



Appeal Statement

For

(LPA ref.)

Prepared by

Carl Taylor BA Hons, LA Dip CMLI

With regards to Landscape and Visual Assessment and Landscape Design

MARCH 2026



CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 The Study Area and Appeal Site
- 3.0 Development Proposals
- 4.0 Relevant Landscape Planning Policies
- 5.0 Landscape Assessment
- 6.0 Visual Assessment
- 7.0 Consultee Objections
- 8.0 Summary and Conclusions
- Appendix 1 Views and Historic Map Regression
- Appendix 2 TPM Landscape Methodology
- Appendix 3 Comparison Effects Tables





1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application relates to an area of land measuring 20.01 hectares outside the defined settlement boundary of Langho.
- 1.2 The site is bounded to the north by Longsight Road (A59), to the east by Northcote Park (residential development), to the south by the railway line and to the west by Whitehalgh Lane..
- 1.3 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 300 dwellings which comprises the following:
- 300 dwellings including 30% affordable homes
 - New railway station car park
 - Biodiversity net gain strategy to deliver a minimum 10% improvement
 - Sustainable drainage systems including attenuation basins
- 1.4 Access is applied for in this application, with the scheme proposing a direct vehicular access onto the A59 and a new pedestrian / cycle access point from Whitehalgh Lane. The existing pedestrian access points from the A59 and the railway station underpass in the south-east corner of the site would be retained. Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are all reserved for a later stage,
- 1.5 The outline planning application (LPA ref: 24/02705/MOA) was refused by a Decision Notice dated 1st August 2025 for the following five reasons:
- 1. The proposed development would result in a large-scale residential development, outside of a defined settlement, which fails to meet any of the exception criteria for allowing development in such location contrary to Key Statements DS1 and H2 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.**
 - 2. 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. The proposed development, by virtue of its overall scale and footprint, would result in the introduction of an incongruous, unsympathetic, and discordant form of development, particularly when viewed from public vantage points along Longsight Road (A59) approaching the site from both the western and eastern directions, Public Footpath FP0606a which crosses the site and residential properties to the north of Langho village afforded direct views of the site. This would result in adverse, long term and permanent visual and landscape harm.**



The resultant impact fails to respond positively to the inherent visual and landscape character of the area contrary to Policies DMG1, DMG2, DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework including paragraph 135.

4. The application fails to carry out appropriate assessments to fully assess the impacts of the development upon habitats within and adjacent to the site including whether appropriate protection and enhancement can be provided for protected species and their habitat. This is contrary to Key Statement EN4 and policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. The proposed development would result in the loss of existing habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units, with insufficient details being submitted to demonstrate an appropriate strategy for achieving the statutory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain contrary to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021).

1.6 This Landscape and Visual Effects Appeal Statement will consider matters relating to the landscape design of the Appeal Site and the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape and visual baseline and amenity.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.7 My name is Carl Taylor. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours in Landscape Architecture and a Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture. I am a Member of the Landscape Institute and a Chartered Landscape Architect. I have approximately 30 years experience as a practicing landscape architect within both Public and Private organisations. I have provided evidence at Inquiry previously for both Local Authorities, Mineral Authorities and Private Developers assessing the impacts of a broad range of projects which have included Industrial and commercial development and warehousing, residential developments, wind farms, and biomass power generation.
- 1.8 I am currently a Director of TPM Landscape, Chartered Landscape Architects and have experience in the field of landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) and Townscape Assessment (TVIA) and urban design generally with the practice currently working on multiple residential schemes across the UK.
- 1.9 I was initially instructed by Ribble Valley Council in February 2026 to consider landscape matters pertinent to the site and proposals. I am familiar with the site for the purposes of preparing evidence.
- 1.10 TPM Landscape has worked over many years designing landscapes for commercial and residential development, and have worked with many developers and Local Authorities across the whole of the UK. I have been a Director of the firm from its establishment in 2001 and have led the development of both landscape and visual assessment and residential Master planning during this time.



1.11 Whilst I am instructed by Ribble Valley Council I recognise that in providing evidence my duty is to provide my impartial professional view to the Inspectorate irrespective of by whom I am instructed. I am aware that my professional duty is to the Inspectorate irrespective of by whom I am instructed and confirm that the evidence I have prepared has been done so in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct of my profession with due diligence and is truthful, representing my honestly held professional view, irrespective of by whom I am instructed.

EXPERT WITNESS DECLARATION

1.12 After exercising due diligence in my inquiries as to relevant facts, I believe that the facts I have stated in this Statement are true and I confirm that I have had proper regard to the relevant principles as to the preparation and presentation of expert evidence at a planning appeal.

Signed: A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. A.', is written over a horizontal dashed line. The signature is contained within a light grey rectangular box.

Dated: 19-03-2026



2. THE STUDY AREA AND APPEAL SITE

- 2.1 The Appeal Site is described in the appellants LVIA assessment:
- 2.2 *The Site is located to the immediate north of the village of Langho in the Ribble Valley of Lancashire between Blackburn (C.4km southwest) and Clitheroe (c.7km northeast). The nearest village settlements are Billington c.1.7km to the northeast and Wilpshire c.1.2km to the southwest.*
- 2.3 *The Site comprises five agricultural fields laid out to pasture set between the A59 which forms the northern boundary and the Ribble Valley Railway at the southern boundary. Residential development at the extent of Langho borders the Site to the south adjacent to the railway. The Site is accessed from Langho Station at an underpass in the southeast corner with a public footpath (ref: PRow FP 6, Billington and Langho) then crossing the Site to meet the A59 with onward links to the north across the Ribble ValleThe landscape is heavily wooded with woodland dominating the slopes and ridgeline to the north and to the east. Woodland and trees also follow the rail and canal corridor and the general impression is of a landscape study area with equal parts urban, arable fields and woodland.*
- 2.4 *The western boundary is formed by Whitehalgh Lane which heads south before turning west, where an existing field gate provides access into the westernmost field. The road then heads south under the railway towards the centre of Langho. The eastern boundary is formed of a woodland block, Green Nook Wood at the northeast corner and the edge of a recent housing development (Northcote Park), comprising a mixture of large detached and semi-detached properties which overlooks the Site. Further to the east are small scale pastures and Mytton Fold Golf Course between the railway and Whalley Old Road.*
- 2.5 *Langho village to the immediate south has a nucleated form and is defined by surrounding woodland blocks and the railway line. Land south of the village rises steeply up the valley side where the Ribble Valley Jubilee Way follows the ridgeline heading in a northeast direction towards Whalley*
- 2.6 The site is overlooked by housing to the immediate south of the site along the whole length of its boundary with the rail line, with housing off Rogersfield; Bushburn Dr; Moorland Road and Olive Bank all elevated above the Site with views out towards the landscapes of the south and the Bowland Fells and the National Landscape.
- 2.7 The site includes a large number of mature trees, many of which are category A and B following field boundaries or former field boundaries, with stands of trees following the internal water course running from the south to north towards the A59 forming a natural vegetative corridor at the centre of the site.
- 2.8 The topography of the site falls gradually away from the rail line and settlement boundary to the north of the Site. The ground is generally gradually sloping with local variations around the watercourse at the centre of the Site.



- 2.9 Further housing overlooks the site to the east with housing on Compass Drive and Northcote Park overlooking the Site.
- 2.10 Individual residential dwellings are found in the north western corner to the Site and opposite the Site on the A59 road, both locations afford open views across the Site.
- 2.11 South of the Site is the village of Langho which is a nucleated settlement originally set around the Roman road to Ribchester, but in its more modern form, developed around the Whalley Road (running through its centre south west to north east), and the Railway Station which lies immediately to the south of the Site towards the eastern boundary.
- 2.12 North of the site open pasture fields extend over a gradually undulating valley towards flood plain of the River Ribble. The land is open farmed pasture land with hedgerow boundaries and mature trees and hedgerow trees creating a layering of vegetation. Further north of the River Ribble the land rises up towards the Bowland fell and the National Landscape.
- 2.13 *Land south of the village rises steeply up the valley side where the Ribble Valley Jubilee Way follows the ridgeline heading in a northeast direction towards Whalley.*



3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (CD2)

- 3.1 The application relates to an area of land measuring 20.01 hectares outside the defined settlement boundary of Langho..
- 3.2 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 300 dwellings which comprises the following:
- (i) 300 dwellings including 30% affordable homes
 - (ii) New railway station car park
 - (iii) Biodiversity net gain strategy to deliver a minimum 10% improvement
 - (iv) Sustainable drainage systems including attenuation basins
- 3.3 Access is applied for in this application, with the scheme proposing a direct vehicular access onto the A59 and a new pedestrian / cycle access point from Whitehalgh Lane. The existing pedestrian access points from the A59 and the railway station underpass in the south-east corner of the site would be retained.
- 3.4 In terms of sustainability, the site is located adjacent to Longsight Road (A59) and the Langho Railway Station, however, the site itself will be segregated from the village of Langho by the railway line. As such there would be little scope for integration with the village, which itself provides limited facilities.
- 3.5 There is a proposed pedestrian/cycle access onto Whitehalgh Lane, which is a narrow lane with limited potential to improve the width and provide adequate pavements which will result in people with reduced mobility having limited options to access Langho.
- 3.6 The proposed development will deliver 8.98 hectares of residential development. The development will deliver up to 300 dwellings at c.33dph..
- 3.7 The development will include approximately 10.876 hectares of public open space including blue and green infrastructure. The Site will also include two formal play spaces.
- 3.8 The design and access statement includes a constraints section where the site is analysed and constraints of the site considered. The existing beck, trees and underground sewer are physical constraints that are noted as not suitable for development land. The openness of views from the rail line and housing to the north of this is also noted as a constraint.
- 3.9 The D&A statement states that *existing vegetation including Green Nook Wood will be retained and enhanced where possible*. The Site contains a striking collection of mature trees described rightly as parkland like in appearance (appellant AIA para 4.5) with the majority of trees as category A and B and one veteran tree held within the TPO protected woodland of Green Nook Wood. The proposals will see at least the loss of 10 trees and a large extent of



native hedgerow fronting onto the A59. The remaining retained trees will go from being set within open pasture, able to draw on the water resource and oxygenation of open fields, to being set within an urban environment, and in some instances sandwiched closely between proposed dwellings. It is my opinion that the design of the proposed development and the extent of development across the site do not offer opportunities of enhancement for these character full trees.(design principles 4 D&A statement)

- 3.10 The design principles go on to claim further benefits of the design as: *Existing high value landscape features retained and enhanced; Sustainable green routes and connectivity; Ecological connectivity and Biodiversity improved*. The high value landscape features are presumably the mature trees and these, as discussed above, will not all be retained and will be placed within a completely different setting from the parkland pasture that the Site currently presents. My evidence is not ecology but there is clearly a strong level of existing ecology on the Site which will not be improved or enhanced by being placed within a housing development. Typically residential development does not contribute to ecological connectivity and ecological diversity because of the obvious harmful additions that such development brings such as: the hard landscaping; the removal of landscape features; the excavation and re-engineering of large parts of the Site and subsequent disturbance and damage to the existing ecology this brings; and the introduction of human activity and predators such as cats that preclude certain wildlife from ever establishing on the site.
- 3.11 Movement and access; Land use; and Placemaking are all discussed as design principles without ever discussing the urban form and relationship with the existing village of Langho. Much of the discussion in the D&A revolves around the vernacular building materials but no attempt is made to explore how the proposals integrate into the village and become part of the urban fabric. In my opinion this is because such a relationship does not, and cannot exist, with access to the village limited to a single narrow tunnel under the rail line in the south east corner of the Site with other access off the main A59 and a cycle link off to the east onto Whitehalgh Lane. The proposals are presented as a stand alone residential development with no links or call backs to the existing village; its urban grain; visual links; and vistas/views
- 3.12 Placemaking discussion (page 41 appellant D&A) talks of creating *gateways; character and distinctiveness; permeable and legible development; and a clear sequence of nodal spaces providing memorable wayfinding that define the entrance points into the development and key spaces*. This outline masterplan does not however indicate to me that any of these highlighted urban design benefits are an intrinsic part of the design of this scheme.
- 3.13 The access is shown as a simple loop within the site entering off the A59, (a busy, fast moving road, poorly suited to being a primary connection for residential use) and an approximate 850m walk/cycle link along roads poorly served by pavement to the main village of Langho (A59- Whitehalgh Lane
- 3.14 Attenuation areas are located at the low point of the Site and adjacent to the A59 which, along with the removal of hedgerow for access and the need to maintain sight lines, reduces significantly the ability to offer mitigation planting along the A59 with open views of the development likely along the majority of the Sites northern boundary.



- 3.15 Path routes through and around the site appear to be simply run through retained areas of trees root zones crossing back and forth onto pavements and squeezed within narrow gaps between development and boundaries. Many of these path routes cross over root zones and through areas of retained vegetation bringing into question how protected in reality any of these existing green space areas would be.
- 3.16 The LAP appears to be located in a corner of the site and not a centrally located element of the design on the footpath network. It appears only overlooked by three properties and seemingly an after thought to the whole design plan.
- 3.17 The LEAP is located in a more accessible location adjacent to the retained and existing PRoW but will further urbanise this section of path retained outside of the developable area.
- 3.18 The description of the design (illustrative masterplan description) suggests that development *will be sufficiently setback from the southern boundary to maintain open views across the Ribble Valley*. Although I agree there will not be a visual amenity impact from the development, the impact on views for existing residents, across the valley, and to the Bowland Fells, will be significant. (see also visual analysis section 6)
- 3.19 The existing growth pattern and urban grain of Langho village is not discussed and the rail line as physical barrier is mentioned only briefly. I discuss this in more detail in section 5 but I do not believe that the design is appropriate in scale or form in relation to the existing village or that it responds well to the physical constraints of the rail line and road networks that surround it.



4. RELEVANT LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICIES

NATIONAL CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 135

4.1 Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁵¹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 15 and Paragraphs 187-189

4.2 *Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- (a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;



Paragraph 188-190

- 4.3 *Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁶⁵; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries. 188*
- 4.4 *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks .189*
- 4.5 Consideration of landscape value and landscape and visual harms and effects that may arise from the proposed development are considered in this statement and support my view that the proposals **do not**: add to the overall quality of the area; are not sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; do not establish a strong sense of place; and do not propose an appropriate amount of development.

NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

- 4.6 The National Design Guide introduces ten characteristics through which good design can be built:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
 - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
 - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
 - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
 - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
 - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
 - Uses – mixed and integrated.
 - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
 - Resources – efficient and resilient.
 - Lifespan – made to last.
- 4.7 The Appeal proposals in my opinion fail to satisfactorily demonstrate a strong and coherent sustainable design for the site. This is expanded upon in section 3.

LOCAL CONTEXT –

POLICY

- 4.8 Policy DMG1 are general considerations of design which include:



1. Development should be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the cade/english heritage building on context toolkit).
 2. be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.
 3. consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.
- 4.9 I do not consider that the proposals are sympathetic to the existing land use and are not sympathetic to this landscape with regards to the size; scale; massing and layout of the proposals. I expand on this throughout this statement.
- 4.10 Policy DMG2 states: within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscape and siting.
- 4.11 In terms of sustainability, the site is located adjacent to Longsight Road (A59) and the Langho Railway Station, however, the site itself will be segregated from the village of Langho by the railway line. As such there would be little scope for integration with the village, which itself provides limited facilities, with only a small convenience store/post office, pharmacy as well as hair and beauty facilities.
- 4.12 The Council has determined that on balance the site is not a sustainable location to support 300 houses by virtue of the ineffective connections to Langho village and difficulty in accessing pedestrian and cyclist links, bus stops and the railway station, particularly by future residents with disabilities and reduced mobility or with prams/pushchairs/young children.
- 4.13 Policy DME1 Protecting Trees and Woodland: the proposals, although retaining trees and hedgerow as part of the proposals see the removal of both trees and hedgerows across the Site.
- 4.14 Policy DME2 Landscape and Townscape Protection, development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features including: traditional stone walls; ponds; characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures; woodlands; and copses; townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the characteristic townscapes of the area.
- 4.15 I believe the proposals will lead to harm of the features and characteristics noted and will harm the townscape characteristics of Langho with regard to the scale and form such that it is harmful to the townscape character of the village. I expand on this further through this statement.



5. LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The Wider Landscape

- 5.1 The Appeal Site lies within National Character Area 35, Lancashire Valleys, Relevant extracts from the NCA are as follows:

The Lancashire Valleys run north-east from Chorley through Blackburn and Burnley to Colne. The National Character Area (NCA) lies mainly in east Lancashire and is bounded to the north-west by the Bowland Fells fringe and the Millstone Grit outcrop of Pendle Hill, and to the south by the Southern Pennines. A small proportion of the area (5 per cent) lies in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Lancashire Valleys broadly consist of the wide vale of the rivers Ribble and Calder and their tributaries, running north-east to south-west between the natural backdrops of Pendle Hill and the Southern Pennines. This visually contained landscape has a strong urban character

Agriculture, once the major source of income before industrialisation, is now fragmented by the built environment, industry and housing. The remaining pockets of farmed land, used for extensive livestock rearing, are concentrated along the Ribble Valley, the fringes of Pendle Hill, the area to the west of Blackburn, and in the north around Skipton.

- 5.2 Key Characteristics of note relevant to the Site and surrounding area of Langho Billington and Whalley are:

- Broad valleys of the rivers Calder and Ribble and their tributaries run north east to south-west between the uplands of Pendle Hill and the Southern Pennines.
- A Millstone Grit ridge extends between the Ribble and Calder catchments (including the Mellor Ridge and part of Pendle Hill).
- Field boundaries are regular to the west and more irregular to the east. They are formed by hedges with few hedgerow trees and by stone walls and post and-wire fences at higher elevations.
- Agricultural land is fragmented by towns, villages and hamlets, industry and scattered development, with pockets of farmed land limited to along the Ribble Valley, the fringes of Pendle Hill, the area to the west of Blackburn, and in the north around Skipton.
- Farmed land is predominantly pasture for grazing livestock, with areas of acid and neutral grassland, flushes and mires. There is some upland heath and rough pasture on Pendle Hill and the higher land to the south.



- Small, often ancient, broadleaved woodlands of oak, alder and sycamore extend along narrow, steep-sided cloughs on the valley sides – for example, at Priestley Clough, Spurn Clough and south of Blackburn.
- There is evidence of a strong industrial heritage associated with the cotton weaving and textile industries, with many common artefacts such as mill buildings, mill lodges and ponds, and links to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.
- The many towns, including Blackburn, Accrington and Burnley, which developed as a result of the Industrial Revolution give the area a strong urban character.
- Numerous communication routes run along the valley bottoms, including the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the Preston–Colne railway and the M65 motorway.

5.3 Statements of opportunity highlight specific areas of enhancement and restoration for habitats local to the area that would have significance at National Level. In the context of the site these could be:

- SEO 2: Increase the resilience and significance of woodland and trees, and manage and expand existing tree cover to provide a range of benefits, including helping to assimilate new infrastructure; reconnecting fragmented habitats and landscape features; storing carbon; and providing fuel, wood products, shelter and recreational opportunities.
- SEO 3: Manage and support the agricultural landscape through conserving, enhancing, linking and expanding the habitat network, and manage and plan for the associated potential impact of urban fringe development, intensive agriculture and climate change mitigation.
- SEO 4: Conserve and manage the distinction between small rural settlements and the densely urban areas and ensure that new development is sensitively designed to contribute to settlement character, reduce the impact of the urban fringe and provide well-designed green infrastructure to enhance recreation, biodiversity and water flow regulation

5.4 The local landscape surrounding and including the Site and Langho have some similarities, but this part of the Ribble Valley is far less influenced by the large conurbations of Burnley, Blackburn and Clitheroe and much more a part of the Ribble Valley and pastoral landscapes leading towards the Trough of Bowland uplands than is generally described within the summary description.

5.5 Of the Key characteristics, the river valley and ridgelines of the Fells to the north play a significant role in defining this landscape within the National Character setting. The surrounding landscapes are predominantly grazing farmland and settlement in the form of small villages, hamlets and individual dwellings and farmsteads are common.

5.6 Small, and often ancient woodland and trees are also present and notable on the Site itself.



- 5.7 Although not influenced by the motorway network, the rail line and A59 provide prominent transport corridors through the landscape.
- 5.8 The Opportunities for the NCA includes managing the resilience and significance of woodland and trees through the NCA, something of particular relevance to the Site.
- 5.9 The conservation and management and the distinction between small rural settlements and the densely urban areas to ensure that new development is sensitively designed to contribute to settlement character and reduce the impact of the urban fringe through well designed green infrastructure is also a key and relevant SEO.

The Local Landscape

- 5.10 At the local /Regional level the landscape is assessed through the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire. The Site and the village of Langho fall within Landscape Character Type (LCT) Undulating Lowland Farmland and in the Landscape Character Area (LCA 5E) Lower Ribblesdale Clitheroe to Gisburn. Although not falling within LCA 5C the landscapes of Langho and Site have much in common with descriptions for the neighbouring LCA 5C Lower Ribblesdale
- 5.11 The landscape strategy is split between the landscape assessment and the strategy for each of the LCT and LCA areas

Undulating Lowland Farmland

- 5.12 *Generally below 150m, the Undulating Lowland Farmland lies between the major valleys and the moorland fringes The underlying geology is largely masked by heavy boulder clays and hedgerows predominate over stone walls. This lowland landscape is traversed by deeply incised, wooded cloughs and gorges. There are also many mixed farm woodlands, copses and hedgerow trees, creating an impression of a well wooded landscape from ground level and a patchwork of wood and pasture from raised view points on the fells. Some of the most picturesque stone villages of the county occur within this well settled landscape type. The towns of Longridge and Clitheroe also occur within this type, but are not typical of the settlement pattern. The area also has many country houses whose boundary walls and designed landscapes add to the species diversity and visual appeal. There is a high density of farms and scattered cottages outside the clustered settlements, linked by a network of minor roads*
- 5.13 *Many of the woodlands which survive on the steep slopes of the deep cloughs and valley sides are of ancient origin and represent a rich natural resource. They include alder and ash woods on the base-rich soils of the valley floors grading through to lowland oakwoods and upland oak woods on the upper valley sides*



5.14 The following are taken from the Strategies for landscape recommended for the Undulating Lowland Farmlands and are judged of particular relevance to the Site, its surroundings and the proposals.

Key Environmental Features

- *Wooded river corridors and gorges provide a sense of enclosure, sheltered habitats and distinctive patterns on the valley sides. Many are also historic sites for early water powered industry.*
- *Hedgerows and hedgerow trees define the field pattern in contrast with the moorland fringe farmland, where stone walls dominate over hedgerows. They also provide sheltered habitats which are important wildlife links between the wooded cloughs and outlying woodlands.*
- *Small mixed woodlands provide important habitats and cover for wildlife and contribute to the overall appearance of a 'wooded' farmland. They reflect an important phase in landscape evolution when 19th century estate woods and shelterbelts were developed for game shooting.*
- *Historic villages, stone bridges and stone walls reflect the local geology; many villages are clustered at river crossing points and there is a dispersed pattern of farms and cottages on the rural roads along the valley sides.*
- *Roman remains and roads reflect the importance of the area during Roman occupation - the routes of Roman roads are visible in sections of existing roads and tracks.*
- *Historic drove roads support woodland, scrub and tall herb strips.*

5.15 Local Forces for Change and their Landscape Implications

- *A decline in mature hedgerow and parkland trees which are a valuable ecological resource and important hedgerow boundary markers. The presence of many trees provides the impression of a well managed, healthy landscape. There is little evidence of regeneration in hedgerows or of new planting to replace existing ageing or declining trees.*
- *Increasing pressures for residential development on the edges of settlements, such as Ribchester, influences the landscape setting and approach to these small rural settlements. Many new developments use imported inappropriate materials such as red brick, which can be intrusive in this rural setting*

5.16 **Conserve the distinctive settings to rural settlements:**

ensure new development on the edges of villages reflects the characteristic clustered form; development should be sited to retain views to landscape features and landmarks such as church towers on the approaches to villages;



avoid ribbon development which would disrupt the characteristic clustered form of settlements and the rural character of local roads;

- 5.17 Enhance the wooded character of the lowland landscape:

Promote the planting of new woodland to link existing woods and hedgerows, aiming for a continuous network of trees, hedgerows and woods where this does not conflict with other habitats of biodiversity significance;

Encourage planting of small farm woodlands which are a feature of the lowland agricultural landscape;

LCA 5e Lower Ribblesdale (Clitheroe to Gisburn)

- 5.18 *This area forms the southern valley side of the Ribble, between Copster Green and Gisburn, on the lowland fringes of Pendle Hill. It is a particularly well settled area and provides a corridor for communication along the Ribble Valley. The A59 runs the length of the area linking the settlements of Copster Green, Whalley, Clitheroe, Chatburn and Gisburn. The railway links the valley to Blackburn and Yorkshire. This communication structure has encouraged built development and industry; the large scale cement works at Clitheroe is a prominent visual landmark for miles around. This character area is underlain by limestone and has some good examples of limestone reef knolls, particularly around Clitheroe; Clitheroe Castle is located on top of one of these knolls.*

LCA 5c Lower Ribble

- 5.19 Although the landscape of the Site is not located within this neighbouring LCA the LVIA accompanying the application (paragraph 6.44) incorrectly identifies and assess this landscape LCA as the one affected by the proposals. I have chosen to include this LCA description here for this reason but also for the reason that, although assessed in error, this LCA actually represent more effectively in my view, the local landscapes surrounding Langho within the Ribble valley at this juncture.
- 5.20 *The Lower Ribble is an area of lowland gritstone farmland between Longridge Fell to the north and Mellor Ridge to the south. It has a distinctive broad valley landform; the north and south valley sides are separated by a flood plain which contains the meandering course of the River Ribble. There is a particularly distinctive pattern of wooded cloughs which descend the valley sides, their streams emptying into the Ribble. A complex pattern of hedges and woodland form links to these wooded cloughs, giving an overall impression of a well wooded landscape. Although a rural valley, the area is well settled; a dense network of winding country lanes and tracks link the large number of stone farm buildings. Other features of this area are the country houses and designed landscapes, for example Stonyhurst College, Huntingdon Hall and Showley Hall. The Roman settlement of Ribchester is sited at an historic crossing point of the Ribble, a tranquil village in the centre of the valley.*



Langho Settlement

- 5.21 The settlement of Langho follows the Whalley Road and now appears as a nucleated settlement broadly collected around the junction of Whalley Road and Whitehalgh Lane/York Lane. It also follows the railway line to the north being centred on the railway station.
- 5.22 The existing village is a small settlement with a limited number of local services. Its population at the last census was recorded as just over 2000 residents (2011 census). An addition of 300 homes would potentially add (2.35 average uk household) a further 705 people to the population – an increase of over 35%.
- 5.23 The development of Langho dates back into the early medieval with connections to even earlier Roman roots. Old Langho (north of the modern village) includes St Leonards Church (1557). The modern village grew up around the railway station and Spring Mill.
- 5.24 The earliest mapping from 1844 shows the rail line in place and the station but only a small cluster of individual dwellings around the road junctions. By 1892 Spring Mill is constructed and buildings appear in a linear fashion around the mill following the roads. By 1929 the village has gradually expanded (1920 mapping showing little growth) with the Mill likely driving much of what appears to be residential housing again in linear fashion along the road network. 1937 sees little change in the form and scale of the village with the Mill still at the centre alongside the station and settlement expanding out along the road network. The Mill ceases operation sometime in the 1930s. By the 1960's the Mill is no longer present and the village is beginning in gradually infill around this site creating a more nucleated form. (see Appendix 1 regression mapping)
- 5.25 The modern village has expanded north as far as the rail line, this forming a natural barrier apart from recent development close to the A59 junction with the Northcote development. The village is modest in scale and generally remains contained by the features that have defined it through the years, namely the road and rail network. The views from the station are spectacular and panoramic, extending to distance across to the Trough of Bowland National Landscape. Views from many properties on the edge of the village facing north also enjoy such views. The approaches past the village to the north include views to the north and views of the open, pastoral landscape of the site with parkland like stands of mature trees and small semi ancient stands of woodland. The village itself is made up of buildings predominantly in stone with an overall coherent and historic appearance.
- 5.26 The historic mapping evidence clearly shows the gradual and modest expansion of the settlement at Langho since its beginnings with the mill and rail station. Even accounting for modern development, the scale of the village remains small and in keeping with other villages and hamlets within the valley landscape. The rail line maintains a barrier east to west and boundary to the settlement. Views to the north towards the National Landscape remain as spectacular from the station and settlement edge and are characteristic of the settlement. The immediate setting of the village is created in part by the landscape to the north, including the Site with mature, parkland style trees and semi ancient woodland groups.



Landscape Value

- 5.27 An assessment of landscape value is required to enable an assessment of how the proposals potentially impact and effect upon the receiving landscape. A number of established methods of assessment and guidance are available to guide and assist this process and this is found principally within the methodology that accompanies this PoE (Appendix 2) and also guidance from the Landscape Institute in the form of the Guidance for Landscape and Visual Assessment vol3 (GLIVIA box 5.1)
- 5.28 I have considered the landscape value for the study area of the application LVIA as a whole outlined below:
- Landscape quality and Condition. The LCA strategic objectives include for the conservation and regeneration of woodland and hedgerows through the landscape in their characteristic patterns, suggesting a condition that is not pristine. The transport corridors and settlement are features of both LCA 5c and e and settlement and industry are part of this landscape type although not dominating within the study area. Trees and veteran trees and woodland are characteristic and are found within and close to the Site. Generally this is a landscape of good condition which could be improved and good quality with a strong visual sense of place from many locations.
 - Scenic Quality. There is an acknowledgement across all of the LCT and LCA areas that the scenic quality of this landscape, although including influences of settlement, industry and transport links, is strong, with characteristic views towards the ridgelines of the Bowland Fells and Pendle hill available throughout. The farmlands and villages and hamlets through the landscape are attractive and historic and the farmland of the valleys is punctuated with mature trees, hedgerows and woodland leading to an attractive and well treed landscape appearance.
 - Rarity. The rarity and distinctiveness of the landscapes within the study area are generally described consistently and include some historic elements within the landscape that date back as far as the Roman period and are still evident through river crossings, road routes and buildings. The views of Pendle hill and the National Landscape and Bowland Fells are unique. A landscape of some rarity.
 - Representativeness. The landscape of the study area is representative of the landscape character more broadly but LCA 5c describes better the landscapes of the Site and the valley landscapes to the north.
 - Conservation Interest. The site includes Green Nook Wood which is a TPO woodland which includes a veteran tree. The Site lies 2km from the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.
 - Recreational Value. The site is crossed by a footpath (PRoW footpath 6) running south from the A59 to the underpass beneath the rail line and into Langho. This footpath network continues north towards the Ribble. Other footpaths cross the immediate landscape to the west and to the south of the village. The area is well served and well used as a recreational outdoor resource with walking and cycling popular.
 - Perceptual Aspects. This is not an especially tranquil landscape with proximity to settlement and main road and railway routes. Away from the roads and settlement this becomes more tranquil and the sense of closeness to the natural landscapes to the north is ever present. A landscape of moderate perceptual aspects.



- Associations. This would be associations such as that enjoyed by the landscape surrounding the Bronte parsonage.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 5.29 The effects of the appeal proposals on the landscape have been identified in the appellants LVIA. I will first offer my own assessment of the landscape before contrasting and comparing this with the Appellants assessment drawing any conclusions that may be of relevance at the end of this section .

The Wider Landscape

- 5.30 The wider landscape was not considered in the LVIA , I have however considered the NCA as I believe the incongruous nature of the proposals and their scale to have effects on the National landscape characteristics.
- 5.31 The key characteristics include the Ribble valley and uplands of the Bowland Fells, woodland, trees and hedgerows across grazing pasture farmland. The proposals will remove a significant amount of open pasture land with the loss of trees and hedgerow.
- 5.32 The statement of Environmental Opportunity highlight the need to increase the resilience of woodland and trees, reconnecting fragmenting habitats and expanding tree cover. The proposals will include new tree and woodland planting but the loss of mature trees and hedgerows and the retention of trees within an urban environment across the Site will lead to a loss of characteristic open pasture and the parkland style setting of trees and woodland.
- 5.33 SEO4 looks to conserve and manage the distinction between small rural settlements and the densley urban areas and ensure new development is sensitively designed to contribute to settlement character, reducing the impact of the urban fringe The proposals will not conserve the distinction of Langho as a small settlement within this landscape with the proposed development set to increase the size of the village by 30% and the population by 35%.
- 5.34 The proposed development is not sensitively designed to contribute to the existing settlement character of Langho, partly in response to the scale of the proposals but also in response to the fundamental changes to the visual and setting characteristics of the village that the proposals will bring about.
- 5.35 I consider the susceptibility to change, for the above reasons to be Medium for the NCA with an expectation that change will occur to aspects of the characteristics and elements that define the National Landscape type. The value of this landscape is Ordinary with good aspects. The overall sensitivity I judge as Medium.
- 5.36 The change to this landscape will be in the context of the NCA being a large area that includes existing settlement, industry and other detracting elements but is never the less defined in part by the open landscapes, farmland, rivers, valleys and small settlements also



present. I consider the change to Langho as discussed above will create a Low-Medium and adverse level of change for the NCA.

The Local Landscape

- 5.37 The local landscape is described through the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire. The site and surroundings lie within landscape character type 5 Undulating Lowland Farmland and LCA5c. I have considered this assessment and the strategies discussed and consider that the Site and its settings are also described in part through the description of the neighbouring LCA 5e.
- 5.38 The landscape description of the LCT and LCA(s) have many aspects that are familiar with regards to the Site and its setting. The Ribble valley setting; the grazing pasture farmland with trees and woodland; hedgerows over stone walls as boundaries; a well settled but rural valley; and historic roads and buildings.
- 5.39 The local forces for change highlight the decline in hedgerow and parkland trees. The proposals will remove hedgerow lengths and will see the removal of 10 trees. Although the proposals will introduce new planting including hedgerow and tree planting, this will be in a sub-urban or urban context with the setting and character of the existing mature trees, woodland and hedgerow altered permanently.
- 5.40 Local forces for change also highlight the increasing pressure for residential development pointing towards a susceptibility for this landscape.
- 5.41 The local landscape clearly has a susceptibility to development and change with specific aspects of character that will be affected. I assess the landscape character area LCA 5e as having a Medium level of susceptibility with an ordinary-good value. The sensitivity is assessed as Medium.
- 5.42 The site and immediate surrounding and setting to the Site are specific to Langho and includes the open pastures with mature parkland like trees and woodland; the rail line and station; the A59; the settlement of Langho; and the expansive and panoramic views to the north towards the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The susceptibility is elevated over the wider LCA as the changes are more immediate and specific to the Site. The susceptibility is assessed as Medium-High, the value Ordinary-good and the Sensitivity Medium -High.
- 5.43 The change to the LCA includes a notable loss of open pasture land and visual amenity associated with access across the public footpath route. There will be a loss of trees and hedgerows and a fundamental shift in character for those trees that remain from an open pastoral setting to one within an urban context. The scale of the development against the existing settlement will be disproportionate, adding a 30% increase in urban volume and degrading the villages characteristics as a small settlement within the LCA. Engineering works will be required to regrade the site altering the topography and natural slope. New planting and landscaping is proposed but will take many years before reaching maturity and appear in places such as the boundaries to the A59 not to have sufficient scale and depth to mitigate the proposal's visual effects. The change is assessed as Medium for the LCA (5e) and High for



the site and its immediate surroundings. The landscape effects are Moderate adverse for LCA 5e and Moderate-Substantial adverse for the Site and immediate surroundings.

Langho Settlement

- 5.44 The settlement of Langho is characteristic of the area and settlements within the character areas more generally. It is of a modest scale, generally built in vernacular materials and for the most part restrained by the rail line that runs to the south. The railway station is situated at its southern edge and both the station and settlement enjoy spectacular views north towards the Trough of Bowland and Fells.
- 5.45 The susceptibility to the change proposed is clear with the potential for an out of scale expansion to the settlement; the loss of views for residents; and the removal of the key arrival views from the station. The susceptibility is assessed as Medium, the value as Ordinary and the sensitivity is assessed as Medium.
- 5.46 The change to the settlement and its character will be marked by the physical and rapid expansion beyond any historic or organic growth in the villages history. It will also be marked through the visual change and loss of views for properties but most importantly from the rail gateway into the village, views that offer a panoramic and distinctive backdrop of the Trough of Bowland National Landscape and upland fells. The change will also be marked through the change to the setting of the village to the north, through the substantial and dramatic change to the visual quality of the approaches along the A59, and the existing open, pastoral landscape with parkland like trees and woodland that form the historic edge to the village to the north. The change will be urban in character (as the existing settlement) but the location, design, arrangement of development, and the potential for movement and permeability are assessed as poor and will not integrate well into the existing village framework and urban grain. The change is assessed as Medium-High. The overall impact on the settlement character is assessed as Moderate-Substantial adverse.
- 5.47 A brief synopsis of the findings of the LVIA is provided in table 1 below

Landscape Receptor	Hierarchy of Importance	Sensitivity	Change to Landscape (Impact)	Landscape Effect Year 1 pre-mitigation	Landscape Effect Year 15 with mitigation
Wider Landscape Character Effects					
NCA 35	National	Medium	Low-Medium	Slight-Moderate adv	Slight Adv
Local Landscape Character Effects					



LCA 5e and LCT 5	Local	Medium	Medium	Moderate adv	Moderate adv
The Site and immediate surroundings	Local	Medium- High	High	Moderate Substantial adv	Moderate Substantial adv
Langho Settlement	Local	Medium	Medium- High	Moderate Substantial adv	Moderate Substantial adv

Table 1 Landscape Effects

5.48 The Appellant considers the effect on the Site as Major-Moderate adverse (post mitigation), the effect on character area LCA 5C (5e) as Moderate adverse (post mitigation) and does not assess Langho settlement. As much as the assessments are comparable we agree that there will be local landscape harm to the Site and its immediate surroundings of landscape and townscape that will be significant and will continue post mitigation.



6. VISUAL ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The study area was assessed as part of the LVIA that supported the appeal planning application and included a visual assessment of ten individual views and a general assessment and discussion of groups of receptors within the study area of up to 3km..
- 6.2 Although I believe the Site and proposals will be visible from the National Landscape over the higher ground of the upper fells and slopes, at over 2km distance I do not believe this will result in significant or notable visual effects and so agree with the appellant that the focus on understanding the visual effects of the proposals should be placed on those locations more local to the site.
- 6.3 I have considered grouped receptors in a similar manner to the appellant and have also visited the site and recorded my own photographs from receptor locations which I will refer to alongside those of the appellant. (see Appendix 1)

Residential Receptors

- 6.4 Residential properties are found around the Site and within the study area. Langho settlement has a number of locations where views across the site are possible from, principally from residential properties but also from public locations such as the roads within the Northcote Park estate and the railway station platform and footpath.
- 6.5 To the east of the site is the recently developed residential estate of Northcote Park (Appellant receptor R2) Views will be apparent from properties bordering the site and from the local road network within this residential area. The receptors will be residential and highway and the sensitivity will be Medium. The visual change will be large during construction and into operation with views of the development, loss of open aspect and loss of views towards the northern landscapes all apparent. I assess the change to be Medium-High for construction and operational change with a slight reduction in this post mitigation. The visual effects will be Moderate-Substantial adverse dropping to Medium adverse.
- 6.6 To the north properties in Langho settlement that overlook the site are considered from the appellants receptor R3. I do not agree with the appellants assessment that *proposed properties are well set back from the site boundary and vantage afforded to existing properties will allow views to continue over the rooflines with distant landscape backdrop still discernible. (7.38)*. I believe that the change will be large and remove views from a number of properties along (Rogersfield; Bushburn Dr; Moorland Road and Olive Bank) with the existing expansive and spectacular views of the landscapes to the north largely blocked by new development. I do however agree with the appellants overall assessment of effect which sees a Major-Moderate (with my methodology Moderate-Substantial) effect remaining from construction through to post mitigation.
- 6.7 Properties to the west of Whitehalgh Lane and the A59 are considered as R6 and R7 in the appellants LVIA with R7 being the properties most prominently affected by the proposals due



to surrounding vegetation screening R6. R7 – Wildmans Farmhouse is a cluster of stone properties to the sites northwest corner and immediately adjacent to the Site.

- 6.8 I have considered this from my View 1 (appellants view R6/R7) I would consider that aspects of the view and visual amenity of these properties will be affected by the proposals with construction and operational affects being large and seeing a notable loss of open pasture and a general change from a detached and rural /semi rural location to one of an edge of settlement character. Although I have considered the magnitude of change to be larger than the Appellant I would agree with the overall expression of effect for this receptor of Moderate adverse post mitigation.
- 6.9 A detached property lies immediately north of the Site and facing south off the A59 (Green Nook considered as R1 in the appellants LVIA) I have considered this from my view 3. The current aspect and view of this property is out towards the village edge across the Site as an open pasture with mature parkland like trees and with woodland to the east framing the view. Views are possible from front garden and driveway locations and upper floor windows with lower windows likely screened by the falling topography and boundary hedgerow.
- 6.10 The change will see development across the whole panorama of view southwards with the loss of open aspect and pasture land and the loss of the visual character associated with being detached and remote from the settlement edge. Mitigation opportunities are limited by the attenuation basins and proximity of development to the A59 and the required sightlines along the road towards the Site entrance.
- 6.11 The susceptibility to change is considered as Medium due to the non primary location of views and the value ordinary-good with a Medium Sensitivity. The change is assessed as High leading to a Moderate-Substantial change that will persist post mitigation. This differs from the appellant who considers this a Medium adverse visual effect reducing to a low adverse effect.

Pedestrian Receptors

- 6.12 Public footpath Billington and Langho 6 runs across the site on its western quarter north to south towards the rail underpass, station and village. The views are considered through my views 5 and 6 and the appellants views 2 and 3.
- 6.13 The Appellant LVIA describes the views from the path route at 7.54—7.57 and I would generally agree with this description and the description of change. I would consider the path route to have a high susceptibility and sensitivity with an ordinary-good value and I would concur with the appellant that the magnitude of change would be High and leading to a Substantial adverse visual effect (appellants Major)
- 6.14 I would agree that the level of change for the path route north of the A59 (my view 4 (Appellant view 4) would experience only glimpsed views of the proposed development with a low level of change with an effect with my assessment of a High sensitivity for public footpath routes of Moderate adverse. This is higher than the appellants final consideration of No effect.



- 6.15 For other path routes within the local landscape and immediate setting of the Site I would agree with the Appellants assessment with no or low visual effects. (Appellants Views: Billington and Langho 7; Public Footpath Dinckley 1; Public Footpath 26; Public Footpath 11; Billington and Langho 8; Billington and Langho 13)

Transport Receptors

- 6.16 The Site is clearly visible from the A59 along the length of its northern boundary (my views 2 and 3) forming part of the setting and gateway views for the existing village of Langho. The proposed development would bring the settlement edge to the road boundary and change fundamentally the relationship between this section of the route and the village with the proposed development effectively becoming part of the immediate entrance and gateway into Langho.
- 6.17 The sensitivity of this receptor is low - medium reflecting the mix of potential users including pedestrians. The change will be large leading to a Moderate-Substantial adverse effect. This corresponds and concurs with the Appellants assessment of Major/Moderate adverse.
- 6.18 I agree with the Appellant that following mitigation, the visual effects over this section of road route will remain as Major/Moderate adverse.
- 6.19 The railway station is a prominent and important gateway into the village, part of the central reason for the existence of modern Langho in its current location since the 1830's. The platform views and visual character have enjoyed spectacular, panoramic and uninterrupted views northwards towards the Bowland Fells for the best part of 200 years. The proposals would remove this key relationship and gateway visual experience harming not only the view and visual experience from the platform and users of the railway but the association that this brings to the village.
- 6.20 Proposed housing would extend across the majority of the land between the rail line, rail platform and the A59 blocking views towards the Ribble valley and the upland fells. The character of the station would alter from a rural station with a commanding view of the National Landscape to one held within an urban setting.
- 6.21 The susceptibility and sensitivity are assessed as Medium-High with a good value. The change is assessed as High and adverse. The overall effect is assessed as Moderate-Substantial adverse.
- 6.22 With regard to the other transport routes assessed by the Appellant in the LVIA I would agree with the assessments including a Moderate adverse level of effect for views from Whitehalgh Lane reducing to minor with mitigation; and Minor adverse effects assessed for York Road/Whalley Old Road and the Minor road network north of the A59, also Minor adverse effects.



Light Pollution and Dark Skies

6.23 Although not considered within the LVIA the introduction of 300 homes of undeveloped open pasture land within a landscape of only intermittent and small scale settlement will have an inevitable impact upon the night time landscape and the perception of the night sky. The A59 is a lit road over this section but the fields between the village and road are not and this would see an increase in light pollution and a further degradation of dark skies within this landscape.

View	Comparable Appellant View	Sensitivity	Change to view (Impact)	Visual Effect Year 1 pre-mitigation	Visual Effect Year 15 with mitigation
1	R6/R7	Medium	High	Moderate-Substantial adv	Moderate adv
2	No equivalent	Low-Medium	High	Moderate-Substantial adv	Moderate-Substantial adv
3	R1	Low (vehicle) Medium highway users and residential)	High	Moderate Substantial adv	Moderate Substantial adv
4	4	High	Low	Moderate adv	Slight- Moderate adv
5	3	High	High	Substantial adv	Substantial adv
6	2	High	High	Substantial adv	Substantial adv
7	1	Medium-High	High	Moderate- Substantial adv	Moderate Substantial adv
	R2	Medium	Medium-High	Moderate - Substantial adv	Moderate adv
	R3	Medium	High	Moderate- Substantial adv	Moderate Substantial adv

Table 2 Visual Effects



7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Site and Proposals

- 7.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 300 dwellings which comprises the following:
- 300 dwellings including 30% affordable homes
 - New railway station car park
 - Biodiversity net gain strategy to deliver a minimum 10% improvement
 - Sustainable drainage systems including attenuation basins
- 7.2 the site is located adjacent to Longsight Road (A59) and the Langho Railway Station, however, the site itself will be segregated from the village of Langho by the railway line. As such there would be little scope for integration with the village, which itself provides limited facilities.
- 7.3 The proposals will see at least the loss of 10 trees and a large extent of native hedgerow fronting onto the A59. The remaining retained trees will go from being set within open pasture, able to draw on the water resource and oxygenation of open fields, to being set within an urban environment, and in some instances sandwiched closely between proposed dwellings
- 7.4 The proposed residential development will not contribute to ecological connectivity and ecological diversity because of the obvious harmful additions that such development brings such as: areas of hard landscaping; the removal of landscape features; the excavation and re-engineering of large parts of the Site and subsequent disturbance and damage to the existing ecology this brings; and the introduction of human activity and predators such as cats that preclude certain wildlife from ever establishing on the site.
- 7.5 The proposals will not, in my opinion, effectively integrate into the existing village to become part of the urban fabric. This is because such a relationship does not, and cannot exist; with access to the village limited to a single narrow tunnel under the rail line in the south east corner of the Site; and other access located off the main A59 with a cycle link off to the east onto Whitehalgh Lane. The proposals are presented as a stand alone residential development with no links or call backs to the existing village; its urban grain; visual links; and vistas/views

Landscape Assessment

- 7.6 The Appeal Site lies within National Character Area 35, Lancashire Valleys and at the local /Regional level the landscape is assessed through the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire.
- 7.7 The Site and the village of Langho fall within Landscape Character Type (LCT) Undulating Lowland Farmland and in the Landscape Character Area (LCA 5e) Lower Ribblesdale



Clitheroe to Gisburn. Although not falling within the LCA the landscapes of Langho and Site have much in common with descriptions for the neighbouring LCA 5C Lower Ribblesdale

- 7.8 At the National scale the proposed development is not sensitively designed to contribute to the existing settlement character of Langho, and, partly in response to the scale of the proposals, but also in response to the fundamental changes to the visual and setting characteristics of the village that the proposals will bring about a Low-Medium and adverse level of change for the NCA.
- 7.9 The landscape description of the LCT and LCA(s) have many aspects that are familiar with regards to the Site and its setting. The Ribble valley setting; the grazing pasture farmland with trees and woodland; hedgerows over stone walls as boundaries; a well settled but rural valley; and historic roads and buildings.
- 7.10 The proposals will remove stretches of native hedgerow along the A59 and will see the removal of 10 trees. Although the proposals will introduce new planting including hedgerow and tree planting, this will be within in a sub-urban or urban context with the setting and character of the existing mature trees, woodland and hedgerow altered permanently.
- 7.11 The local landscape clearly has a susceptibility to development and change with specific aspects of character that will be affected
- 7.12 The change to the LCA includes a notable loss of open pasture land and visual amenity associated with access across the public footpath route. There will be a loss of trees and hedgerows and a fundamental shift in character for those trees that remain from an open pastoral setting to one within an urban context. The scale of the development against the existing settlement will be disproportionate, adding a 30% increase in urban volume and degrading the villages characteristics as a small settlement within the LCA. Engineering works will be required to regrade the site altering the topography and natural slope. New planting and landscaping is proposed but will take many years before reaching maturity and appear in places such as the boundaries to the A59 not to have sufficient scale and depth to mitigate the proposals visual effects.. The landscape effects are Significant and adverse for both the LCA and the Site and immediate surroundings. The Appellant agrees with the level of landscape effect brought by the proposals on the local landscape and the Site.

Langho Settlement

- 7.13 The change to the settlement and its character will be marked by the physical and rapid expansion beyond any historic or organic growth in the villages history. It will also be marked through the visual change and loss of views for properties but most importantly from the rail gateway into the village, views that offer a panoramic and distinctive backdrop of the Trough of Bowland National Landscape and upland fells. The change will also be marked through the change to the setting of the village to the north, through the substantial and dramatic change to the visual quality of the approaches along the A59 and the existing open, pastoral landscape with parkland like trees and woodland that form the historic edge to the village to the north. The change will be urban in character (as the existing settlement) but the location, design, arrangement of development, and the potential for movement and permeability



through the site are as poor and will not aid integration well into the existing village framework and urban grain. The landscape/townscape effects are adverse and significant.

Visual assessment

- 7.14 Visually the proposals are visible from locations around the Site and immediate surroundings with significant and adverse change assessed as occurring from residential; recreational footpaths; and transport routes and station.
- 7.15 The Appellant's own assessment concurs with my own that all of the local visual receptors surrounding the Site will experience significant visual harm following the construction of the proposals and in my assessment, this harm will continue to be significant post mitigation.

Significance and Compliance with landscape and design Policy

- 7.16 A comparison between my assessment and the Appellant's indicates a broad agreement at the level of effect the development would have over the receiving landscape and visual amenity. There are some differences between the parties, and I have sought to identify these through this statement and summarise this in table form in **Appendix 3**.
- 7.17 Locally we collectively agree that landscape and visual effects will be of a moderate adverse level and above and will remain at this elevated level for most receptors, within the local area, post mitigation.
- 7.18 Although not a project that required an ES the significance of these effects is never the less something that needs to be considered when placing them in the context of extant planning policy. In my opinion a significant or notable (Landscape Institute term for levels of significant effect when considered outside of an ES chapter) would be Moderate or above. I believe this is a widely used level throughout the industry,
- 7.19 It appears that both parties agree that there will be significant landscape and visual effects on the receiving local landscape and receptors and that many of these will not reduce post mitigation. I believe these significant effects are not compliant with the landscape, townscape and design requirements of the Council's Local Plan. I have set out below in conclusion the specific aspects of the proposed scheme that I believe fail the policies in reason for refusal 3 - **Policies DMG1, DMG2, DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework including paragraph 135.**

Conclusion

- 7.20 The proposals will bring to bear significant landscape effects post mitigation on both the landscape and visual amenity of the site and surroundings.
- 7.21 I am of the view that the proposals **do not**: add to the overall quality of the area; are not sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; do not establish a strong sense of place; and do not propose an appropriate amount of development.



- 7.22 I do not consider that the proposals are sympathetic to the existing land use and are not sympathetic to this landscape with regards to the size; scale; massing and layout of the proposals.
- 7.23 The site itself will continue to be segregated from the village of Langho by the railway line. As such there will be little scope for integration with the village, which itself provides limited facilities.
- 7.24 The Council has determined that on balance the site is not a sustainable location to support 300 houses by virtue of the ineffective connections to Langho village and difficulty in accessing pedestrian and cyclist links, bus stops and the railway station, particularly by future residents with disabilities and reduced mobility or with prams/pushchairs/young children, and I agree with this position and find that my assessment supports this view.
- 7.25 The proposals, although retaining trees and hedgerow as part of the proposals also require the removal of both trees and hedgerows across the Site.
- 7.26 I believe the proposals will lead to harm to the features and characteristics of the Site, its surrounding landscape and Langho settlement and will harm the landscape and townscape characteristics of Langho with regard to the scale; form; massing; and layout.