

# Longsight Road, Langho

## 784-B075154

PINS Ref: 6002485 | LPA Ref: 3/2025/0196

# **Volume 1: Proof of Evidence of Peter Blair on Highways, Transportation and Accessibility**

**In Respect of Outline Planning Application for up to 300 Residential Dwellings, Associated Access, Rail Station Car Park, Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Drainage Systems (all matters reserved except for access)**

At Land South of Longsight Road, Langho

**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 | Tetra Tech Ref: 784-B075154**

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**Revision 01 – Final**

**On behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited**

## Volume 1 Text



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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Preamble**

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1.1.1 This Highways and Transport Proof of Evidence has been prepared by Peter Blair, Head of Transport North at the international consultancy Tetra Tech. It describes my Highways and Transport evidence, considerations and findings.

### **1.2 Experience of Witness**

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1.2.1 My name is Peter Blair. I have a degree in Civil Engineering and a diploma in Industrial Studies, both from the University of Ulster. I am a Chartered Engineer, a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers and a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.

1.2.2 I am Head of Transport North at the international consultancy Tetra Tech (TT). I have over 35 years' experience of working in the field of traffic engineering, acting both for Public Authorities and Private Clients.

1.2.3 I am familiar with the development site and the highways and transport operational conditions in the local area.

1.2.4 My evidence is given in accordance with the requirements of my professional bodies. I can confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions, irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

### **1.3 Appointment**

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1.3.1 I am instructed on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited, thereafter referred to as the appellant, to present evidence relating to Highways and Transportation matters in respect of the appeal, submitted pursuant to Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, concerning development of Land south of Longsight Road, Langho ("the appeal site"). My evidence should be read in conjunction with the Planning evidence of Mark Saunders and the Highways Statements of Common Ground.

### **1.4 Background to the Appeal**

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1.4.1 A full summary of the background to the appeal is set out within the appellant's Planning Statement of Case (SoC).

1.4.2 The site consists of one large agricultural field at land south of Longsight Road, Langho. The whole of the residential scheme is located within the administrative boundary of Ribbles Valley Borough Council (RVBC).

1.4.3 A comprehensive suite of technical reports and plans were submitted with the application in line with RVBCs validation requirements. The documents submitted during the course of the application are scheduled in the Core Documents List. The highways and transportation work which accompanied the application was undertaken by the consultancy Hydrock Fore (HF).

1.4.4 The full planning application for the site was received and validated and given the planning application reference 3/2025/0196. The case officer at the Local Planning Authority (LPA) prepared a report for the planning committee and recommended that the application should be refused.

1.4.5 This appeal follows the refusal by Ribble Valley Borough Council with regard to the application for planning permission for the following Proposed Development (“the appeal scheme”):

*“In respect of outline planning application for up to 300 residential dwellings, associated access, rail station car park, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems (all matters reserved except for access)”*

#### **Scope of Evidence**

1.4.6 The consultancy HF produced the highways and transport information which accompanied the application. I have been appointed to provide a second opinion and to present my evidence upon the proposals in order to enable the Inspector to consider the merits or otherwise of the transport and accessibility criticisms which arose in the application process.

1.4.7 I have read the planning documents, including the HF Transport Assessment (TA), Core document (CD) 1.9, the Framework Travel Plan (FTP) CD1.10, the Highway Authority (HA) consultation responses (namely, Lancashire County Council – LCC), the case officer’s report to committee and the decision notice. I have undertaken a site visit and have commissioned various traffic and pedestrian surveys in the area, to further inform my considerations.

1.4.8 Reason for Refusal (RfR) no. 2 cited reliance on the private motor vehicle as being contrary to local and national policy. The case officers report to committee (para 5.6.7 and 5.6.8) cites concerns over the accessibility and connectivity of the site and the lack of an accessible route to the train station, concluding that the matter of sustainability of the site had not been addressed. Consultee and public representations include concerns over the adequacy of bus services, safety of the site access onto the A59, the use of Whitehalgh Lane, traffic impact on the A59 and the steps on the direct pedestrian route to Whalley Road.

1.4.9 Following the Case Management Conference (CMC), the Inspector issued a summary note CD 8.2 which identified the main issues to be addressed. The second main issue within the CMC summary note is the developments “*effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport*”.

1.4.10 My evidence addresses those points.

1.4.11 LCC as the HA and offered no objection, subject to conditions and S106 contributions which include significant sustainable travel mitigation. A Highways Statement of Common Ground (HSOCG) has been agreed with the HA. CD 4.21.

1.4.12 A HSOCG is also in place with RVBC. CD 4.18 That HSOCG records that the only transportation points between the appellant and the LPA are those pertaining to RfR2.

## 2.0 Review of Submitted Information and Additional Tetra Tech Information

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In approaching this case, I am mindful that the applicant has submitted a TA and an FTP (prepared by HF) and that the HA was consulted through the process and is satisfied with the proposals. Nevertheless, I have sought to cross check that information and collect additional data to help inform my considerations. There are several reasons for doing that:

- To seek to validate the previous findings;
- To establish whether previous assessments or findings could be considered to be over robust. If that is the case, it should give latitude for the LPA to weigh the proposals more favourably; and
- To establish whether previous submissions understate impacts or issues. If that is the case that would inform where additional analyses or mitigation might be required.

2.1.2 The details of my cross checking and investigations are as set out in the following sections.

### 2.2 Traffic Counts and Speeds

2.2.1 The HF TA CD 1.19 presented traffic volumes and speeds recorded along the A59 in October 2024. Figures 9 & 10 of the TA (see **PoE Appendix 1**) show the surveyed traffic volumes which include the recorded traffic figures along the A59 in the AM and PM peak hours. This speed limit of this part of the A59 is the national speed limit, which for this class of road is 60mph.

2.2.2 I commissioned a traffic survey between 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to collect classified traffic volumes and speeds (see **PoE Appendix 2**). Whilst the September survey was just after the school holiday period, and so volumes may be slightly lower in the commuting peaks, lower volumes may mean higher speeds. The comparison between traffic volumes and speeds in the TA and in my work is tabulated below.

2.2.3 **Table 2.1** presents the comparison between the 2024 and 2025 Surveys. It includes weekday peak hour traffic volumes and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile traffic speeds over a 7-day period.

*Table 2.1 Traffic Volume and Speed Comparison in the Peak hours*

Direction of Travel	2024 Traffic Survey Data (extracted from HF TA)			2025 Traffic Survey Data		
	AM Traffic Flow	PM Traffic Flow	85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed	AM Traffic Flow	PM Traffic Flow	85 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Speed
Eastbound	644	751	52.1mph	649	623	52.2mph
Westbound	754	590	54.3mph	651	635	51.3mph

2.2.4 The PM peak hour varies between the two records. In the 2024 survey the PM peak hour was from 16:30 to 17:30 but in my survey it was between 16:00 to 17:00.

- 2.2.5 The traffic volume during the AM peak hour eastbound is almost identical in both surveys. The AM westbound and PM eastbound were recorded to be c. 100-125 trips higher in 2024 than 2025, whilst the PM westbound was higher in 2025 by 45 vehicles. In summary, the volumes are very similar.
- 2.2.6 The traffic speeds from the two surveys were also very similar. In the eastbound direction they were almost identical and in the westbound direction the more recent survey records slightly slower speeds.
- 2.2.7 The higher 2024 volumes were the basis for the peak hour junction operational assessment of the site access junction. That assessment forecast that the site access would operate with at least 47% spare capacity and with no material queues in the AM and PM peak hours (TA Table 7 page 16). Given that the volumes have not changed significantly between 2024 and 2025, it is considered that the junction modelling in the TA was carried out on a sound and up to date data source.
- 2.2.8 The exercise essentially cross checks and validates the traffic volumes and speeds presented in the TA.
- 2.2.9 The proposals would also seek to introduce a speed limit reduction to 40mph along the site frontage, which should result in a significant reduction in speeds. The visibility splays which are required at the junction are 120m, commensurate with DMRB standards for 40mph. The actual visibility splays which will exist will exceed the distances which are required for the existing 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds. In that way the junction layout and splays are appropriate, whether the LHA decide to reduce vehicle speeds or not.

## 2.3 Trip Generation

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- 2.3.1 I have seen that the HA requested significantly higher trip generation rates for the proposals than those which HF first proposed in the scoping phase. I have undertaken an independent trip rate derivation and find that my figures align more closely with the original HF rates. The HF assessments adopted the higher rates requested by the HA in their TA.
- 2.3.2 The difference is perhaps a moot point because all of the junctions which were assessed in the HF TA were forecast to operating well within capacity at peak times even under the higher HA trip rates. As an aside, in checking the HF analyses I note that the traffic volume inputs to the model have been made in “Passenger Car Units”, PCU. That approach factors up HGV numbers to an equivalent higher number of cars. That is the reason why the assessment output files record a “warning” that no HGV traffic has been modelled. It has taken account of HGV traffic, just by an alternative and accepted methodology.
- 2.3.3 My conclusion is that the HF work is sound, albeit that the proposals are likely to generate fewer traffic movements than have been assessed. Consequently, the access junction and local network will operate better than the submitted assessments forecast. The HF and HA finding that the development is acceptable on highways impact terms is therefore robust.

## 2.4 Pedestrian Survey

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- 2.4.1 I have collected additional data in the form of pedestrian surveys in the area where the Public Right of Way (PRoW) crosses the A59 (see **PoE Appendix 3**). That was intended to gauge the number of

existing pedestrians along the footway on the A59 site frontage, where that frontage is being improved and speeds are to be reduced.

- 2.4.2 The survey was conducted by video, over a Thursday and a Saturday in early September 2025, between 6am and 8pm, which at that time of year, approximates to the hours of daylight.
- 2.4.3 The recorded pedestrian volumes were 43 movements on the Thursday and 45 movements on the Saturday including walkers, joggers and dog walkers. The actual number of individuals was lower (34 on Thursday, 42 on Saturday) as the video shows that some people passed the site more than once, such as joggers who must have been jogging around a loop.
- 2.4.4 That data is relevant to quantifying how many existing pedestrians will experience the benefits from the proposed footway, crossings and traffic speed reductions along the site frontage.

## **2.5 Proposed Access**

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- 2.5.1 The proposals feature a new site access junction onto the A59 with a 3m wide footway/cycleway on both sides of the A59. The proposals include a speed limit reduction to 40mph, a crossing of the site road, two uncontrolled crossing points on the A59 and a signalised toucan crossing on the A59. That crossing also serves two new bus stops. The access junction has been designed to accommodate the turning movements of pantehnicon and a refuse vehicle as demonstrated by vehicle tracking in the HF TA.
- 2.5.2 The pedestrian survey recorded c 44 pedestrian movements per day, each of which currently experiences the A59 environment where 85<sup>th</sup> %ile traffic speeds are around 52mph, no footway is present on the south side where the PRoW emerges, and the footway on the north side is a little overgrown, with approximately a 1.3m useable width. The proposals will be capable in geometric and capacity terms, and will introduce measures to encourage active travel and will improve the pedestrian and cycling environment.
- 2.5.3 As the survey demonstrates, the footway alongside the A59 is presently actively used.
- 2.5.4 The proposals also include a new pedestrian and cycle access onto Whitehalgh Lane accompanied by a speed limit reduction to 30mph and associated lighting and traffic calming measures. The proposals are not reliant upon pedestrian use of Whitehalgh Lane, but there is a recognition that it is already in use by pedestrians and may be used by some future residents, so improving this route is appropriate.
- 2.5.5 The HSoCG with the LHA CD 4.21 confirms their agreement that the proposals provide safe and suitable access.

## **2.6 Proposed Car Park and Rail Station Car Parking Availability**

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- 2.6.1 The proposals include the provision of a 43 space (including 5 blue badge spaces) car park for rail users. The appellant has confirmed that c. 4 EV charging spaces and covered, secure cycle parking will be provided. The details of those will be subject to a Reserved Matters application and agreement with the HA. The car park is being provided to accommodate the existing demand for rail related parking and to support and encourage the existing and future use of rail services. RVBC CD 4.18 and the HA acknowledge that it will serve that purpose.

- 2.6.2 In addition to encouraging new rail travellers, it will also accommodate rail travellers who until recently were able to park in a restaurant car park in Langho. Rail related parking was formerly permitted there and then, following a short period when signage advised that rail parking was no longer permitted, the entire car park has been taken out of use through the installation of concrete barriers. Photographs of the former Langho rail parking signage and the current concrete barriers are attached in **Appendix 4**.
- 2.6.3 When preparing my Proof and in advance of receiving LHA agreement that the proposed car park would also encourage new rail travel, I collected data relating to the availability of rail parking in Langho and at three other stations along the line. My thinking was that if convenient rail parking was not available at those locations, then there may be a number of travellers who could otherwise use rail services, but may currently be deterred by the lack of parking and so may be using their car instead.
- 2.6.4 I commissioned observations at and around Clitheroe, Whalley, Ramsgreave and Wilpshire and Langho rail stations, the 4 nearest rail stations. That survey data is presented in **PoE Appendix 4**. The purpose of those observations was to determine whether parking is available in those locations at times when commuters or persons undertaking late morning journeys are likely to need it. One survey was undertaken in the school half term week and a further survey was undertaken in the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> November.
- 2.6.5 The finding was that there is a lack of parking availability near those stations which means that persons who might otherwise use the train will be deterred from doing so. The absence of parking availability at those stations also means they offer no scope to achieve benefits from future looking, Vision-led strategies to promote mode shift from car to rail.
- 2.6.6 The finding that there is an absence of accessible parking spaces and Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure near those rail stations means that any vehicle drivers who require those, will be deterred from using the existing stations.
- 2.6.7 There is now no dedicated parking at Langho rail station at all.
- 2.6.8 The conclusions from the survey work are that a new car park at Langho would:
- a) Accommodate the existing demand for rail users who until recently parked their vehicle in Langho (Restaurant Car Park) and used the railway. That will promote and enable public transport.
  - b) Accommodate any parking demand currently being displaced to other less convenient rail stations. That will reduce mileage.
  - c) Accommodate any rail journey related parking demand, which is currently being suppressed by the lack of parking availability across the rail stations. That will enable and facilitate rail use.
  - d) Create a Vision-Led facility which will accommodate future parking demand arising from mode shift towards rail as promoted by future initiatives and strategies. That will accommodate future increasing demand for rail use.

- e) Provide facilities for blue badge holders and Electric Vehicle charging, to overcome the lack of those facilities at other stations, which may be currently precluding rail travel for those who need those facilities.

2.6.9 The provision of a 43 space car park (including 5 blue badge spaces and EV spaces) will not increase the number of journeys which need to be made. It will however serve to encourage the use of rail for part of those journeys. In doing so it will encourage mode shift and promote sustainable travel, which are objectives of the NPPF. It will achieve that straight away in terms of serving existing and suppressed existing demands. It will also serve as advance provision to support the success of other initiatives and strategies which aspire to increase rail travel.

2.6.10 The proposed car park achieves objectives within the NPPF and the draft Lancashire Local Transport Plan such as improving accessibility to and promoting public transport and providing for efficient onward public transport movements which are safe and convenient.

## **2.7 Summary of Review of Submitted Information and more Recent Information**

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2.7.1 My review of the highways and transport work submitted with the application concludes that it is sound. New additional data validates that work and shows that the assessments of operational conditions are robust.

2.7.2 New pedestrian and rail station parking data informs the extents to which the proposals would benefit existing pedestrians, and would promote and accommodate demand for rail travel.

2.7.3 It is notable that the HSOCGs confirm that highways and traffic related impacts are not points in contention at the Inquiry.

## 3.0 Review of the Proposals against the Requirements of Local Policy and the NPPF

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 In preparing my evidence, I have reviewed the policies cited in the RfR2 and also the key policies within the NPPF. At the time of preparing this evidence, a Draft NPPF is being consulted upon. Although it is not in effect in policy terms, it indicates the direction of travel which the NPPF is seeking to follow.
- 3.1.2 For ease of cross reference, RfR2 stated:
- “The proposed development by virtue of the quantum of development, would result in a large-scale development in a rural location resulting in future users being reliant on a private motor vehicle contrary to Key Statement DM12 and Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework which supports sustainable patterns of development.”*
- 3.1.3 I set out in section 4 of this PoE why I consider that RfR to be flawed. This section of my proof focuses on the policies cited within it and how the proposals fare when gauged against the requirements of those policies.

### 3.2 The Proposals and Sustainable Travel Improvements

- 3.2.1 A comparison of the Proposals against policy requires a consideration of the improvements and the sustainable travel enhancements offered by the proposals. The TA and TP identify 18 sustainable travel improvements and 16 sustainable travel measures / funding. In the interests of brevity and to assist cross referencing, I set those out in a matrix, included as **PoE Appendix 5**. Many of those elements will also benefit wider accessibility and should inform considerations on the subject of sustainability.
- 3.2.2 Whilst this section of my evidence presents these measures to demonstrate compliance with policy, they should also be noted in terms of addressing the comments in the Officers Report to Committee CD 3.1 and RfR2 where the issue of sustainability is questioned.

### 3.3 Compliance with Policy

- 3.3.1 To clearly and comprehensively set out how the proposals comply with the policies cited in RfR2 and in the NPPF, I have tabulated those policies and cross referenced them against various elements of the proposals to demonstrate how the proposals comply. I present those tables as **PoE Appendix 6**.
- 3.3.2 With reference to those tables, I consider that the proposals comply with local policy and the NPPF. Those policy compliances are set out in the context of the Reasons for Refusal and the main issue (transport related) raised by the Inspector in Section 4 of my evidence.
- 3.3.3 In undertaking this review, I have identified one area where it appears that policy has not been served. Policy DMG3 requires that “considerable weight” should be given to many positive aspects

of the proposals. However, it would appear that positive weight has not been afforded in the case officer's assessment. I will leave the application of that policy for the appellants Planning Witness to describe.

3.3.4 I have also reviewed the transport and accessibility aspects of the case against the '*NPPF Planning and National Decision Making Policies (December 2025) - Draft Text for Consultation*'. I have set out my review in **PoE Appendix 7** of this evidence and have additionally summarised that in within the policy compliance tables in **PoE Appendix 6**.

3.3.5 I consider that the proposals comply with the requirements of local policy, the NPPF and the Consultation Draft NPPF in relation to the highways, transportation, accessibility and sustainability aspects. It is notable that the LHA confirm that position as recorded in the HSOCC with the HA.

### **3.4 Considerations on Interpretating Policy and Definitions**

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3.4.1 With reference to the aforementioned policy tables (**PoE Appendix 6**) and the sustainable travel improvement matrix (**PoE Appendix 5**), it should be clear how the various elements of the proposals assist compliance with the key policies. A consideration of what policy and guidance actually do and do not require, gives an even clearer demonstration of compliance.

3.4.2 Considerations of what constitutes sustainable development often recognise that there are 3 strands to sustainability, which are social, economic and environmental. Travel is directly related to the environmental strand, but it is can also be linked to the social strand. The point to make is that travel is just one aspect of three strands in the consideration of whether a development is sustainable. It is therefore not correct for the LPA to regard an alleged reliance on the private car as something which automatically renders a development unsustainable. In the case of this development, and as later sections show, the development is sustainable and enhances sustainable accessibility for non-development persons too.

3.4.3 The Glossary of NPPF defines sustainable modes of travel to include ultra-low / zero emission cars. Those are a rapidly increasing proportion of the UK car fleet. Car sharing has also long been regarded as a sustainable form of travel, and is encouraged as such in Travel Plans. It is therefore incorrect for the LPA to regard all car travel as unsustainable, particularly when many of those cars are expressly defined as sustainable modes of travel. It therefore follows that it is incorrect to equate an alleged "reliance on the private car" as something which renders a development unsustainable.

3.4.4 There is no policy requirement to provide access to every facility by all modes of travel.

3.4.5 There is no policy that requires access to be available to all services, for all people, via the most direct route.

3.4.6 The case officer has classified the proposals as being located in a rural area. The NPPF advises that planning decisions should recognise that developments in rural areas are likely to exhibit fewer opportunities for sustainable accessibility. Although the site is rural, it is clearly not remote and as rural locations go and must be at the higher end of rural accessibility, with it being located directly adjacent to a settlement which benefits from a range of non-car modes of travel. The site has the

additional benefits of being close to a rail station and the A59 which is a major public transport corridor for buses travelling between Preston and Clitheroe.

3.4.7 The Draft NPPF consultation advises use of a Connectivity Tool, which itself has not been released in final form, but is available to use. A recent article in the Transportation Professional magazine (Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation) said “*The tool provides a single reproducible national baseline, giving all parties at the planning table a shared starting point*”. **PoE Appendix 7.1** shows an excerpt from that tool showing the Ribble Valley and surrounding areas. It shows that the site has a far better level of connectivity than typical rural areas. It also shows that the overall connectivity score (except driving) for the existing site is at an average level in national terms. That connectivity will be enhanced further by an on-site layout designed to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, off site footways, cycleways, speed limit reductions, pedestrian and cycle crossings, traffic calming, provision of and enhancements to public transport infrastructure including bus services and a rail station car park and FTP measures.

## 3.5 Summary

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3.5.1 My evidence concludes that:

- The TA and FTP identify 18 sustainable travel improvements and 16 sustainable travel measures / funding;
- My review confirms that the proposals are not contrary to the cited local policies, nor to the NPPF;
- The proposals in fact comply with, and positively deliver the requirements of those policies;
- Although at the time of preparing this proof it is not a requirement to comply with the NPPF Consultation Draft, that document indicates the direction of travel of policy and my review has found that the proposals do comply with the transport and accessibility aspects within it;
- Had proper weight been given to positive aspects of the proposals as required by policy DMG3, that could only serve to affect the planning balance positively in favour of the proposals, and
- It can be seen in the HSOCG with the HA CD4.21 that they are in agreement that the sustainable travel and accessibility tests in the NPPF are satisfied by the proposals.

## 4.0 Addressing Main Issue Identified by the Inspector and the Reason for Refusal 2

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 At the CMC, it was clear that in highways and transport terms, the LPA were only intending to run a case on lack of accessibility. It is notable that highways safety and traffic impacts are not points in contention.
- 4.1.2 The Inspector has reflected this in identifying a main issue (in Section 4 of the CMC summary note), to be the developments “effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport”.
- 4.1.3 The HSoCG with RVBC has stated that RfR2 is the matter which is not agreed.
- 4.1.4 Both the Inspectors main issue and RfR2 are related to the sustainability of the development. I have outlined my considerations regarding the main issue identified by the Inspector, RfR2 and the matter of sustainability in this section.

### 4.2 Consideration of the Main Issues Identified by the Inspector

- 4.2.1 The Inspector has highlighted the effect of the development on sustainable modes and patterns of transport as a main issue.
- 4.2.2 In answering that issue directly, I consider the effect of the development on sustainable modes and patterns of transport to be beneficial. The Table in **PoE Appendix 5** demonstrates how the proposals provide physical infrastructure to enhance walking, cycling and public transport modes of transport. Moreover, they provide financial contributions to enhance public transport, and the FTP secures that additional measures to promote sustainable travel will be implemented. In terms of the proposals effect on sustainable modes of transport, those enhancements and encouragements are therefore positive and beneficial.
- 4.2.3 Additionally, the proposals will introduce a significant number of additional patrons who will use the bus and train services, and that will have a beneficial effect on those sustainable modes of transport by improving their viability.
- 4.2.4 The patterns of travel in and around Langho will increasingly shift towards sustainable modes through enhancements to infrastructure, encouragement towards sustainable travel and indeed the continued increase in ultra-low and zero emission vehicles. Some of those enhancements will be delivered by this development and some will emerge from the increasing policy shift towards prioritising sustainable travel such as are included in the draft Lancashire Local Transport Plan objectives towards achieving their transport visions.
- 4.2.5 Finally, the provision of efficient broadband to the new premises will serve to reduce the need to travel which in turn improves patterns of sustainable travel.

## 4.3 Consideration of the Reason for Refusal 2

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### 4.3.1 RfR2 states:

*“The proposed development by virtue of the quantum of development, would result in a large-scale development in a rural location resulting in future users being reliant on a private motor vehicle contrary to Key Statement DM12 and Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework which supports sustainable patterns of development.”*

4.3.2 Addressing that, my evidence therefore reviews the proposals in relation to the topics of accessibility, reliance on the private car and sustainable development. At the outset, there are a few overarching points to make in relation to the wording of RfR2.

4.3.3 The “large scale” size of any development is not something that can be criticised in terms of whether future users would be reliant on the private car. If a link between development scale and future travel choice exists, then it would surely be to recognise that developments of sufficient scale can provide the improvements and funding to enhance sustainable travel choices as is the case here. Small scale developments cannot.

4.3.4 The rural location of the site means that the recognitions afforded to rural development and sustainable travel by the NPPF apply, notably paragraph 110. Clearly the site is not remote, it is directly adjacent to Langho, a settlement located in a popular and well connected area where the adjacent residential development was deemed to be appropriate and sustainable.

4.3.5 The RfR equates a rural location to a reliance on a private car and then a reliance on a private car to a failure to comply with policies promoting sustainable patterns of development. Both of those suppositions are incorrect, principally around the concept and definitions of reliance and sustainable development.

- Most developments even in city centres expect households to own cars. Parking standards require that parking is provided and parking on this site will be agreed at an appropriate level in the reserved matters application. Simply owning a car or having one present on site does not mean that the resident will be reliant upon it.
- Reliance means being dependent upon. Active travel and sustainable travel options together with ever-increasing on-line accessibility options, combine to ensure that residents will have a choice of how to access facilities or services so they will not be “reliant” on a private car .
- Even when some residents do choose to use a car, if that car is used by more than one person, then by the definition of sustainable travel in the glossary to the NPPF, such a journey would be a sustainable form of travel.
- Similarly, ultra-low emission and zero emission vehicles are becoming increasingly common and are also defined by the NPPF as sustainable forms of travel. It is the case that now and increasingly, some use of a private car is sustainable and does not automatically equate to a development which is unsustainable.
- On a perhaps a pedantic point in relation to the RfR, reliance on private motor vehicles is not actually prohibited by any of the cited policies. It is incorrect to have concluded that that users will be reliant on the private car, that any such reliance renders a development unsustainable

(travel is just one aspect of 3 strands of sustainability) or that any that such reliance is contrary to policy.

## **4.4 Further Considerations on Accessibility and Sustainable Development**

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4.4.1 My evidence describes the various highways and transportation aspects of sustainability and accessibility. I note that the HA consultation response 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 stated:

*“Subject to the mitigation measures identified above being implemented we consider that residents have the option to travel sustainably between the site, local facilities and employment centres and hence the proposals are suitably accessible”.* I concur.

4.4.2 The HSOCG with the LHA CD 4.21 also confirms that in terms of walking, the three pedestrian routes between the site and the town, together with the proposed pedestrian infrastructure suitably integrate the proposals with the village.

4.4.3 When considering accessibility and sustainable travel, (leaving aside for now, the various modes of travel), it is helpful to consider accessibility in four categories:

1. on site,
2. at the interface between the site and the external networks,
3. onward to facilities and services and
4. accessing services and facilities which does not require travel at all.

4.4.4 I have tabulated the various provisions of the proposals, set against the first three of those categories, cross referenced with travel mode and objectives achieved (see **PoE Appendix 5**).

### **Accessibility On-Site**

4.4.5 As far as the site layout is concerned, the planning application is in outline. It can be ensured at detailed planning stage that the site will be laid out to modern standards, putting pedestrians and cyclists to the fore. It should therefore be assumed, that the Site will be delivered with an accessible internal layout, in line with the requirements of paragraphs 115 and 117 of the NPPF.

4.4.6 A second aspect of site accessibility is the nature of the accesses to the site and the modes of travel which they can support. The site will have 4 access points, and potentially 5 depending upon the legal status of the route through the 2018 Pringle development to the east. Where the Pringle site adjoins the application site, a sign has been erected saying “Private”, but has been crossed out. Prior to that site being erected, I note that the developer in promoting the application stated that the footway on their site would connect through from the railway underpass to the A59, with no suggestion that this would only be to the benefit of residents of that development. The planning officers report for the Pringle scheme describes an expectation that the play area on that site should be available to the general public. Both of those clearly indicate that a benefit of that approval was intended to be that people could walk through that site.

4.4.7 That is perhaps something of an aside, because the site promotes 4 other accesses. Enhancements will be made to FP6a at its connection to the railway underpass. As a footpath it can only accommodate pedestrians.

- 4.4.8 A new pedestrian and cycle access is proposed onto Whitehalgh Lane, accompanied with speed reduction and traffic calming measures.
- 4.4.9 A new vehicular access (the main site access), connecting with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure will be provided onto the A59. That is also accompanied by speed reduction measures on the A59, footways and cycleways, uncontrolled crossings, a signalised toucan crossing and two new bus stops to Quality Bus Standards.
- 4.4.10 It is also proposed to improve the existing access where FP6a emerges onto the A59. Currently there is no footway where that path emerges onto A59. At this location pedestrians will benefit from the measures proposed along and across the A59.
- 4.4.11 There is no policy requirement to provide access in every direction to all types of users, just that the site should be accessible. The provision and enhancement of facilities at 4 access locations, benefiting pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, the mobility impaired and motorists is a clear demonstration that the site would be accessible to the surrounding networks. That accords with paragraphs 115 and 117 of the NPPF as agreed with the LHA.

#### **Onward Accessibility to Services and Facilities**

- 4.4.12 The TA Figure 2 shows facilities in Langho. **PoE Appendix 8** shows the typical walk distances from the centre of the site to the crossroads of Whalley Road and Whinney Lane. The shortest distance is via the lit railway underpass and that route also involves a flight of steps which I acknowledge would not accommodate all mobility impaired users, notably those using mobility scooters or wheelchairs, but for the remainder of users, would be a short and convenient route to the rail station and the town.
- 4.4.13 Community Rail Lancashire has developed options to provide lift access to the rail platforms, and step free access to the town centre, Reference: DfT Option Selection Report, September 2020. Their option report sets out their favoured Option (F) and amongst many positives, also lists the negatives of minor modification to the PROW, required access over 3<sup>rd</sup> party land for construction and the assumption that a car park will be provided. The proposals would deliver all elements to overcome those negatives and safeguards a small area of land to accommodate the works. The report dated September 2020 includes letters from Northern Trains and Community Rail Lancashire voicing support to advance the project. The applicant cannot control the delivery or long-term maintaining of such infrastructure, which will be in the hands of Network Rail and so does not rely upon it at this appeal. It is nevertheless clear that a proposal has been investigated and is supported and the Applicant can play their part in assisting the delivery of it.
- 4.4.14 Although the existing steps would not accommodate wheelchair or mobility scooter use, they do offer features to support the mobility impaired. The 19 steps typically have tread width of 300mm, a rise of just 110mm and are punctuated by two landings 1.7 and 2.1m long. The steps have a handrail for the first 6 step flight and two handrails for the two higher flights.
- 4.4.15 For those who can negotiate the steps, FP6a is the most direct route into Langho on foot. For anyone who cannot, the alternative routes, shown on **PoE Appendix 8** offer alternative route choices.

- 4.4.16 It has long been recognised that walking has the greatest potential to replace short car journeys, particularly those under 2km. My evidence presents published research on how far people walk to services. Research undertaken by Gareth Wakenshaw and Nick Bunn (2017) (attached as **PoE Appendix 9**) shows the distances that people do walk and cycle to access public transport, employment, services and facilities. It shows that in a rural area, people are willing to undertake a walk of 1,600m and a cycle of 9,650m for all journey purposes. This is well within the distances from the centre of the site to the centre of Langho, as demonstrated in **PoE Appendix 8**.
- 4.4.17 There is no policy that requires access to be available to all services to all people via the most direct route. To the contrary, an overall view has to be formed as to the quality of the opportunities for sustainable travel which will be available to future residents.
- 4.4.18 I note the views of Objectors who cite the lack of services and facilities in Langho and who contend that other nearby settlements have a wider range of services.
- 4.4.19 If some residents of the development find that they cannot access services in Langho or that the services which they wish to access do not exist in Langho, then they have reasonable sustainable travel options by which to access those services.
- 4.4.20 A key aspect which makes accessing services and facilities from any rural site a realistic option, is whether there are towns or villages nearby where those services and facilities can be found. Clitheroe, Whalley and Blackburn are sizeable towns and can be reached within a short drive or bus journey, noting that the A59 is a major bus corridor.
- 4.4.21 I have reviewed the bus timetables and find that there are regular services to those locations. The proposals further promote bus travel by providing new bus stops, a signalised crossing, upgrades to bus stops and public transport funding.
- 4.4.22 I have also seen Objectors comments pointing out that many services are school only. That is noted, but such services are still a sustainable travel mode providing access to those schools for the people who may use them, and they reduce the incentive upon parents to use the private car for the school run.
- 4.4.23 The proposals also benefit from being directly adjacent to a rail station. The rail station provides a direct service to a range of locations with large scale commercial and employment opportunities, such as Bolton, Salford, Clitheroe and Blackburn. The current limitations to accessing the platforms for some mobility impaired users are noted, as is the fact that Community Rail Lancashire have explored options to specifically address that. As can be seen from **PoE Appendix 10**, rail services are regular. I have seen Objector comments stating that it is quicker to drive to Manchester than take the train. That may be so outside of rush hour, but not during the time of peak demand when principal arterial routes into Manchester are heavily congested.
- 4.4.24 It is notable that the Consultation draft NPPF now highlights how proximity to rail services can be a factor which permits the granting of planning approval for sites outside settlement boundaries.
- 4.4.25 The point to make is that the rail services adjacent to the site are an additional travel option which is not available to most developments (nor indeed in many towns). Any current limitations in service frequency or access to the platforms does not diminish the suitable accessibility of the site.

The fact is that the additional travel choice by rail exists for most users and that should be regarded as an additional positive to weigh in favour of the proposals.

- 4.4.26 The proposals further seek to promote the use of rail facilities by providing a car park which will be available to the wider public. As set out in section 2, that encourages public transport, reduces mileage, provides facilities for blue badge parking and EV charging and releases demand for rail travel which is suppressed by lack of parking facilities in Langho and at other near-by stations, both now and in the future.
- 4.4.27 A key thread of the planning system is for development proposals to be Vision-led. No development can provide every aspect necessary to deliver the sustainable travel future vision for the north west of England, but the proposals do provide infrastructure which directly supports that Vision.
- 4.4.28 In terms of promoting the use of sustainable modes, the proposals promote rail, bus, walking, cycling, and sustainable car travel, through providing infrastructure, funding and implementing a full Travel Plan, in line with the FTP. Those all support sustainable patterns of development.
- 4.4.29 I appreciate that whilst policy says “all modes” of travel, few developments if any are served by all modes of travel, so I take that requirement to mean by walking cycling, public transport, taxi and car. The important issue is that the site will be served by a realistic range of sustainable travel modes which offer travel choice as alternatives to the use of the unsustainable private car.
- 4.4.30 Residents of the site will be able to physically access services and facilities. The site is not remote, and residents certainly won't be isolated. The site and the proposals exhibit adequate to good accessibility across the 3 categories of on-site provision, access interface with the external networks and onward accessibility to services and facilities. Accessibility and accessibility enhancements are provided in respect of walking, cycling, bus, rail and sustainable car modes of travel, through infrastructure, funding and the implementation of a full Travel Plan.

#### **Online Accessibility**

- 4.4.31 A final point to make on accessibility relates to the increasing and very significant trend to access services, facilities, work and maintain social contact on-line. As a modern development, the homes will feature efficient broadband connectivity.
- 4.4.32 Many people choose to work from home and access facilities such as shopping, medical appointments, chemist prescriptions, news, literature, entertainment (such as movies) and social interactions on-line.
- 4.4.33 Physical accessibility to services and facilities (particularly the workplace) is important but being able to have on-line access to most aspects of life, where travel was traditionally necessary, has reduced isolation and the need to travel.
- 4.4.34 **PoE Appendix 11** presents statistics gleaned on the subject.
- 4.4.35 On-line access presents a great sustainability benefit and a further accessibility choice. In a Vision-led planning system and with Government and Local Authority strategies seeking to reduce vehicular travel, that trend is likely to increase.

## 4.5 “Sustainable Patterns of Development”

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- 4.5.1 The Reason for Refusal refers to sustainable patterns of development. Considerations of what constitutes sustainable development often recognize that there are 3 strands, social, economic and environmental. The matters of traffic and sustainable travel are directly related to the environmental strand but are also linked to the social strand. I do not comment on the economic strand other than to observe that the site is located in a populous and prosperous part of county and that the appellant, in promoting the proposals will have satisfied themselves on the question of economic viability. Objectors have noted the limited businesses and services available in Langho, however the additional spending which the development would bring would surely enhance the viability of those existing businesses.
- 4.5.2 The sustainable travel opportunities, infrastructure enhancements and funding to promote public transport and full Travel Plan implementation, address the travel related criteria of sustainable development under the environmental strand.
- 4.5.3 Travel and access to services and facilities can also be linked to the social strand of sustainability. The site is located adjacent to other houses, close to the village centre and in an area which has good connections to a number of villages and significantly large towns. Those towns and villages offer significant services and facilities, (including rail services) and a significant number of workplaces, all well within an acceptable commuting travel distance. Bus services pass the site and the pedestrian survey shows that the A59 is frequented by walkers and joggers.
- 4.5.4 The residents of the site will have access to modern broadband and telecommunication connections and the social engagements which those offer. It would be unthinkable that residents of the proposed site would regard their situation as being isolated or locationally unsustainable from a social perspective. To the contrary, the site lies within an easy bus ride or train trip to major centres of employment and higher order centres. For example, Clitheroe is 20 minutes away by bus, with the employment area at Barrow being around 10 minutes away. BAE Samlesbury, a major local employer and the heart of a designated Enterprise Zone lies 10 minutes by bus to the West.

## 4.6 Summary

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- 4.6.1 This section considers the proposals against a main issue identified by the Inspector, i.e. the developments “effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport” and also against RfR2.
- 4.6.2 Both of those aspects mention sustainability and so my evidence addresses that too.
- 4.6.3 In terms of the developments “*effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport*”, I consider that it will be beneficial. The multiple sustainable travel infrastructure improvements, funding provisions, increased public transport patronage, provision of a carpark for the rail station and other enhancements (e.g. travel plan) will all serve to encourage sustainable modes of travel both for residents of the development and the local public.
- 4.6.4 In relation to RfR2 I consider it to be flawed. The scale of development does not harm the accessibility aspect of sustainability, if anything, larger developments have more ability to enhance it.

- 4.6.5 Policy advises that there should be recognition of the challenges in achieving accessibility in rural areas, and as rural sites go, the proposed site is well connected and accessible.
- 4.6.6 Many forms of private car travel are sustainable so it is incorrect that the RfR2 should conclude that a reliance on the private car automatically results in an unsustainable development.
- 4.6.7 My evidence also shows that residents will have a significant range of alternative travel mode choices and so will not be reliant on the private car. Moreover, the modern efficient digital connectivity in each home will reduce the need to travel and will give access to employment, services, facilities, retail and social interactions.
- 4.6.8 In terms of sustainability (relating to transport), this section also describes how the on-site layout, the interfaces between site and the wider area, the public transport facilities, digital connectivity, an increasingly sustainable car fleet and elements such as the new rail station car park, the travel plan and funding, all serve to enhance development sustainability. Noting of course that transport is just one aspect of the environmental and social strands of sustainability.
- 4.6.9 In transport accessibility terms the proposals are sustainable and the increasing prevalence of ultra-low emission and zero emission cars, the reducing trend in need to travel and the future promotion of public transport and the sustainable initiatives such as those in the draft Lancashire Local Transport Plan all align with vision-led aspirations for sustainable transport.

## 5.0 Summary and Conclusion

### 5.1 Summary

5.1.1 I am content for this section of my Proof to be read as my Summary Proof of Evidence.

5.1.2 In approaching this project, in relation to highways, traffic, transportation and accessibility issues, I have :

- Checked the transportation work submitted alongside the application;
- Undertaken further investigations and updates to data;
- Found that the previous work which supported the application is sound and robust;
- Reviewed the Officer Report to Committee and its findings;
- Reviewed the points made by objectors to the application;
- Reviewed the proposals against the requirements of local policy, the NPPF and Draft Consultation NPPF;
- Considered the attributes of the proposals in terms of Sustainable development and accessibility;
- Reviewed the proposals against the stated Reason for Refusal 2;
- Reviewed the proposals against the single transport related main issue raised by the Inspector; and
- Entered into Highways Statements of Common Ground with the Highway Authority and the Planning Authority.

5.1.3 The agreements set out within the HSoCGs are extensive. The Highway Authority have no points of disagreement, and agree that the proposals offer safe and suitable access, prioritise sustainable travel, suitably integrate the development with the village, meet the sustainable travel and accessibility tests in the NPPF and have no unacceptable traffic related impacts.

5.1.4 The HSoCG with RVBC records that the only point upon which the parties are not in agreement is RfR2.

#### **Review of Submitted Transport Work and Additional Survey Data**

5.1.5 The HSoCGs (CD 4.2.1 and CD 4.18) and the transport related main issue to be addressed before the Inquiry, acknowledge that matters of highways and traffic related impact are acceptable. In advance of reaching that position, I had reviewed the previously submitted work and undertook additional surveys of traffic volumes, trip generations and traffic speeds, pedestrian numbers and parking at rail stations. I include that evidence for completeness.

5.1.6 My review of the highways and transport work submitted with the application concludes that it is sound. New additional data validates that work and shows that the assessments of operational conditions are robust.

5.1.7 New pedestrian and rail station parking data informs the extents to which the proposals would benefit existing pedestrians and would promote and accommodate demand for rail travel.

### **Review of the Proposals against Local and National Policy**

5.1.8 My review gauged the proposals and the 18 sustainable travel improvements and 16 sustainable travel measures / funding against local policy, the NPPF and the Draft NPPF. To set that process out efficiently and clearly, PoE Appendices 5 and 6 contain tabulations of the various elements of the proposal, their benefits and how they fare when considered against policy. My review concludes that:

- The proposals are not contrary to the cited local policies, nor to the NPPF;
- The proposals in fact comply with, and positively deliver the requirements of those policies;
- Although at the time of preparing this proof it is not a requirement to comply with the NPPF Consultation Draft, that document perhaps indicates the direction of travel of policy and my review has found that the proposals do comply with the transport and accessibility aspects of it;
- Had proper weight been given to positive aspects of the proposals as required by policy DMG3, that could only serve to affect the planning balance positively in favour of the proposals.

5.1.9 It can be seen in the HSoCG with the HA that they are in agreement that the sustainable travel and accessibility tests in the NPPF are satisfied by the proposals.

### **Addressing the Transport Related Main Issue identified by the Inspector and the RfR2**

5.1.10 My review considered the proposals against a main issue identified by the Inspector, i.e. the developments “effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport” and also against RfR2.

5.1.11 Both of those aspects mention sustainability and so my evidence addresses that too.

5.1.12 In terms of the developments “*effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport*”, I consider that it will be beneficial. The multiple sustainable travel infrastructure improvements, funding provisions, increased public transport patronage, provision of a carpark for the rail station, safeguarding land for step-free access improvements at Langho Railway Station and other enhancements (e.g. travel plan) will all serve to encourage sustainable modes of travel both for residents of the development and the local public. That point is agreed in the HSoCG with the HA.

5.1.13 In relation to RfR2 I consider it to be flawed. The scale of development does not harm transport related sustainability, if anything, larger developments have more ability to enhance it.

5.1.14 Policy advises that there should be recognition of the challenges in achieving accessibility in rural areas, and as rural sites go, the proposed site is well connected and accessible. That point is agreed in the HSoCG with the HA. CD 4.2.1

5.1.15 Many forms of private car travel are sustainable so it is incorrect that the RfR2 should state that a reliance on the private car automatically results in an unsustainable development.

5.1.16 My evidence shows that residents will have a significant range of alternative travel mode choices and so will not be reliant on the private car. Moreover, the modern efficient digital connectivity in each home will reduce the need to travel and will give access to employment, services, facilities, retail and social interactions. That point is agreed in the HSoCG with the HA.

- 5.1.17 In terms of sustainability (relating to transport), my evidence also describes how the on-site layout, the interfaces between site the wider area, the public transport facilities, digital connectivity, an increasingly sustainable car fleet and elements such as the new rail station car park, the travel plan and funding, all serve to enhance development sustainability. Noting of course that transport is just one aspect of the environmental and social strands of sustainability.
- 5.1.18 The site could not be regarded as being isolated or locationally unsustainable from an access or social perspective. That point is agreed in the HSoCG with the HA.
- 5.1.19 In transport terms the proposals are sustainable and the increasing prevalence of ultra-low emission and zero emission cars, the reducing trend in need to travel and the future promotion of public transport and sustainable initiatives such as those in the draft Lancashire Local Transport Plan all align with vision-led aspirations for sustainable transport.

## 5.2 Conclusions

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- 5.2.1 In consideration of my evidence, I conclude the following:
- The proposals provide safe and suitable access for all modes of travel.
  - The site designation as being in a rural location means that reduced opportunities for sustainable accessibility should be taken into account when planning decisions are made. As rural sites go, the site is adjacent to a settlement with good accessibility. The proposals enhance that and offer good accessibility both on site, connecting to adjacent networks and via sustainable travel modes to a significant number of facilities, services and towns.
  - The proposals will not have any significant traffic impacts on the local highway network.
  - The residual cumulative impacts on the road network will not be severe.
  - The transport and highways aspects of the proposals support sustainable development and promote and prioritise sustainable travel.
  - Residents of the development will not be reliant upon the unsustainable private car.
  - The proposals comply with local and national policy and guidance.
  - The proposals comply with the NPPF draft consultation.
  - In terms of the main issue within the Inspectors CMC summary note, the proposals will have a positive and beneficial effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport.
- 5.2.2 The development proposals should be considered to be acceptable in highways, traffic, transport accessibility and sustainable travel terms.

**Volume 2: Appendices (Bound Separately)**