

**APPEAL BY HALLAM LAND MANAGEMENT LIMITED
LAND SOUTH OF LONGSIGHT ROAD, LANGHO**

CLOSING SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE APPELLANT

Introductory Matters

1. This appeal is brought by Hallam Land Management Limited (“the Appellant”, “Hallam”) against the decision of Ribble Borough Valley Council as LPA (“the Council”) to refuse outline planning permission for: *“up to 300 residential dwellings, associated access, rail station car park, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems (all matters reserved except for access to the site)”* (“the Appeal Scheme”). The Appeal proposes a sustainable new residential neighbourhood set within a high-quality green infrastructure framework delivering considerable biodiversity net gains.
2. At the time that the Application was determined the Council considered that it had a robust 5YHLS, and considered that there was no warrant to breach the settlement boundaries established in its Core Strategy. Despite the fact that its Local Plan Review was some time off, and despite the significantly increased LHN, the Council considered that it was entitled to count recent past over-supply to reduce the future need for housing. Had that position been maintained then the Appellant was gearing up to present detailed evidence on the issue of housing need to justify why this position was seriously misplaced. In the context of a national housing crisis an acute local need for AH, and a challenging new LHN, the Council’s position appeared objectively untenable. However,

following an appeal decision in Chatburn¹, the Council, rightly abandoned that position and conceded in its SOC that it was woefully short of the minimum requirement of Government to demonstrate a minimum supply of 5 years of deliverable housing.

3. That meant that the preclusive policies of the LP are presumed to be out of date and the tilted balance engaged. More starkly, as Ms Hughes rightly accepted the balance has tipped significantly in the direction of the grant of permission. That together with the fact that other RfR's have been whittled down mean that even on her case the planning balance is far closer to an 'on balance approve' decision than it was when she wrote the Officer Report (OR)².
4. The balance, when conducted properly and fairly, is now decisively in favour of the grant of permission, and the Council's case is in reality tantamount to pointing out that the Appeal Site falls short of an unanswerable idealised case, rather than contextualising the merits of the Site and acknowledging adjacency to a sustainable settlement in a rural district, close to excellent transportation links.
5. Thus, the Appeal Site ("the Site") is an opportunity unmatched by any other site in the Ribble Valley area. It is an undeveloped site immediately *next to a railway station*. And if that were not of itself notable, it also sits between and within an easy walking distance of two of the most important bus routes in the district. The A59 (Longsight Road) lies to the north offering excellent travel opportunities into the higher order settlements by bus (including a number of school routes for secondary school and College Students), and Whalley Road too benefits from important routes. Tellingly, the recently constructed housing estate to the East ('the Pringle Homes Site') was considered sustainable³. Not only are links to local and higher order settlements for work, retail and employment good but notably the train also provides wider opportunities to travel sustainably to the highest order settlements in the NW, and the bus on the A59 would take a future worker at the Salmsbury Enterprise Zone essentially door to door in 15 minutes⁴.

¹ CD 7.1, Appeal Decision Chatburn Old Road.

² CD 3.1, paras. 5.1.14 and 6.1.

³ See references in MS Planning PoE at para. 7.44- 7.52 (CD 9.1).

⁴ This is why LCC and the Appellant agreed existing bus provision is adequate and that the appeal proposals will further enhance provision, see CD4.21 at section 4.

6. Langho is a Tier 1 village, and so one of the most sustainable settlements in the Borough and a recognised location for growth. Whatever the nuances of that position⁵, that fundamental ranking considers population and proximity to transport and facilities and is unlikely to change any time soon. Whilst the inquiry has focused upon some of the ways in which non-car accessibility are not ideal – viewed objectively and contextually – the Site is obviously a sustainable one next to a sustainable settlement– and it is little wonder that Lancashire as LHA agree, as do all of the references in the evidence-base documents that were drawn to the attention of the inquiry.
7. Localised landscape harm is acknowledged – a consequence of any peripheral greenfield site in the RV - but the Site benefits from an unusual level of visual containment, which can be readily improved and increased by the proposed green infrastructure. Principal views of the changes on the Site will arise if you are within or next to it. The level of landscape harm on either the Appellant’s case or the Council’s case is insufficient to tip the balance against a grant of permission (tilted or normal).
8. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and there is a significant shortfall in the Borough ranging between 3.04 years to 3.45 years supply – a real world, immediate shortfall of between 503 to 638 dwellings; and there is an acute affordable need in every part of the district, with no prospects of future delivery improving. This is precisely the sort of sustainable visually contained site that the Council should be seeking to release to provide much needed housing *in the Ribble Valley* (as noted by PB in EIC).

Fundamental Points

9. Given the skilfully presented, but essentially scattergun nature of the LPA’s case, the following fundamental points are of central importance:

⁵ See Table 2 in MS Planning PoE on p.37 for a summary of the differences between the 2008 and 2025 Settlement Studies. In 2008 Langho scored ‘4’, in 2025 ‘6’. See Table 3 which follows for a breakdown of the score of ‘6’.

- (a) This is a proposal for Outline Permission with only one element of detail for determination at this point (means of access into the Site) this means that concerns around layout, scale and density are obviously for a later stage;
- (b) There is a national policy imperative to make efficient use of land – if not permission ought to be refused (NPPF §130(c)). Coupled with that policy is an imperative to deliver housing in the context of pressing local and national housing need⁶;
- (c) All highways experts now agree that the loop road is the optimum highways solution⁷;
- (d) All of the ecologists agree that translocation of lowland meadow has been documented to work, no criticism was made of the detailed work presented by KG in his appendix and in the ecological submission to the council (CD6.14) as to how that will be achieved, and in any event not only is translocation within the Site proposed, but so is reprovision in the local Habitat Bank of more than is being moved (providing an overall net increase of 113% in lowland meadow habitat units);
- (e) All landscape witnesses agree that a degree of landscape harm is inevitable when developing a greenfield site, and that effects will primarily be localised;
- (f) No witness has been able to identify any site in the Ribble Valley or ever the wider NW which is a greenfield site next to a railway station;
- (g) There is agreement that the provision of affordable housing is acutely needed in Ribble Valley; and

⁶ This is a particular application of article 29(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development)(England) Order 2015, which provides: “...in dealing with the application, the local planning authority [are required to certify that they] have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with a planning application.”

⁷ See Agree Note on the Loop Road, settled after the conclusion of evidence and submitted as ID12.

(h) The planning process is not about delivering a scheme immune from criticism or entirely without harm. There will always be a final judgment on the balance of issues, ordinarily called the planning balance. In assessing the balance, proper weighting of the benefits and harms is essential. Here the final balance, tilted or flat is decisively in favour of allowing the appeal.

Main Issue 1: Character and Appearance

10. As both AC and MS explained, the Appeal Scheme will inevitably give rise to some harm, involving as it necessarily does the development of a greenfield site. It was agreed in the RT session that views across the Ribble Valley were not a concern. As will have been evident from the site visit, the Valley is a very broad glacial one, and as AC points out its character is very much a settled rural environment in which smaller settlements are interspersed within countryside. The proposals, where seen in long views, will be wholly consistent with this character.
11. The differences between AC and MS are limited and relate to differences of professional judgment not differences of methodology or principle. The one main difference (the effect on the local landscape character area) may properly be characterised as an interesting but largely minor issue in the determination of this appeal.
12. The Site is “urban fringe” in its nature (AC in RT)⁸, and is heavily influenced by the A59 highway, railway line, and adjacent residential developments (to the south and east). The Site is therefore framed by a combination of residential development and significant infrastructure, which strongly influences its character. Residential properties extend along the full length of the eastern boundary, running from the railway line up to the A59. Along the northern boundary lies the A59 itself, a busy arterial route carrying high volumes of traffic. It is the main arterial route through the Ribble Valley, linking the principal settlements in the borough. This road is illuminated by street lighting and experiences constant movement, contributing not only to daytime activity but also to a noticeable nighttime presence. To the north, the boundary transitions into rurality interspersed with country lanes leading to the River Ribble, and together these surrounding features firmly situate

⁸ And see Landscape PoE from para. 4.13 onwards. CD 9.2.

the site as closely related to the settlement of Langho. In the southeastern corner, the presence of the railway station and adjoining rail line further adds to the level of activity, reinforcing the site's connection to the wider transport network. Taken as a whole, the site is effectively enclosed on three sides by built form and infrastructure, making it heavily influenced by its urbanising context.

13. In the northeastern corner of the site, within the red line boundary, lies an area of ancient woodland known as Green Nook Wood. The landscape masterplan proposes that this woodland be protected and managed to materially enhance its ecological value, including restricting public access. At present, however, it is accessible, and there is evidence that this has led to some degradation of its ecological condition. Just as any impact upon an irreplaceable habitat ought to carry significant weight – so too should a proposal which will protect and enhance such a habitat. The fact that such a habitat is being protected and enhanced puts into context the Lowland Meadow debate which is a habitat of far less significance.
14. A further important feature is a public footpath that runs roughly north–south across the eastern half of the site. This path provides a direct and convenient link to the village via an underpass near the railway station and is clearly well used by the local community. Observations on site indicate that people frequently stray from the defined route, suggesting a desire for more informal, readily accessible recreational use of the surrounding landscape. While this could be described as tolerated trespass, it nonetheless highlights a clear demand among local residents for accessible open space and opportunities for informal recreation (AC RT). Paradoxically it also demonstrates that in the real world the steps and subway at the station are not quite the barrier that Mr Carter, with his limited experience of the Site and the Area would have one believe.
15. From a landscape planning perspective, the assessment draws on established published character studies to provide a structured understanding of the site's context. At the broadest level, this begins with the National Character Area, specifically NCA 35, known as the Lancashire Valleys. This designation identifies the key characteristics⁹ that define the area as a whole. Notably, one of the defining features highlighted in the assessment is the prevalence of towns and settlements

⁹ See CD6.12. The overall key characteristics reveal a settled and farmed landscape with many specific references to built infrastructure and individual settlements.

throughout this settled landscape. In addition, the area is characterised by a mix of hamlets, villages, and industrial development, reinforcing this impression of a well-settled landscape¹⁰, in clear distinction to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape further to the north. The presence of extensive infrastructure is also a defining trait, with numerous transport corridors such as roads, canals, and railway lines running along the valley floors. Taken together, these elements indicate a landscape that is both inhabited and highly connected, best understood as a settled environment shaped by infrastructure. Whilst the development will bring a localised change¹¹ – it is impossible to credibly claim that it would be one which would be out of character with this LCA.

16. Thus, at a more detailed level, the analysis turns to the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Assessment (published in 2000). This subdivides the wider area into more specific landscape character types. The Site falls within the “undulating lowland farmland” type, which is described as a wooded and well-settled landscape containing villages and nearby towns, including Longridge and Clitheroe. The assessment also highlights the presence of clustered settlements connected by a network of roads, further emphasising the integrated relationship between habitation and movement within the landscape. Indeed, CT’s map regression exercise proves that Langho owes its very existence to the construction of the railway, lying as it does well to the south of ‘Old Langho’.
17. At an even more local scale, the site lies within the “Lower Ribble Valley” character area, specifically identified as the stretch from Clitheroe to Gisburn. This finer-grained analysis reinforces earlier observations, again describing the area as well settled and strongly influenced by transport infrastructure. The River Ribble valley is identified as a key communication corridor, with major routes such as the A59 linking a series of settlements along its length. The presence of the railway line is also noted, and the assessment explicitly states that this network of transport routes has historically encouraged built development throughout the valley.
18. When viewed in plan, this pattern becomes particularly clear. The site sits within a landscape that includes numerous surrounding settlements, such as Langho itself, along with nearby communities

¹⁰ See AC Landscape PoE at para. 5.18, CD 9.2.

¹¹ AC PoE at para. 5.35, CD 9.2.

including Billington, Old Langho, Brockhall Village, and Clayton-le-Dale. This distribution of settlements, combined with the evident network of roads and rail infrastructure, demonstrates the extent to which the local landscape character is defined by human activity and connectivity.

19. The national landscape study and Lancashire study all refer to a “well settled landscape”. The settlements are by themselves an integral part of the overall character area. Appendix 7 (AC PoE¹²) shows that the part of Wilpshire to the south-west of the settlement at Lango is identified in the character assessment as suburban. This indicates that Lango itself is integral to, and indeed defines, the local character area. Accordingly, the introduction of housing and associated green infrastructure would reinforce the existing character rather than alter it. It would not represent an incongruous or out-of-place intervention, such as a large warehouse, but instead a form of development that is consistent with and reflective of the area’s established suburban identity (AC in RT).

20. In this context, the proposed residential development can be understood not as an intrusion into an otherwise undeveloped landscape, but as a continuation of an established pattern. By introducing additional housing, the proposal reinforces one of the key characteristics already identified at every scale of assessment: that this is a settled, infrastructure-rich landscape (AC RT). Thus, the Site’s character is shaped as much by its surroundings as by its immediate physical attributes.

21. This context is important particularly as the landscape reason for refusal (the third reason for refusal)¹³ refers specifically to the proposed development being visible from the public right of way that crosses the site, as well as from the A59 to the north. It goes on to claim that the resulting impact would fail to respond positively to the inherent visual and landscape character of the area. Notably, however, there is no explicit reference to any harm being caused to the settlement of Langho itself. The wording is quite precise in this respect, and any broader interpretation appears to extend beyond what is actually set out in the reason for refusal.

¹² CD 9.6 are the Landscape PoE appendices.

¹³ See Decision Notice, CD 3.3.

22. As AC explained, if one examines the relevant area, it becomes clear that there are two principal routes structuring the area. The first is the A59, which runs broadly east–west, while the second is Whalley Road, which follows a more south-westerly alignment, crossing near the point where Langho is identified. The key observation here is that the overall configuration of the area, and indeed the basis of the assessment, is strongly influenced by this road network, which sits both to the north and south of the railway line. At the eastern edge of the village, to the north of the railway line along Whalley Road, the site context clearly shows established and significant community uses. As illustrated on the Site Location Plan¹⁴, this includes Langho St Leonard's Church of England Primary School, with St Leonard's Church, Langho located immediately to its west. This demonstrates that development is already firmly established on both sides of Whalley Road in this part of the village. Importantly as AC noted, it should not be forgotten that significant facilities cluster around the most modern element of the road infrastructure – i.e. the bypass and its roundabout. To the NW – ie closest to the Site are Northcote, Langho FC's fields as well as various stables and the facilities in Old Langho and Brockhall Village a short walk to the North – and to the E is the continuation of Whalley Road, with St Leonard's CoE school, the Community Centre of the village and two successful hotels with restaurants, and leisure facilities.
23. Whilst Mr Sheikh may have stressed the number of hairdressers and beauticians for effect – that hardly paints a fair picture of Langho's facilities and services. Indeed, the opportunity is there with further development for now closed facilities to be brought back into life, such as the Pentre Arms and the Indian Restaurant.
24. Thus, the pattern of growth here is not centred around a single focal point but instead follows a more linear form, closely aligned with the road network. Residential development extends along Whalley Road, including cul-de-sacs branching from it, and this pattern continues both north and south of the railway line. The road network has therefore played a defining role in shaping the evolution of Langho, acting as the main axes along which the settlement has expanded over time. In this context, the suggestion in Mr Taylor's evidence that there is little or no settlement to the north of the railway line is not accurate. What is evident instead is a clear and continuing pattern of development extending along and around Whalley Road. More recent examples include the

¹⁴ Site Location Plan, CD 1.21.

Northcote/Pringle Homes development, along with a smaller residential cul-de-sac just to its east, close to the roundabout on the eastern side of the site. As such, the proposed development would not appear out of place. Rather, it would represent a continuation of this established pattern, reinforcing the linear expansion of the village on either side of Whalley Road, consistent with its historical growth over the last century fuelled, ironically by the railway station¹⁵.

25. The Appeal Scheme must therefore be considered in the context of the existing baseline, which clearly includes the Northcote development. That scheme has rightly been identified through the plan led system by the Council as a suitable and sustainable location for additional residential development. And whilst Whalley and Barrow may have leapfrogged over Langho in population and facilities terms since the 2008 Settlement Study, that seems likely to be because those vibrant settlements have benefitted from significant growth over the last decade, whereas Langho has not¹⁶.
26. The Appeal Scheme itself is landscape led and includes a wider tree belt along the A59, a primary landscape corridor, and generous public open spaces. It is perhaps of note that the LPA's evidence and case responded to revision A (the Application) not the most recent Revision C (the Appeal Scheme) – which tempers some of CT's more specific criticisms.
27. The Appeal Scheme establishes a strong framework for the northern part of both the scheme and the adjoining village and accommodates two attenuation basins designed to be seasonally wet. These basins are intended to function as ephemeral features, likely drying out during the summer months, thereby creating valuable seasonal wetland habitats. Together, these elements contribute to a broader network of blue–green infrastructure that can be appreciated, if not always directly accessed, as part of the area's public open space¹⁷. On its western side, the landscape corridor

¹⁵ the design has ensured that the locally distinctive vernacular is respected and reflected in the proposed scheme as set out in the DAS (CD1.4).

¹⁶ Only 76 units during the plan period, see MS Planning PoE at 5.10(8) on p.21 and Figure 1 on p.22, CD 9.1. MS observes herein *“the relative lack of housing delivery at Langho to be highly material. Despite being consistently assessed as one of the larger and higher performing settlements in terms of sustainability and accessibility terms, Langho has only seen 76 completions over the Plan period”*.

¹⁷ AC Landscape PoE at para. 8.6 (CD9.2): *“The proposal provides extensive open space which would allow unrestricted public access to all of the green space within the site area which would be a substantial benefit in terms of recreation space and opportunity within the site itself”*.

includes areas of grassland and meadow area. There are two north-south orientated landscape corridors running through the scheme that would provide further connectivity and green infrastructure whilst retaining and protecting the existing mature trees.

28. In landscape terms, the Appeal Scheme aligns with established guidance, including that of Landscape Institute, which emphasises assessing how development affects landscape character through its component elements. The proposal responds well to topography, working with the natural grain of the land and resulting in only minor adverse effects. Tree planting would deliver a net beneficial outcome, despite the limited and identified loss of some existing trees. Similarly, the introduction of new hedgerows would enhance the landscape structure. While the development would inevitably replace a significant proportion of existing pasture, as is typical for a greenfield site, it would also introduce new water features, leading overall to a beneficial effect in this respect¹⁸.

30. The transformation of the site from open countryside into a residential neighbourhood is acknowledged, but the scheme incorporates measures to strengthen landscape quality and ecological value within that change. Some landscape harm arising from the Appeal Scheme is acknowledged. However, the harm must be understood in context. The Site is experienced in a highly localised way in part as a result of the proposed mitigation. The Appeal Scheme benefits from a high degree of physical and visual containment. Further, the Site is an opportunity in the context of dire housing need. In order to release housing in Ribble Valley and meet the requirement, sites with some degree of landscape harm are going to be needed and released.

Main Issue 2: Sustainable Modes and Patterns of Transport

31. The Appeal Scheme provides safe and suitable access for all modes of travel, meeting local and national policy.

32. The scale of the development is not a legitimate basis for criticism in sustainability terms. On the contrary, a development of this size is capable of delivering the infrastructure, funding, and critical mass needed to support genuine alternatives to private car use. This proposal does exactly that,

¹⁸ See section 4 AC Landscape PoE, CD 9.2.

providing enhancements to walking, cycling, and public transport that smaller schemes could not viably achieve¹⁹. Whilst the site is in a rural location, national policy recognises that such areas require a flexible approach to sustainable travel. Crucially, the site is not isolated: it sits immediately adjacent to Langho, a well-established and connected settlement where recent residential development has already been accepted as sustainable.

33. Planning policy recognises the inherent challenges of achieving high levels of accessibility in rural areas; however, in that context, the proposed site is comparatively well connected and accessible. It is therefore important that its performance is assessed against the realities of rural locations rather than more idealised urban benchmarks²⁰.
34. The argument that a rural location automatically results in reliance on private cars, and that this equates to unsustainable development, is misplaced. Car ownership is typical even in urban environments and does not imply dependency. What matters is whether residents have a genuine choice of travel modes, and here they clearly will do. The scheme provides opportunities for walking, cycling, bus, and rail use, alongside the increasing role of shared journeys and low-emission vehicles, all of which are recognised within national policy as sustainable. There is no policy requirement to eliminate car use entirely; rather, sustainability must be assessed across a broader set of social, economic, and environmental considerations.
35. It is also incorrect to assume that any level of private car use automatically renders a development unsustainable, a point CC readily accepted. Many forms of car travel, particularly shared journeys and the increasing use of ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles, are acknowledged within policy as sustainable. As such, the suggestion that reliance on the private car necessarily equates to unsustainable development is not supported.
36. In accessibility terms, the Local Highway Authority agrees that the proposals would enable residents to travel sustainably to local services and employment²¹. Internally, the layout, to be secured at reserved matters stage, will prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement in accordance

¹⁹ Full list of sustainable transport enhancements and weighting at paras.10.40- 10.52 MS Planning PoE, CD 9.1.

²⁰ Per NPPF 110, PB EIC and Transport PoE at para. 4.3.4 (CD 9.3).

²¹ See HSoCG with LCC as LHA, CD 8.5, at section 4.0.

with national guidance. Externally, the site will connect to the surrounding network through four principal access points (and potentially a fifth via the adjoining Pringle development), with enhancements to existing routes such as Footpath 6a and new pedestrian and cycle links to Whitehalgh Lane. The main access onto the A59 will deliver substantial improvements, including new footways, cycleways, uncontrolled crossings, a signalised toucan crossing, traffic calming measures, and two new bus stops constructed to modern “Quality Bus” standards on the edge of the site along a main bus route for multiple buses.

37. Public transport provision is a key strength of the scheme. The A59 functions as a main bus corridor, offering regular services to nearby centres including Clitheroe, Whalley, and Blackburn, providing access to a wide range of employment, education, and retail opportunities. The development not only benefits from these existing services but will actively enhance them through the provision of new, high-quality bus stops, improved pedestrian access to those stops, and financial contributions to support public transport²². This combination of infrastructure and patronage will help maintain and potentially improve service frequency and viability over time.
38. Rail accessibility is also a significant advantage. Langho railway station lies next to the site in the southeastern corner, with the most direct route via the lit railway underpass and Footpath 6a. This is a key benefit of the scheme. While this route includes steps and may not suit all users, alternative routes are available for the minority who are mobility impaired to the extent that they cannot use steps. That is not a reason to somehow discount the site’s proximity to the station – which is emphatically not the approach in any of the evidence-based documents supporting plan making locally. Rather it is a reason to exploit the use of this facility so far as possible and to help facilitate improvements which will address access for all.
39. Thus, there is and has been ongoing work by Northern Rail, Community Rail Lancashire and the County’s Rail officer to explore improvements to exploit travel by rail including creating step-free access improvements. That work is not presently funded, but a significant step is facilitated by these proposals by providing the land needed for such an improvement on the north side of the station.

²² Bus timetables at Appx 10 to PB Transport PoE, CD 9.7.

40. The proposals also include provision for a new public car park serving the station, which would increase rail use by addressing existing parking constraints, as well as offering electric vehicle charging (the only publicly available charging in the settlement to date) and accessible parking²³. Together, these measures demonstrate that the development is not only well connected by both bus and rail but would actively strengthen the role and usability of these sustainable transport modes.
41. Whilst Mr Carter sought to enthusiastically downplay the benefits of providing the car park – every other public body that has looked at this issue (including RVBC) has actively encouraged such provision, noting that there is a problem of the inadequacy of parking along this part of the line²⁴. With respect this is a significant benefit of the proposals which will help foster sustainable travel choices for the wider community, consistent with the objectives of the County, the Rail operator, Rail bodies and even RVBC’s past statements on the issue. To the extent that the inquiry has been taken down the forensic rabbit-hole as to whether PB’s confirmatory work in this regard ‘proves the existence of suppressed demand’ – the point is readily countered by the views of literally all of the public bodies who have had something to say on this issue, and even at least one of the third parties. The point being made even more acute by the non-availability of the Indian Restaurant car park.
42. The evidence demonstrates that future residents and indeed existing residents of Langho would benefit from a wide range of alternative travel options, including walking, cycling, bus, and rail. This range of choice means that residents would not be dependent on private car use. In addition, modern, high-quality digital connectivity within homes would reduce the need to travel by enabling access to employment, services, retail, and social interaction remotely.
43. From a transport perspective, the proposals incorporate a number of features that collectively enhance sustainability. These include an accessible internal layout, strong connections to surrounding networks, improved public transport infrastructure, and measures such as a new rail station car park, a comprehensive Travel Plan, and associated funding. Alongside this, the shift

²³ The attempt to disparage accessible parking in this location in evidence is unworthy – not all blue badge holders are incapable of using steps.

²⁴ See for example Northern Rail consultee response at CD 2.11. Note also HSoCG with LCC at 2.1 “*The proposed Rail car park will encourage sustainable travel by rail for existing and future residents of the Ribble Valley*”.

toward a more sustainable vehicle fleet and the role of digital connectivity further support reduced reliance on travel. It is also important to recognise that transport is only one component of the wider environmental and social dimensions of sustainability. Contrary to the impression created by CC's evidence, the two highways' statements of common ground make it clear that the measures proposed will reduce reliance on the use of the private car, and he accepted in XX that the issue is in reality one of degree rather than principle.

44. The degree of mode shift away from the private car is set out in the Framework Travel Plan and that document is agreed between all parties.
45. Thus, new residents will have clear choices not to use their car. And whilst a mobility-impaired person wishing to travel to, say, Preston may not be able to travel there by train – they could instead choose to go by an equally convenient bus. Similarly, such a person could travel to the settlement by a more circuitous route or jump on a bus to go to Whalley in a few minutes and enjoy the range of facilities available in that town, without encountering any steps at all. There is also the option to use the “Little Green Bus” a community transport service for those who find it difficult to use regular public transport.
46. The residents of the site will have access to modern broadband and telecommunication connections. The Site lies within an easy bus ride or train trip to major centres of employment and higher order centres. 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. This is a sustainable site, and the Appeal Scheme enhances transport sustainability in line with national and local policy requirements.
47. Yes, there are imperfections, but those with clear knowledge of the area, notably the LHA, are unequivocal in their position that the site will be one which presents a genuine opportunity to travel by modes other than the private car.

48. Subsequent to providing evidence, the highways experts have prepared a further note regarding the Connectivity Tool score of 50²⁵ (excluding driving) (produced and submitted as ID13). It bears reading carefully, since the impression put in evidence by both sides could have led to an erroneous conclusion.
49. The Tool is in fact a population-based tool and not a geographic tool. The 20th percentile result does *not* mean that this is a location where 80% of the area of the UK is better located in transport terms (which may have been the impression from CC's EIC). It rather means that 80% of the UK *population is based in a location* which is more accessible - which would of course include people in the large urban areas of the country. When one looks at the edges of Clitheroe, Longridge, Barrow and Whalley the Site's connectivity score is comparable to a peripheral location adjacent to *any* of the bigger urban areas in the Borough. The starting point is not that the Site has rubbish connectivity, but that for a future resident here their connectivity would be poorer than if they lived on a site in Manchester, Birmingham, London (which is wholly unsurprising). The percentile actually tells one that more people live in large conurbations in this country.
50. For the purpose of the Inquiry, and in respect of the rural application site the highways experts now agree that a score of 50 correlates reasonably well with a level of connectivity better than that enjoyed by 20% of the UK population. Indeed, a score of 50 correlates reasonably well with a level of connectivity better than that enjoyed by 93% of the area of England and Wales (as determined from an analysis of the area comprised of the largest 20th percentile Output Areas). The existing Site has a level of connectivity which is half the connectivity of the best-connected location in the UK i.e. central London and the accessibility of the existing site will be improved further through the proposals.
51. As noted below, the LPA now accept that the loop road is the optimal solution in transportation terms. The fact that there might be other technically less optimal solutions is an irrelevance. The experts agree that cul-de-sacs are discouraged in design terms. The Appeal Scheme is an acceptable scheme in planning terms with an optimal internal layout. LCC as LHA are supportive

²⁵ as presented in the Evidence of Mr Blair at page 79 of CD9.7.

of a loop road²⁶. Notably even though Mr Carter notes that the site could also have come forward with vehicular cul-de-sac – he also says that there would be a need for a ped/cycle loop to facilitate accessibility. It is therefore not the position that the southern part of the Clough would not need to be bridged, nor that it would not have to have a route through it. Rather even with a sub-optimal vehicular approach there would still need to be a properly designed route through this area – underscoring that the optimal solution for the Lowland Meadow was the one proposed by Mr Goodman (see below).

52. Overall, the scheme performs well in accessibility terms and aligns with broader, vision-led objectives for sustainable transport. This includes the continued promotion of public transport, the transition to low-emission vehicles, and wider initiatives such as those set out in the emerging Lancashire Local Transport Plan, all of which point toward a more sustainable pattern of travel over time.

Main Issue 3: Ecology and Biodiversity

53. It is agreed under the Amended Ecology Statement of Common Ground (CD8.10) that if the appeal were to be allowed, the translocation of the lowland meadow would be acceptable and could be secured through a condition (see 2.2 of CD8.10). It is also agreed that there would be a parallel approach taken – i.e. that the Lowland Meadow compensated for by the overall provision of a greater areas lowland meadow (2.29ha) and a greater number of lowland meadow habitat units (providing a net increase of 113%) from habitats in the off-site location proposed AND that the existing turf of the deteriorating priority habitat on site will be translocated and managed on-site to secure its future. In the real world – there would be no diminution in such priority habitat in this district – to the contrary it is likely to be more than doubled.

54. The issue in dispute is whether the requirements of the mitigation hierarchy at 193(a) of the NPPF have been followed, and whether development affecting the lowland meadow complies with the

²⁶ See PB's comments in the 'Loop Road' Note, ID12: "*the Consultation response from the LHA (CD 2.7) which offered comment on the indicative layout, noting the need for an 8m wide road as far as the first junction and 5.5m thereafter. Such a requirement is standard for loop layouts to recognise where a single road link to the highway could be subject to roadworks (and disruption), it is built "over wide" to minimise such effects*".

requirements of EN4 and DME3. However, this is a policy test and not a legal one, and as with all policy what matters is to apply such policy with a sensible planner's eye in the circumstances of the case before the decision maker. Here – there is indeed a priority habitat – but it is not in great condition and in an appeal dismissed world the overwhelming likelihood is that it will continue to deteriorate as a result of a sub-optimal grazing regime by horses and continued trespass by people wandering from the path. In an appeal allowed world, as well as the off-site compensation – the actual sward will be moved to an inaccessible part of the Site where it will be actively managed. Yes, there is a risk that the latter may not work – albeit that Mr Richardson's fear of agitating soil is misplaced since that is not the methodology proposed – but Table 4 of the Updated Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (CD.4.3) outlines the tried and tested translocation methods which have worked in the HS2 example (CD6.16). The soil structure has been analysed and the methods proposed are conventional.

55. The proposed translocation of the lowland meadow would essentially constitute a form of 'on-site impact avoidance' which is arguably within the meaning of paragraph 193(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework. While it is acknowledged that policy ordinarily places strong weight on the retention of priority habitats in situ, the proper interpretation of "harm" in this context should be directed to the loss of the ecological resource itself, rather than its precise geographic location within the site. The appeal proposal does not entail the destruction of the meadow as an ecological system. Instead, it provides for the careful translocation of the habitat, including its soil structure, seed bank, and associated biological communities, to a prepared and suitable receptor site. In doing so, the essential characteristics and functionality of the meadow would be retained. The effect of the development is therefore not to extinguish the biodiversity interest, but to relocate it in a manner that allows its continued existence with a proactive monitoring and management regime as outlined at KG PoE Appendix B (CD9.8). This is not mitigation, nor is it preservation in situ (as one might describe archaeology), but it is on any view a source of avoidance.

56. Importantly, the translocation strategy forms an integral part of the scheme design, rather than a secondary or compensatory measure. The identification and preparation of the receptor site, together with the proposed methodology and long-term monitoring and management framework, demonstrate that the approach has been embedded from the outset as a means of retaining the

habitat resource. On that basis, the proposal should properly be understood as avoiding harm, rather than merely mitigating or compensating for it.

57. Furthermore, the approach secures a high degree of ecological continuity. By translocating the meadow substrate in its entirety, the proposal maintains the existing species assemblage and underlying ecological processes, distinguishing it from habitat creation or restoration schemes which seek to replicate such features over time. With appropriate safeguards, including phased implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management, the residual risk to the habitat can be reduced to an acceptable level.
58. Even if that is concluded to be a technical failure to meet the first step of the hierarchy – it is a sensible step. As noted above – it is to facilitate the efficient use of land at a time of housing need, and a loop road is the optimal solution (see ID12). On the LPA’s case even, the sub-optimal approach would require a ped/cycleway through this part of the site. To that extent a dual cul-de-sac would not preserve the lowland meadow in isolation from the risk of further deterioration – it would create an area of open land within a residential development with a route through or next to it – with the obvious risk of continued deterioration as a result of those using it as accessible open space even if that might be in defiance of signs asking them not to. What is proposed, is plainly the best solution in all of the circumstances, and if there is policy tension that is not mirrored by actual ecological harm. Such policy tension could not, sensibly warrant the withholding of consent – and the more balanced and sensible approach is that which has been taken by Inspectors elsewhere as KG has explained in evidence (see below).
59. Therefore, in these circumstances, the development would not give rise to significant harm to biodiversity as contemplated by paragraph 193. The biodiversity value of the meadow would be retained in a viable form, and the policy test is therefore satisfied at the first stage of the mitigation hierarchy. Accordingly, there is no meaningful conflict with national policy on this basis.
60. In relation to the lowland meadow, the Council’s position was that the development proposals should avoid the area of lowland meadow, as this represents the first step in the mitigation hierarchy outlined in paragraph 193(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework. However, this

mechanistic approach lacks ecological judgment and planning judgment. Paragraph 193(a) first requires an assessment of whether the development proposals would result in significant harm, or whether any harm would instead arise from existing factors.

61. KG's expert judgment is that any assessment of significant harm should consider three factors: the current baseline position, the existing management of the site, and the effects of the scheme on other habitats. In applying this framework, KG explained that the lowland meadow was small, contributing only 0.17% of the regional resource, was poorly managed, deteriorating and did not meet the criteria for designation as a Biological Heritage Site. The Council rightly acknowledge that the condition of the lowland meadow is one of deterioration but then sought to argue without evidence that the landowner might sign up to a stewardship scheme if the appeal is dismissed – true that might happen but there is no evidence that there is a realistic prospect that it would do so. The existing regime would not support the development of the habitat or its indicator species and would instead lead to its gradual decline.
62. The Council have suggested that the lowland meadow could be better protected in situ with better management of human activity, like signage advising people to keep to the PROW. What the Council fail to appreciate is that signage has already been attempted by the Appellant. This strategy has failed: signs have been removed and ignored.
63. Given the inherent constraints in management, KG concluded that it was this management or inability to appropriately manage human intervention, rather than the development, that was likely to continue to result in significant harm. On this basis, it was appropriate to move to mitigation and compensation measures, including the translocation of the lowland meadow.
64. This approach aligns with the interpretation of paragraph 193(a) adopted by Inspectors in cases such as Bishop Itchington (CD 7.7), Glossop Road (CD 7.6)), and Drake Broughton (CD 7.3), with particular emphasis on the similarities between the Bishop Itchington scheme (CD 7.7) and the current proposals (see [31]-[39]²⁷).

²⁷ In particular, at [34] *“It may be that development could take place elsewhere but this would not, for the reasons noted above, provide any guarantee that the field’s grassland habitat would not deteriorate further.”*

65. In considering the overall planning balance, KG explained that alternative design options had been properly explored. Due to the need for a loop road through the site, a choice had to be made between impacting the lowland meadow or an area of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Both habitats are of high distinctiveness and priority status. However, while it is feasible to translocate lowland meadow, as demonstrated by the HS2 project and associated research, woodland cannot be replaced within a short to medium timeframe. Consequently, it was considered preferable to translocate the meadow rather than lose woodland.
66. The option of retaining the lowland meadow while removing housing but retaining the road was also examined. This would have resulted in fragmentation of the habitat into smaller sections that would be difficult to manage and more vulnerable to disturbance and accidental damage due to their proximity to the road.
67. Importantly, the loop road design is supported by both highways experts before the Inquiry. Mr Carter agrees in the joint note on the Loop Road the loop road “*is the optimal highways layout for the site*” (Loop Road Note, submitted as ID12). LCC as Highways Authority support a loop road. In the same note, Mr Blair sets out the benefits of a loop road for reasons of access, traffic and connectivity/ permeability. Importantly, if there were to be no loop road then there would be a need for a pedestrian/cycleway to link the two cul-de-sac. The area of lowland grassland would therefore have to be bisected in any event.
68. In contrast, translocating the meadow in its entirety to a receptor site free from public access was considered more likely to secure its long-term viability. Fragmentation within an urban setting was therefore judged to reduce the likelihood of successful retention, making translocation the optimal solution.
69. KG’s overall conclusion was that, on balance, translocation combined with long-term management and monitoring through the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan would secure lasting protection for the habitat. The proposals would deliver a net gain of 1.92 units of lowland meadow on site, supplemented by additional offsite compensation at a strategic habitat bank at Moreton Park Habitat Bank (listed on the National Gain Sites Register under Reference BGS-300625002)

and located circa 3.5km east of the Appeal Scheme within Ribble Valley Borough Council LPA. With this offsite provision the overall package would deliver an overall net gain of 113% in lowland meadow units. This combined onsite and offsite approach was noted to be consistent with that adopted for the HS2 project.

70. In response to concerns raised by the Council regarding the success of translocation and long-term management, the submitted biodiversity net gain assessment included an outline translocation strategy based on tuft translocation. KG explained that detailed objectives and remedial measures were set out in supporting appendices to ensure successful establishment and management over a 30-year period (KG PoE Appendix B, CD9.8). KG has presented detailed evidence on the effectiveness of a translocation strategy.
71. Concerns about potential public pressure on the habitat following development were addressed by noting that public access to the receptor site would not be promoted, that it would be separated from the development by a hedgerow and could be fenced, and that interpretation boards could be used to discourage use. KG also observed that some areas of lowland meadow in good condition already accommodate permissive footpaths, indicating that limited public access does not necessarily degrade the habitat.
72. It was also noted that DR appeared to accept, when questioned by the Inspector in the RT, that he had observed examples of successful grassland translocation. Other relevant planning policies included EN4 and DME3. KG explained that EN4 requires adverse effects to be avoided but allows for a balanced approach and permits offsite compensation where the habitat is not designated. As the site and the lowland meadow were not designated, offsite compensation was considered acceptable, although not strictly necessary given the onsite net gain. Nevertheless, additional offsite provision had been included, resulting in a substantial overall gain. While DR emphasised the requirement for avoidance within EN4, KG maintained that, as with paragraph 193(a), a balanced approach should be applied. Similarly, although DME3 refers to avoiding adverse effects, KG considered that this requirement must also be interpreted within the overall planning balance.

73. Finally, in relation to paragraph 008, KG’s position was that it did not constitute an assessment of harm but rather a sequence of targeted actions, whereby progression to the next step occurs once the previous one has been addressed. While DR emphasised avoidance, KG argued that the stepwise process had been followed in accordance with policy requirements, as set out in his proof of evidence (see KG PoE paragraphs 11.44 – 11.55, CD 9.4).

74. DR appears to argue that the present “do nothing” approach was a scenario in which the lowland meadow might improve in condition were better management practices followed. This entirely ignores the fact the Appellant has already attempted to dissuade people from deviating onto the lowland meadow from the footpath through signage, but signs have been removed and ignored. There is no evidence whatsoever to support the contention that under a “do nothing” scenario the lowland meadow will do anything other than continue to decline. A fallback position can only be a material planning consideration when is a “real prospect”, it cannot be fanciful²⁸. This threshold is not met and even if it were met the weight to be attached would have to be negligible given that there is no ecological or planning evidence to support a “do nothing” approach improving the lowland meadow’s condition.

Main Issue 4: The Balance of Issues

75. Mr Saunders has completed a full review of the appeal proposals against development plan policies, he concludes that there is accordance with the development plan read as a whole, notwithstanding the fact that the tilted balance applies in this case by virtue of NPPF and Key Statement DS2 (Planning PoE, CD 9.1).

76. The starting point for MS is that the proposals accord with the development plan when read as a whole. There is no fundamental or wholesale conflict with its provisions, and where tensions arise, these reflect the natural “push and pull” inherent in applying policies rather than clear breaches. In any event, if the decision-maker were to conclude otherwise, Policy DS2 requires the application of the tilted planning balance, bringing wider material considerations into play.

²⁸ *Mansell v Tonbridge And Malling Borough Council* [2017] EWCA Civ 1314.

77. In policy terms, the Core Strategy is now dated in key respects, not least because it was never reviewed within the required five-year period following adoption. The evidence base has evolved considerably since then, and the emerging Local Plan, first initiated over five years ago, remains some distance from adoption, with repeated delays and consultation gaps. Against this backdrop, the National Planning Policy Framework carries substantial weight as a material consideration, particularly in its support for sustainable development in rural contexts, the delivery of housing, the benefits of larger schemes, and the need to respond to demographic change, including provision for older persons.
78. Turning to compliance with specific policies, most housing policies are agreed to be out of date: it is common ground that Key Statement H1 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 are out of date, reducing their determinative weight. Spatial Strategy Policy DS1 remains relevant but is based on outdated housing requirements and has already achieved its intended distribution over the plan period. There is no evidence that the appeal proposals would undermine its objectives or settlement hierarchy. On the contrary, in Mr Saunder's view DS1 is not necessarily out of date and it continues to provide the most appropriate framework for guiding the spatial distribution of development within the Borough and for promoting sustainable patterns of growth. Evidence indicates that the policy has operated effectively throughout the plan period, and the proposals do not undermine its underlying objectives. The Appeal Scheme delivers much needed housing in a Tier 1 village in a sustainable location.
79. Other policies relating to design, sustainability, ecology, and landscape either allow for flexibility or are satisfied by the proposals, with mitigation embedded where necessary. There is no significant ecological harm in light of KG's evidence, and landscape effects are limited and localised, falling short of policy thresholds for unacceptable impact.
80. The housing context is critical. Both parties now agree that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the Appellant previously identifying a position as low as 3.1 years²⁹. Even on the Council's case, there is a clear and pressing undersupply, exacerbated by reliance on uncertain windfall delivery and delays to plan-making. This creates a policy vacuum

²⁹ CD 8.8 is the 5Y HLS SoCG.

in which significant weight must be given to proposals that can deliver housing in the short term. Appeal decisions such as Littlebourne confirm that boosting housing supply, particularly where affordable housing is included, attracts very substantial weight.

81. Affordable housing provision is a central benefit of the scheme. The evidence demonstrates an acute and persistent need across the borough, with delivery rates falling well below both historic and emerging assessments of need. While it is accepted that no single scheme is required to meet the entirety of annual need, future supply is projected to remain significantly constrained. The proposal's policy-compliant provision therefore represents a meaningful contribution, and there is no substantive evidence from the Council to diminish the weight that should be attributed to it.
82. The evidence before the inquiry³⁰ demonstrates a clear and pressing need for affordable housing at both district and local levels, albeit with disagreement over the weight to be applied. While the overall benefits of the scheme are not agreed, there is no dispute that it would deliver a policy-compliant level of affordable housing through a Section 106 obligation. The proposal provides 30% on-site affordable housing, equating to up to 90 dwellings, consistent with Key Statement H3. This single scheme would therefore deliver more than a full year's historic average affordable housing output in the borough (c.78–81 dwellings per annum), underlining its significance. The detailed tenure mix would be secured at the reserved matters stage, but the quantum, compliance with policy and deliverability requirements in the Section 106 obligation are all firmly established.
83. This level of provision must be considered against the policy and evidence base. The development plan seeks 84 affordable homes per annum, yet more recent evidence identifies far greater need: the 2020 assessment indicates 88 per annum, while the 2025 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment identifies a requirement for 230 homes per year. Past delivery has consistently fallen short, with only around 42% of identified need being met in recent years, and significant cumulative shortfalls—for example, over 3,000 homes against earlier assessments. Corporate strategies reinforce this position, identifying affordable housing as a central priority for addressing homelessness and supporting communities. As at March 2024, there were 847 households on the

³⁰ the proofs of evidence, appendices, statements of common ground, and rebuttals. Also, the Affordable Housing Note, ID14. Note the errata to JS's Affordable Housing PoE (ID15).

housing register (a 7% annual increase from the previous year), alongside households, some with children in temporary accommodation and rising homelessness pressures, all of which highlight the scale and urgency of need.

84. Whilst the Affordable Housing Note (ID14) dated 1st May 2026, sets out when historic affordable housing delivery rates are applied to the projected supply from sites of ten or more dwellings, it has been superseded by Mr Stacey's errata note and his appendix JS3. Appendix JS3 is dated 6th May and responded to the email from the FOI team of that date, identifying an error in the FOI provided in November 2025, which Mr Stacey relied upon for his evidence. The amended note has essentially picked up the same comments from the LPA in ID14 and as such the amended note (within Appendix JS3 of the Errata note) setting out the range of future delivery, should now be preferred.
85. Based on total deliverable supply figures of 861 dwellings (Appellant) and 1,109 dwellings (LPA), applying a 26% delivery rate would yield approximately 224 and 294 affordable homes respectively, while a 30% rate would result in around 258 and 339 homes. When annualised, this equates to between 45 and 52 affordable homes per year under the Appellant's position, and between 57 and 68 per year under the LPA's figures. Even on the more optimistic assumptions, these outputs fall well below identified annual needs, reinforcing the extent of the shortfall and the importance of additional policy-compliant schemes contributing to supply.
86. As Mr Stacey explained, the wider affordability context further emphasises these pressures. Lower quartile house prices in the borough have risen by around 32% since 2008, while rents have increased by approximately 30% since 2013/14, now averaging about £763 per month. At the same time, affordability ratios remain stretched relative to incomes, and demand continues to grow. The consequences of under-delivery are severe and well documented, including financial hardship, poorer health outcomes, reduced life opportunities, and increased reliance on public support systems. Against this backdrop, the delivery of up to 90 affordable homes would represent a substantial and immediate benefit, directly assisting a meaningful proportion of those in need. In a borough experiencing clear and sustained affordability pressures, this contribution carries substantial weight in the planning balance.

87. In addition, the scheme delivers dedicated provision for older persons, supported by detailed evidence of demographic trends and need. Current provision falls significantly short of identified requirements, with shortfalls ranging from several hundred units depending on the methodology used. The inclusion of age-restricted housing within a broader mixed community offers clear social and health benefits, as well as releasing existing housing stock through downsizing. This aligns with national policy, which now gives increased prominence to meeting the needs of older people, and should be afforded substantial weight.
88. In sustainability terms, the site performs strongly. Langho is recognised as one of the more sustainable settlements in the borough, with established services, transport links, and a relatively large population for a rural parish. Evidence, including settlement studies and connectivity analysis, supports this conclusion. The Council's previous positions on comparable applications have acknowledged the sustainability of the location, and the absence of a consistent countervailing case weakens any suggestion that the site is unsuitable in accessibility terms. The proposals themselves further enhance connectivity through infrastructure and travel planning measures.
89. Concerns regarding scale and landscape impact are not borne out by the evidence. The Site sits on the edge of an established settlement and reflects the existing pattern of development, including growth on both sides of the railway line. It benefits from a high degree of physical containment, with any visual effects limited to localised viewpoints such as nearby footpaths and roads. There are no landscape designations affecting the site, and wider impacts are minimal. Overall, any harm in this regard is moderate and does not approach a level that would justify refusal.
90. Ecological considerations have been carefully addressed through an evolving strategy focused on avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement. The presence of lowland meadow has been incorporated into the design through translocation to a more suitable and manageable location within the site, supported by technical evidence. This approach not only avoids degradation of the habitat but provides opportunities for long-term improvement and management. Taken as a whole, the scheme delivers positive biodiversity outcomes and does not give rise to unacceptable ecological harm.

91. In the overall planning balance, the benefits are substantial and wide-ranging. These include significant contributions to housing supply, affordable housing, and provision for older persons, alongside enhanced public open space, transport improvements, ecological gains, and economic activity. Any identified harms are limited in scope and weight, and fall well short of outweighing these benefits. Whether assessed against the development plan or under the tilted balance, the clear conclusion is that planning permission should be granted. Given the Site's location, the compelling benefits associated with the proposed development and the Appeal Scheme's performance against local plan policy, the proposed development clearly constitutes 'sustainable development' and delivers on all three strands of economic, social and environmental objectives.

Other Matters

92. As noted in Opening, Mr Saunders also addresses third party representations in detail in Appendix 4 of his proof (CD9.5). Responses covered the topics of scale, layout & design, highways safety and impact, pedestrian connectivity, ecology, landscape and visual impact, impact on the Green Belt, air quality, and the additional pressure on local services. All of these matters are responded to through the Appellant's evidence. None of the issues raised amount to a reason to refuse planning permission.

Conclusion

93. In conclusion, the Appeal Scheme is plainly acceptable in planning terms. The Appeal Site benefits from both an unusually high degree of visual containment and its rare situation next to a railway station in a Tier 1 village. On any proper assessment, whether under the standard planning balance or the tilted approach, the outcome of the balance points clearly toward approval. The Appeal Proposal offers clear and substantial public benefits that outweigh the harms raised by third parties significantly and demonstrably. The Application is in accordance with the development plan. Permission should be granted so the Site can contribute to meeting pressing housing needs.

Paul G Tucker KC

Constanze Bell

6th May 2026

KINGS CHAMBERS
MANCHESTER – BIRMINGHAM – LEEDS