight to be attached its provision should be tempered because the scheme is market led with AH in the minority. In this context, the weight in the planning balance would be somewhere near significant.
81. Whilst recent permissions in and around Goosnargh provide for AH, the bulk of the provision will be on the Whittingham Hospital site and much of it is unlikely to be delivered before 2030. However, it is undisputed that there is a pressing need now, that need is on a city-wide basis, provision is largely driven by and relies on market housing and overall delivery of AH has fallen

materially below that required. In this case, I heard nothing to suggest that the delivery of this site would be delayed. Moreover, given the nature of the provider and the enhanced scale of provision, AH attracts substantial weight.

82. This scheme would provide up to 77 market homes, which in the context of the national objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and assessed LHN being a minimum figure not a cap¹³, is a clear benefit attracting substantial weight.
83. The lpa acknowledges that the scheme would provide economic benefits through, promoting economic growth, support for local services and stimulating the local construction industry. Both the lpa and the appellants agree that economic benefits attract moderate weight. I can understand why the lpa seeks to be cautious, particularly given the economic benefits are unquantified. Framework paragraphs 81 and 84 indicate that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and supporting a prosperous rural economy through, amongst other things, contributing to the retention and development of accessible local services such as local shops and public houses. In this context, the economic benefit of this scheme attracts significant weight.
84. Financial contributions to improve the bus service form part of the S106 Agreement and, by definition, considered reasonable and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms¹⁴ to mitigate the impact of additional demand on the service. That said, improvements to the frequency and quality of these services would benefit existing residents expanding the choice of transport modes, which attracts moderate weight.
85. The proposal includes the location of a significant area of open space close to the village centre and the village hall. Whilst its provision is largely to meet the needs of the proposed development it would be accessible by the wider community and as such a benefit that attracts moderate weight.
86. The lpa recognises that the development has the potential to result in biodiversity gain, attracting limited weight. Whilst there is the potential for biodiversity gain, most of the indicative proposals are included to mitigate the impact of these developments on existing biodiversity. In this context, in terms of being a benefit, the potential for biodiversity gain is neutral.
87. The provision of the community car park for use by patrons of the village hall and as a drop off and collection point for school children is a public benefit that attracts moderate weight.
88. Preston along with South Ribble, Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership are partners in the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal with the Government as a mechanism to drive forward growth through by addressing infrastructure barriers to housing and economic growth.
89. The City Deal was entered into after the JCS was adopted and before the adoption of the LP. It is not part of the development plan framework; it sits alongside it. As such, the City Deal is not planning policy, it does not contain a housing requirement nor is it a spatial policy. It recognises that the JCS

¹³ Framework paragraphs 60 & 61.

¹⁴ Framework paragraph 56.

provides the overarching development and planning framework and highlights the proportion of new homes allocated in the Preston and South Ribble areas.

90. The provision of high-quality housing in appropriate and sustainable locations underpins economic growth. However, the City Deal highlights that inadequacies in the highway network have prevented and would continue to prevent the delivery of homes and jobs. The City Deal commits the authorities to “...grant the necessary consents, in line with planning policy and commit to ensuring the delivery of the following housing units in the City Deal Area”. This statement is followed by list of units to be delivered in the years 2014/15 to 2023/24 totalling some 17401 units¹⁵. To address the infrastructure issues to enable the full development of significant housing and commercial development schemes the City Deal commits to 4 new roads, a motorway junction, and the necessary local community infrastructure required to support the scale of development in the JCS and LP.
91. Against that background, of the 4 major road schemes, 2 are complete, the third, the Preston Western Distributor will open in 2023 and a planning application has been made for the forth, the South Ribble Western Distributor. However, the number of housing units delivered has not kept pace with the City Deal commitments. In the period 2014/2021 there has been a shortfall of some 2805 units, which by the end of the City Deal period, 2023/2024 is forecast to rise to some 5487 units. I have no reason to disagree with the appellants’ figures. The lpa acknowledges the shortfall in delivery against the City Deal and points to ongoing discussions to obtain a 5-year extension to the agreement. Thus, the commitments could be met, albeit over a longer period than envisaged in 2013. Moreover, an extension, which I have no evidence to indicate will not be approved would take the City Deal up to 2029 beyond the existing plan period and into the new plan where, the spatial strategy and housing requirement may be different.
92. Whilst the lpa acknowledge the shortfall, which on a bare reading of the figures, is substantial, the lpa submits that the commitment is, “...grant the necessary consents...”, and that the lpa is dependent on developers to make applications in locations consistent with the spatial strategy and build them. Whilst that is true, the lpa’s submission omits the remainder of the sentence, which goes on to say, “...and commit to ensuring delivery of the following housing units...” That is a bold commitment, which considering the lpa’s submission, it acknowledges it cannot achieve. That said, the lpa has a healthy supply of housing land, the implementation of which would contribute to the achievement of the commitments made under the City Deal.
93. Drawing the above together, the City Deal is a material consideration to be weighed in the planning balance. The lpa in a Planning Committee report¹⁶, on an application for a significant number of houses on the rural fringe of Preston (Bartle) concluded there was a 13.6-year HLS and the proposal conflicted with JCS Policy 1 and LP Policy EN1. However, the report notes that, the proposal, “...would support... the Council’s commitments under City Deal.”. In that case, although it clearly was a consideration, the lpa does not indicate the degree of weight it gave to this consideration. Given that the City

¹⁵ This figure differs from the total contained in the appellant’s Additional Joint Submissions Relating to the Updated HLPs. There appears to be an error in the figure for 2021/22. The appellant shows 2814, whereas the City Deal shows 2849.

¹⁶ 06/2020/0888

Deal is not part of the spatial strategy and does not allocate land or identify a housing requirement and its term is likely to be extended, it attracts limited weight as a material consideration.

Issue 4

94. The planning acts require that an appeal is determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise¹⁷. This is commonly referred to as the “flat balance”. The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. Framework paragraph 11 indicates that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making, this requires that where the policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against policies in the Framework taken as a whole; the “tilted balance”.
95. In this case, my assessment of the suite of the most important policies for determining this appeal, JCS Policies 1 and 4 and LP Policy EN1, is that whilst JCS Policy 4 is out-of-date, JCS Policy 1 and LP Policy EN1 are not. Thus, the development plan is up-to-date, and the “flat balance” applies.
96. The adverse impact of this development is a fundamental conflict with the development plan spatial strategy for Central Lancashire. This strategy seeks to direct development to the most sustainable higher order centres and minimise development in the lower order centres such as Goosnargh. Whilst the spatial strategy recognises that some greenfield development will be required, this is caveated in that it would be on the fringe of main urban areas.
97. As to the other material considerations, the contribution to market and affordable housing attracts substantial weight and the economic benefits attract significant weight. The financial contributions for public transport attract moderate weight. The car park attracts moderate weight and the implications for the City Deal attract limited weight. However, when balanced against the fundamental conflict with the spatial strategy and the very healthy supply of housing land, cumulatively these benefits do not outweigh the conflict with JCS Policy 1 and LP EN1 and the development plan taken as a whole. In coming to this conclusion, I have had regard to the contents of the S106 Agreement. However, as this appeal is being dismissed for other reasons, they are not matters that need to be considered further.

Overall Conclusion

98. For the above reasons and taking all other matters into consideration, this appeal is dismissed.

George Baird

Inspector

¹⁷ Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

ANNEX A - FULL TEXT OF SECOND REASON FOR REFUSAL

APP/N2345/W/20/3258890; 3258894; 3258896; 3258898 & 3258912.

The cumulative impacts of the proposal and other proposals adjacent to Goosnargh, which are the subject of current planning applications/appeals, would result in a radical change to the character of the rural village. Not only would the scale of development proposed by the application proposal and other proposals collectively destroy its character as a rural settlement and its intimate relationship with the surrounding countryside, by surrounding the village on all sides with suburban new development, but they would also represent rapid and unsustainable unplanned growth, which would be inappropriate and contrary to the aims of Policy 1 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN1 of the Local Plan, which seek to limit development in such rural locations to small scale, infill development. The need to promote sustainable development, set out in paragraph 8 of the Framework, involves bringing forward land of the right type in the right place with accessible services. By virtue of the location of application proposal, and other proposals adjacent to Goosnargh, the proposed development would demonstrably fail to do this. The proposed development is contrary to Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, Policy EN1 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANTS

Paul Tucker QC and Gary Grant of Counsel instructed by Shoosmiths LLP.

They called:

Dan Hughes, MPLAN, MRTPI
Associate, PWA Planning.

Housing Land Supply & Cumulative Impact

Ben Pycroft, BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI.
Director, Emery Planning.

Gary Holliday, BA (Hons), MPhil,
CMLI, Director, FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

Rob Hindle, BSC (Hons), MRICS
Executive Director, Rural Solutions Ltd.

Strategic Policy

John Barratt of Counsel.

He called:

Alexis De Pol, BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI
Director, De Pol Associates.

Affordable Housing

Philip Robson of Counsel

He called:

James Stacey, BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI.
Senior Director, Tetlow King Planning.

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Giles Cannock QC and Martin Carter of Counsel instructed by

They called:

Ben Sandover MPlan, MRTPI
Senior Planning Officer,

Housing Land Supply, Strategic Policy & Cumulative Impact

Christopher Blackburn BSc, MSc, MRTPI.
Planning Policy Team Leader.

Affordable Housing

Michael Bullock BSc (Hons), PhD, MMRS, MCIH.
Managing Director, ARC4 Limited.

INTERESTED PERSONS

Mr Ingham.
Mr Hargreaves.
Cllr. Woodburn.
Cllr Clarke.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED DURING THE INQUIRY

Statement on Highways Cumulative Impact, Highways England.
Statement on Highways Cumulative Impact, Highway Authority.
Appellants' Response on Highways Cumulative Impact.
Whittingham Hospital, Statement of Community Involvement.
Whittingham Hospital Affordable Housing Delivery Note.
Whittingham Hospital Affordable Housing Delivery Note, lpa response.
Whittingham Hospital Affordable Housing Delivery Note, appellants' response to lpa note.
Whittingham Hospital Affordable Housing Delivery Note, note by Mr Stacey.
Appellants' Note on Third Party Highways Representations, April 2021.
Cllr Woodburn, Response to Appellants' Highways Submissions April 2021.
Email dated 21 April 2021 from Mrs Clarke re General Highway Matters.
Representations by the Goosnargh & Whittingham Against Overdevelopment Group.
Public Transport Contributions, LCC Advice Note.
Cllr Woodburn, Cumulative Impact of Goosnargh Proposals.
Representations by Mr Ingham.
Representations by Mr Ingham on Housing & Population Numbers.
Bartle Garden Village, Extract from Design & Access Statement.
Land at Sandy Lane & Tabley Lane Planning Statement.
Legal Submissions on behalf of the appellants.
Letter dated 15 March 2021, re Hybrid planning application 06/2020/0888, Land west & east of Preston Western Distributor Road, Bartle.
Plan showing North-West Preston Planning Approvals.
CIL Compliance Statement.
List of Suggested Conditions & Reasons.
Cllr. Woodburn, Submission re Village Core.
Letter dated 20 April, Bushells Farm Housing Delivery.
Supplementary Drainage Note.
Supplementary Ecology Note.
Supplementary Transport Note.
Representations by Mr Hargreaves.
Certified Copy of S106 Agreement.

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE INQUIRY CLOSED

Lpa comments dated 6 August 2021 on the Chain House Lane, Whitestake, Preston appeal decision (APP/F2360/W/19/3234070).
Appellants' comments dated 4 August 2021 on the Chain House Lane, Whitestake, Preston appeal decision (APP/F2360/W/19/3234070).
Preston City Council Housing Land Position Statement 31 March 2021.
Lpa submissions on the Housing Land Position Statement dated 8 September 2021.
Appellants' submissions on the Housing Land Position Statement dated 30 September 2021.