

**LAND OFF LONGSIGHT ROAD, LANGHO BOUNDED BY THE RAILWAY,  
NORTHCOTE PARK AND WILDMANS FARM**

**APPEAL BY HALLAM LAND MANAGEMENT LTD**

**PINS REF: 6002484**

**LPA REF: 3/2025/0196**

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**OPENING SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF  
THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**

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**Introduction**

1. The appeal is made by Hallam Land Management Ltd (“the Appellant”) against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council (“the Council”) to refuse outline planning permission for ‘*Up to 300 residential dwellings associated access, railway station car park, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems (all matters reserved except for access)*’ (“the Development”) at Land off Longsight Road, Langho, bounded by the railway, Northcote Park and Wildmans Farm (“the Site”).
2. The appeal proposal was considered by the Council’s Planning & Development Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025, where members resolved to refuse the application in line with the officer’s recommendations for the reasons set out in the Decision Notice dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025.<sup>1</sup>
3. The main issues in this appeal as set out in the Inspector’s post-CMC note<sup>2</sup> neatly capture those reasons<sup>3</sup> and are as follows:
  - a. The proposed development’s effect on the character and appearance of the area;

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<sup>1</sup> CD3.3

<sup>2</sup> CD8.2

<sup>3</sup> The Inspector’s post-CMC note also correctly identifies that the Council confirmed in its Statement of Case that it was no longer pursuing RfR1 in light of its housing land supply position. The main issues thus reflect RfR2-5 which are still being defended.

- b. Its effect on sustainable modes and patterns of transport;
  - c. Its effect on biodiversity, including in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain; and,
  - d. Whether any harm that might result from the development would be outweighed by other considerations, including housing land supply.
4. A summary of the Council's position in relation to each is taken in turn below.

### **Landscape character and visual amenity**

5. The Site comprises five agricultural fields currently laid out to pasture. Whilst it is on the periphery of Langho village, to the south, it is segregated by the railway line, which is otherwise a defining boundary of the nucleated village. The Site is in the open countryside in both policy and real-world terms. Even on the Appellant's own case,<sup>4</sup> significant adverse landscape and visual impacts would arise from the proposed Development.
6. As Mr Taylor explains, the Development would result in a notable loss of open pasture land as well as visual amenity, especially for users of the public right of way running across the Site. The Development would also result in a loss of trees and hedgerows, and a fundamental shift in character for those that remain from an open pastoral setting to an urban context (referred to by the Appellant as landscape elements that would instead result in beneficial effects). The scale of the Development against the existing settlement of Langho would be disproportionate, adding a 30% increase in urban volume and degrading the village's characteristics as a small settlement within the LCA. Indeed, the change to the settlement and its character would be marked by a physical and rapid expansion beyond any historic or organic growth in the village's history. The change will be marked through the visual change and loss of views, most importantly from the rail gateway into the village, that offers a panoramic and distinctive backdrop of the Trough of Bowland within the National Landscape and upland fells, and through the visual quality of the approaches along the A59 and the existing open, pastoral landscape with parkland like trees and woodland that forms the historic edge to the village to the north.
7. Whilst new planting and landscaping is proposed it will take many years to reach maturity and will only mitigate the effect to an extent. Mr Taylor's assessment aligns in many

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<sup>4</sup> In particular the conclusions of the LVIA (CD1.13)

respects with the Appellant's LVIA which concludes that there will be significant level of adverse landscape and visual harm following the construction of the Development (though notably not so Mr Cook's conclusions which themselves appear to differ from those in the Appellant's own LVIA); harm which in Mr Taylor's view will continue to be significant post-mitigation.

8. Accordingly, the Council considers that the scheme conflicts with Core Strategy Policies DMG1, DMG2, DME1 and DME2 as well as §135 of the NPPF and that the impact on landscape character and visual amenity alone should result in the appeal being dismissed.

### **Sustainable modes and patterns of transport**

9. Sustainability is a golden thread that runs through national and local policy. NPPF §110 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a *genuine choice* of transport modes. To offer a *genuine* choice, the quality of proposed travel routes must be sufficient and should reflect the fact that national policy places a focus on sustainable transport modes, prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements, and facilitating access to high quality public transport. Whilst *some* private car use is of course sustainable,<sup>5</sup> it remains a generally unsustainable mode of travel such that both local policies, including Key Statement DMI2, and Policy DMG3, as well as national policies, seek to reduce reliance on it.
10. Langho is classed as a Tier 1 Village in the Council's Core Strategy through Key Statement DS1. However, that is premised on an evidence base over a decade old, and robust decision making must require an assessment of its services and facilities in the current context. Whilst Langho appears to provide (perhaps too) well for hair and beauty, it is otherwise extremely limited. Residents would have to travel further afield for anything other than a convenience store and primary education, such as for employment, leisure and supermarkets.

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<sup>5</sup> NPPF Annex 2, glossary definition of 'Sustainable transport modes'

11. To reach the limited extent of Langho facilities from the Site the Appellant relies on three possible walking/ cycling routes.<sup>6</sup> Applying the relevant guidance, Mr Carter explains the plethora of qualitative issues with those options. For example, the shortest route through the train station underpass is inaccessible for those with reduced mobility; Whitehalgh Lane lacks dedicated pedestrian or cycle provision and users would have to mix with potentially fast moving traffic and a steep gradient; and, whilst the route via the A59 (Longsight Road) presents fewer barriers in comparison, it significantly increases distance to facilities. In any event, even then the only facility in desirable walking distance is the rail station which requires stepped access.
  
12. Turning to public transport then to assess travelling further afield, whilst Langho offers bus services on the A59 and on Whalley Road, they are all low frequency. That is important because not only would that reduce the likelihood of use, but as Mr Carter explains it also reduces the distance people are willing to walk for a lower value service. Equally, whilst in theory proximity to a train station is beneficial, in practice Census data illustrates that rail mode share for journeys to work is very low in the area. The scheme offers no improvements to either the barriers presented by the lack of provisions or accessibility at the rail station, nor the frequency of buses. Whilst the Council recognises that the provision of a train station car park is to some extent beneficial, there is no evidence to support to the Appellant's assertion that it is going to unlock some sort of suppressed demand which is not already being met by on street parking in the village. In this sense, whilst the Appellant sells the 'many' improvements proposed, they don't actually address the fundamental deficiencies in the accessibility of the Site. The result - the Site does not have good access by foot and cycle, and nor does it offer a genuine choice of transport modes. Accordingly, to allow the appeal would be to approve unsustainable development expressly in conflict with both local and national policy.

## **Ecology**

13. The matters of disagreement in relation to ecology have helpfully been narrowed in the lead up to the inquiry commencing, as set out in the Addendum Ecology SoCG.<sup>7</sup> However, the key matters that remain in dispute are significant. Mr Richardson explains that the

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Blair POE, Appendix 8 (CD9.7)

<sup>7</sup> CD8.10

proposed translocation of the lowland meadow on Site, a priority habitat, fails to accord with the mitigation hierarchy which advises avoidance of harm. For the same reasons the BNG hierarchy has not been followed because the lowland meadow is a high value habitat and rather than avoiding harmful effects its proposed translocation involves inherent uncertainties. Mr Goodman simply relies on the requirements of the proposals and layout as set out by Mr Saunders<sup>8</sup> “to facilitate the site’s infrastructure”<sup>9</sup> which in turn self-servingly relies on making the most efficient use of the Site for residential development (*i.e.* delivering the greatest number of dwellings) in an attempt to demonstrate that translocation cannot be avoided.<sup>10</sup> However, the Appellant has not provided sufficient positive evidence to show that alternative proposals which did not result in harm to the lowland meadow were considered, and therefore conflict with the hierarchies remain. Accordingly, conflict arises with Key Statement EN4 and Policy DME3, as well as NPPF §193(a) and the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy.

### **Planning balance**

14. It is a matter of agreement between the parties that the Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply. The minor difference between the 3.46 years accepted by the Council and the 3.04 years alleged by the Appellant is immaterial for the purpose of the appeal, albeit the Inspector is invited to review the relevant SoCG and Scott Schedule<sup>11</sup> and determine the matter accordingly. Equally, whilst the Council recognises that the Development would deliver other benefits (most notably affordable housing and older persons housing) a number of benefits are overstated and even then, the harms are independently significant.
15. The Council will therefore demonstrate that the Development is in conflict with the development plan, and that material considerations, including the benefits associated with the scheme, are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm that arises from non-compliance of both local and national policy.

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<sup>8</sup> Kurt Goodman POE, §11.56 (CD9.4)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, §12.26

<sup>10</sup> Mark Saunders POE, §9.22 (CD9.1)

<sup>11</sup> CD8.8-8.9

**Conclusion**

16. Accordingly, the Council will in due course invite the Inspector to dismiss the appeal.

**SHEMUEL SHEIKH**

**Kings Chambers**

**Manchester | Birmingham | Leeds**

**28<sup>th</sup> April 2026**