

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 10

meeting date: THURSDAY, 16 JANUARY 2014
title: FORMER RIDINGS DEPOT AND LAND NORTH AND SOUTH OF
WHITTINGHAM ROAD, LONGRIDGE – CONSULTATION FROM
NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To advise Members of the Council's response to a proposed development in a neighbouring authority.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The matters dealt with in this report relate to the ambition of helping to protect and enhance the local environment; it also has relevance to the Council's emerging Core Strategy.
- Community Objectives – The matters covered in this report relate to objectives of creating a sustainable local economy and ensuring that there is a suitable supply of sites for employment and housing.
- Corporate Priorities – The report supports the performance of the Council as a well-managed authority.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has been consulted by Preston City Council on a planning application for a significant mixed-use development adjacent to the borough boundary at Longridge. The application may be viewed on Preston City Council's website (www.preston.gov.uk) using the planning application search facility and entering the application number 06/2013/0795.

2.2 Members are reminded that Committee has considered the site on two previous occasions. Firstly, on 16 June 2011 in relation to a similar previous proposal at the site (Preston City application number 6/2011/0344) when it was resolved that Preston City Council be advised that the Council raised no policy objections to the proposal but that the matters set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report were to be taken into consideration when determining the application.

2.3 The second occasion was on 12 April 2012 in relation to a further similar proposal (Preston City application number 3/2012/0101). As that application was similar to the previous application, a similar report was put before this Committee and Members again resolved that Preston City Council be informed that the Council raised no policy objections to the proposals subject to due consideration of the matters set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report.

- 2.4 In respect of both previous applications, this Council responded to the consultation by Preston City Council in accordance with the resolutions of Planning and Development Committee as described above.
- 2.5 Preston City Council, however, refused application 6/2011/0344 in January 2012 for a reason relating to the cumulative impacts of traffic from the development on key local highway corridors between Longridge and Preston. An appeal against the refusal was dismissed by letter dated 8 August 2012 as the Inspector concluded that the negative impacts of the development on the highway network were so severe that they outweighed a shortfall in the five year housing land supply that had been agreed by the parties at the appeal.
- 2.6 Application 6/2012/0101 was submitted in February 2012, but was held in abeyance with the applicant's agreement pending the appeal decision on the previous application. Following that decision, the applicants sought to resolve the highway issues with Preston City Council but, when resolution could not be achieved, an appeal against non-determination was submitted. In response to this, the City Council's Planning Committee resolved on 30 September 2013 that, had the appeal not been made, they would have refused the application for two reasons. The first reason (as in the previous application) related to detrimental effects upon the highway network. The second reason related to the fact that approximately two thirds of the site is within an Area of Separation as supported by the Council's Adopted Core Strategy Policy 19; and that the development would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the open countryside character of the area and on the distinctiveness of separation of Longridge and eastern Preston and would facilitate the merging of these areas.
- 2.7 A public inquiry into this appeal is due to commence on 15 January 2014. Following legal advice, Preston City Council is not going to contest the appeal.
- 2.8 The current application 6/2013/0785 is due to be considered by Preston City Council's Planning Committee on 13 January 2014 (ie 2 days before the public inquiry is due to commence and 3 days before this meeting of the Ribble Valley Planning and Development Committee on 16 January 2014). It is for this reason that this report is an Information item to advise Members of the response to the consultation that will, of necessity, have already been sent to Preston City Council.

3 PROPOSAL AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The previous applications for this site were both for a mixed use development including up to 200 residential units, office space, leisure uses (including a swimming pool) residential apartments with care, and open space. This current application is in outline with all matters except "means of access" reserved for subsequent determination, although illustrative layout plans have been submitted with the application. The scheme differs from the previous applications in that the leisure uses including the swimming pool have been deleted, and the number of dwellings has been increased to up to 220 units.
- 3.2 The site lies adjacent to the Ribble Valley boundary to the west of Longridge on land that comprises areas of previously developed land with established employment uses and Greenfield land. The application sits in part to the south of Whittingham Road but it is predominately on land to the north.
- 3.3 The site will have impacts upon Longridge, which would be anticipated to provide the service facilities for residents. Capacity of infrastructure would need to be

considered with the statutory providers and it should be borne in mind that Ribble Valley is currently in the process of establishing its Core Strategy and seeking to determine appropriate scales of development. This issue was raised in the Core Strategy Topic Paper 'Discussion on the approach to the Preferred Option' considered by Members at the 8 December 2011 Planning and Development committee meeting, acknowledging this site as part of this. It was agreed in principle that this site could contribute to the housing requirements within Longridge as part of the Core Strategy, and deliver an allowance of 200 dwellings on the site as part of the housing numbers for Longridge. Approval of the development would not lead to the situation where no further development would be required within Longridge. It would however, be a factor in judging scale.

- 3.4 In the Preferred Options version of the Preston Local Plan (PLP) this was a larger site to provide 280 dwellings. More recently, however, in the July 2013 Publication Version Preston Local Plan - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) part of this site was designated as an Area of Separation, leaving only the brownfield portion of the site as an allocation for 90 dwellings. This matter was the subject of a report to this Committee on 7 November 2013. As explained in that report, this Council has co-operated with Preston City Council on the basis of an allocation of 200 houses at this location on Whittingham Road. As this Council's Core Strategy has now reached Examination Stage (with the hearings due to commence in January 2014) RVBC would not wish to make further late changes which could impact on its plan strategy. It is considered that the proposed reduction in this allocation from 200 to 90 dwellings fails to recognise the importance of Longridge and the significant contribution that the site offers to the role of Longridge as a Key Services Centre. In accordance with the recommendation of their officers, Members resolved "that the Council submit an objection to the housing allocation and Area of Separation on land at Whittingham Road, Longridge due to its impacts on the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, namely the spatial distribution of housing, and its relation to the role of Longridge as a key service centre". Such an objection was sent to Preston City Council. This current application for up to 220 dwellings would provide the level of provision that this Council has already considered appropriate in this location and that has informed the preparation of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
- 3.5 It is considered important, given a current lack of readily available employment land in the Ribble Valley to serve Longridge, to be satisfied that the proposed employment provision is adequate to mitigate against loss of the existing employment uses on the site and the future opportunity to develop or redevelop these sites further, including the need to serve the Ribble Valley element of Longridge. A careful assessment of the employment opportunity should be undertaken.
- 3.6 It is a matter for Preston City to consider their position in regard to their need for housing land and their delivery of a five year housing land supply. The consideration of this would need to take account of their wider planning strategies and proposals being pursued in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy. In general terms, the scale of this proposal is not in conflict with the general policies of that proposed strategy. It is understood that in terms of saved local plan policies, the site lies within a location that has no specific land designation and consequently any application would be considered on its merits.
- 3.7 Primarily, the application falls to be determined against National Planning Policy Framework. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework, is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without

delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless 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; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Subject to consideration being given to matters concerning impacts upon the local highway network, and infrastructure provision, approval of this application by Preston City Council would authorise what is considered to be a sustainable development in accordance with the requirements of NPPF and that would accord with the emerging Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

4.2 Preston City Council has therefore been advised that this Council raises no policy objection to the proposal but that the matters set out in section 3 of this report be taken into consideration when determining the application.

5. **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

5.1 Note and endorse the consultation response to this application that has been sent by the Head of Planning Services to Preston City Council.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Preston City Council Planning Application 6/2013/0785/P – neighbouring authority consultation.

For further information please ask for Colin Sharpe, extension 4500.

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