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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2025

**by S Brook BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 30 July 2025**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D2320/W/25/3362468**

**14 Southport Road, Chorley PR7 6ES**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Lee Wrigley against the decision of Chorley Borough Council.
  - The application reference is 25/00143/PIP.
  - The development proposed is Permission in principle for demolition of existing buildings and erection of 5 No. dwellings.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for demolition of existing buildings and residential development comprising a minimum of 5 dwellings and a maximum of 5 dwellings at 14 Southport Road, Chorley, PR7 6ES, in accordance with the terms of the application reference 25/00143/PIP.

### Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Lee Wrigley against Chorley Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

### Preliminary Matters

3. The proposal is for permission in principle. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has two stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second, Technical Details Consent (TDC) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
4. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle are limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent TDC application, if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
5. An applicant can apply for permission in principle for a range of dwellings by expressing a minimum and maximum net number of dwellings as part of the application. In this instance, the application form indicates both a minimum and maximum of 5 dwellings.
6. I have taken the address of the appeal site from the appeal form as this includes the house number and so it more accurately describes its location.

## Main Issues

7. The main issues are whether the location, the proposed land use and the amount of development is suitable, having regard to:
  - whether the proposal would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, considering the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies, including where necessary, the effect on openness, and
  - if relevant, whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances required to justify the proposal.

## Reasons

8. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt. No development plan policies relating to the Green Belt are referenced on the Council's Decision Notice and none have been drawn to my attention. The Framework states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
9. Paragraph 154 of the Framework sets out that development in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, other than in a number of exceptions. Paragraph 155 of the Framework states that the development of homes on grey belt land should not be regarded as inappropriate, if specific criteria are met.
10. The Framework defines grey belt land as land in the Green Belt, comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 of the Framework. It excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets of particular importance as set out in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. The appeal site in this case would constitute 'other land' and there is no information before me to suggest that areas or assets of particular importance as set out in footnote 7 of the Framework provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development in this case.
11. The Council does not suggest that the appeal site prevents neighbouring towns merging into one another, or that it preserves the setting and special character of historic towns. From the available evidence, I have no reason to disagree. The area of dispute between the parties relates to the consideration of purpose (a) whether the appeal site strongly contributes to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
12. The planning practice guidance (PPG) advises that as purpose (a) relates to the sprawl of large built-up areas<sup>1</sup>, villages should not be considered as such. It goes on to provide considerations for informing such judgements.
13. The appeal site itself contains an existing dwelling and associated paraphernalia, and so, it is not free from development. Further, it has a sense of containment, not only from the hedging and mature trees to its various boundaries, but also from the

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225

mix of residential, commercial and agricultural development that is present to the immediate east, north and south, and further west.

14. While it is seen in the context of other development along Southport Road and Dawbers Lane, the extent of this other development does not in itself constitute a large built-up area, and so the appeal site could not be described as being adjacent or near to a large built-up area. Given the proximity to, and relationship with existing development, the proposal would not result in an incongruous pattern of development. Consequently, the appeal site does not make a strong contribution to purpose (a), and so it meets the definition of grey belt land.
15. Given that the appeal site itself is partially developed and noting its relationship to existing development to the north, east and south in particular, development of the site as proposed would not appear as an encroachment into the countryside. Further, there is nothing before me to suggest that the proposal would undermine the Green Belt purpose of assisting in urban regeneration. As such, I am satisfied that the proposal would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
16. The Council does not presently have a five-year supply of deliverable housing land and so there is demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. The Council has not disputed that the appeal site is within a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework, noting the proximity to some facilities in the immediate locality, as well as the availability of public transport connecting to the wider area. The Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. In this case, there does appear to be some genuine choice of transport modes, other than reliance on the private car, and so I have no reason to disagree with the Council on this matter. The proposal is not major development, and so it is not necessary for me to go on and consider the 'Golden Rules' of paragraph 156 of the Framework.
17. To conclude, the appeal site comprises grey belt land and the proposed development would meet the criteria of paragraph 155 of the Framework, and so it would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In these circumstances, it is not necessary for me to consider any effects on openness of the Green Belt, or whether there are any very special circumstances to justify the development.

### **Other Matters**

18. The main parties have also provided commentary on whether the proposal meets criterion (g) of paragraph 154 of the Framework. However, as I have found that the proposal is not inappropriate development under paragraph 155 of the Framework, it is not necessary for me to go on and consider this further criterion.

### **Conclusion**

19. Having considered the matters of location, the proposed land use and the amount of development, no conflict with the development plan has been identified and having considered all other material considerations, including the Framework, I find that the appeal should be allowed.

20. It is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle. The default duration for permission is three years. Any other matters can be addressed at the TDC stage.

*S Brook*

INSPECTOR