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Your ref: 3/2026/0810
Our ref: 3/2026/0810/HDC/KW
Date: 12 November 2026

Location: Land at Vicarage Lane Wilpshire
Proposal: Permission in Principle for up to nine dwellings and associated development.
Grid Ref: 368560 432854

Dear Lucy Walker

With regard to your consultation letter dated 22 October 2026, I have the following comments to make based on all the information provided by the applicant to date and after undertaking a site visit.

Summary

Lancashire County Council acting as the Local Highway Authority if of the opinion that the principle of development raises significant highway and access concerns. Based on the information currently available, it is not clear that the constraints associated with Vicarage Lane, including its limited width, adjacent drainage ditches, visibility limitations, land ownership uncertainties and safe movement of venerable users of the Bridleway, BW0346027, can be satisfactorily mitigated to provide a safe and suitable means of access for the proposed development.

Advice to Local Planning Authority

Introduction

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) are in receipt of a planning in principle application for up to nine dwellings and associated development at Land at Vicarage Lane Wilpshire

Site Access

Whilst access is reserved for stage two approval, the Planning Statement identifies potential vehicular access arrangements from either the western or southern boundaries of the site via Vicarage Lane. Vicarage Lane has no public vehicle access rights and is privately maintained for vehicular traffic (Lancashire Country Council are responsible for the Bridleway which runs along the route). The extent of the highway has not been confirmed at this stage. The site appears to be physically separated from the track by areas of unregistered land containing trees, vegetation and drainage features that fall outside the application red line boundary.

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In the absence of evidence demonstrating ownership of, or legal rights over, this land, the LHA has concerns that a suitable vehicular access can be secured at the reserved matters stage. Furthermore, there is currently no certainty that sufficient land exists within the applicant's control to deliver the necessary highway improvements or pedestrian infrastructure that would be necessary to make the development acceptable in highway terms.

Vicarage Lane for approximately 780m from Ribchester Road currently serves direct access for approximately 30 residential properties, not including the dwellings that sit within The Hazels which has an access onto Vicarage Lane 75m from its junction with Ribchester Road. The initial section, extending approximately 140m from Ribchester Road, has a carriageway width of approximately 5.5m and is capable of accommodating two-way vehicle movements, this section also features street lighting, although no segregated pedestrian provisions exist. Beyond this point, the route narrows substantially, reducing to a single track widths ranging between 2.5m and 3.5m along the western side of the application site.

The LHA considers this width insufficient to accommodate the increased traffic associated with a development of nine dwellings without the provision of significant widening works or formalised passing opportunities. At present, there is no evidence that such improvements can be delivered.

The western side of Vicarage Lane adjacent to the proposed development site is bordered by a drainage ditch that falls away immediately from the carriageway edge. This creates an unprotected drop adjacent to the running surface of the track. The LHA is concerned that vehicles emerging from a potential western access would be required to manoeuvre in close proximity to this hazard. The risk would be further exacerbated during periods of snow and ice, particularly as the route does not form part of a winter maintenance route due to its private status. Given the constrained carriageway width, opposing vehicles would be required to reverse to reach a location where passing is possible, increasing the likelihood of vehicles mistakeably entering the drainage channel.

The drainage ditch also restricts opportunities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to move clear of vehicles when travelling in opposite directions. This is of particular importance as Vicarage Lane forms Bridleway, BW0346027 and therefore accommodates vulnerable users in addition to vehicular traffic.

The eastern side of the track is similarly constrained by drainage features, vegetation and land outside the application red edge boundary. Whilst the drainage ditch is less pronounced than those on the western side, these features nevertheless represent further physical constraints that may inhibit future widening works or the vegetation reducing the opportunity to delivery visibility splays, should the applicant have no ownership rights over it.

The LHA also notes that these drainage ditches perform an important drainage function, assisting the removal of surface water from the track and reducing the potential for deterioration of the surface. Any modifications to facilitate widening would therefore require careful consideration and may require additional drainage features, the feasibility of which has not been demonstrated and may require third party land ownership.

In order to provide a safe and suitable means of access, the LHA would expect the access route serving the development to safely accommodate two-way vehicle movements, for its length or provide an appropriate network of passing places supported by suitable forward visibility. Based on the information submitted, the existing width restrictions, adjacent drainage ditches, vegetation constraints and uncertainty over land ownership raise significant doubts as to whether such improvements can be delivered.

As such the LHA has significant concerns regarding the suitability of Vicarage Lane to accommodate additional traffic associated with the proposed development. The track already serves approximately 30 existing dwellings, with the narrow single track section adjacent to the application site providing access to around 10 properties located adjacent to and beyond the site frontage.

Therefore, development of nine additional dwellings would inevitably increase traffic flows along this constrained route shared by the existing 10 dwellings if access was taken from the West side of the site. Given the limited width available, the proposal would increase the frequency of vehicle encounters, resulting in additional reversing manoeuvres along the single track section and a heightened risk of conflict between users. The presence of drainage ditches immediately adjacent to the carriageway further compounds these concerns and substantially reduces the margin for driver error.

Southern Arm of Vicarage Lane

A secondary arm of Vicarage Lane extends eastwards from No. 14 Vicarage Lane and serves properties numbered 16 to 28. This section runs to the side of the southern boundary of the application site and is similarly to the West side is constrained by land ownership between the site and the access track and other width limitations.

This route narrows to approximately 3.5m in places and currently serves seven existing dwellings to the southern side. In addition, a private parking area for a nearby property is located immediately adjacent to the north section of the track. The addition of traffic associated with nine further dwellings would increase the potential for conflict between vehicles and would likely require widening works within land that does not fall within the red line boundary between the access track and the sites red edge.

Visibility when emerging from this arm onto the main section of Vicarage Lane is restricted by existing vegetation when looking northwards. No information has been provided to demonstrate that the necessary visibility improvements can be achieved or maintained in the future, posing a risk to those making use of the Bridleway and the existing 10 dwellings which fall beyond this point. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the applicant controls the land required to secure such improvements.

Whilst widening works to increase carriageway space and the provisions of footways may theoretically overcome some of the concerns detailed above, no robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that sufficient land is available to facilitate such improvements. Consequently, the LHA cannot be satisfied that a safe, suitable and deliverable access arrangement can be secured through the reserved matters process.

Pedestrian, Cycle and Equestrian Safety

Vicarage Lane does not benefit from any dedicated footway provision and functions entirely as a shared-use route. The Bridleway, BW0346027, which runs along its length is used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders in addition to vehicles.

The proposed development would also increase pedestrian movements along Vicarage Lane, particularly between the site and Ribchester Road. In the absence of segregated pedestrian facilities, future residents would be required to walk within the carriageway and share the route with vehicular traffic, including along constrained sections where opportunities to step clear of passing vehicles are limited. Even on the wider section nearest to Ribchester Road, no dedicated pedestrian infrastructure is currently available and the ability to create it would likely require third party land.

The LHA would expect a continuous segregated pedestrian connection between the development and Ribchester Road. However, no evidence has been submitted demonstrating that the applicant controls sufficient land to provide such infrastructure. Consequently, there is no certainty that appropriate mitigation can be delivered.

Furthermore, the intensification of vehicular traffic along the Bridleway, BW0346027, would increase interactions between vehicles and vulnerable users. In the absence of highway improvements, segregated facilities or ability to demonstrated mitigation measures, the proposal would materially increase the potential for conflict along this shared-use space.

Internal Layout
Notwithstanding the above concerns, for completeness, the LHA will provide further information on what would be required should the Local Planning Authority wish to proceed with the application to stage two.

Lancashire County Council has detailed Estate Road Specification and Creating Civilised Streets guidance, which outlines the design criteria for estate roads and expects all developments to be built to these standards, even if they are to remain private. Given that the site lacks direct connection to the adopted highway, the site cannot come forward for adoption and will likely remain private for its lifetime.

The internal carriageways should retain a width of 5.5m throughout the site and be provided with 2m footways on both sides, it is noted that the carriageway and footways shown on the site plan provided do not meet these standards; these shall be widened throughout at the technical details stage.

At the technical detail stage, swept path analysis shall be provided showing an 11.2m refuse vehicle using the internal carriageway and turning area to ensure the design of the development is appropriate for the largest vehicle expected to access the development on a regular basis.

Parking
Notwithstanding the above access concerns, should the application be granted, at the technical details stage, the LHA would expect the proposed development to comply with the LHAs parking guidance as defined in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

The LHA expect private drives to have a minimum width of 3.2m where they are used for vehicular access and pedestrian access to a property and have the minimum dimensions for a standard off-road parking bay, which is 2.4m wide by 5m long. Where the parking bays are adjacent to walls, fences and similar obstructions, it is recommended that the drives have a minimum clear width of 0.6m, to provide additional room to open the doors.

The LHA would also remind the applicant that the recommended minimum internal single garage size to be 6x3m, and this includes integral garages. Where garages are smaller than the recommended minimum internal dimension of 6 x 3m they should not be counted as a parking space and the applicant should provide an additional parking space for each garage affected.

Drainage
Notwithstanding the concerns stated above, the applicant, if permission is granted, will be required to submit a drainage strategy as part of a future application, it is expected that all new access points connecting to the highway maintained at public expense feature drainage at the access point to prevent surface water being discharged onto the network. Consent does not give approval to a connection being made to the County Council's highway drainage system. The applicant is further advised that the highway surface water drainage system must not be used for the storage of any waters from adoptable United Utility surface water systems or any private surface water drainage systems.

Sustainable Transport
The LHA are aware that the site's closest bus stops are located within 400m of the centre of the site. The bus stops are on Ribchester Road, primarily serving route 45, providing connections between Preston and Blackburn. The service is an hourly service and is subsidised by Lancashire County Council.

However other local amenities sit outside of LHA's Decide and Provide guidance on preferred walking distances. The nearest convenience store is approximately 1,600m from the centre of the site, recommend walking distances are 200m for a local shop. The local primary school, Salesbury C.E Primary School, also falls outside of the LHA's Decide and Provide guidance on preferred walking distance of 600m. The local primary school is approximately 800m for the centre of the site. Notwithstanding this, given the constrains in providing footways along Vicarage Lane, future children and parents of the site, should it be developed, would be required to share carriageway space at peak travel times when travelling to school in the mornings.

As local facilities and amenities sit outside of preferred walking distances, there is a view that the development would have some private vehicle dependencies.

Notwithstanding the concerns previously raised, should development come forward at this location, the site shall enhance its sustainable transport options to actively encourage and support sustainable transport use. The development must include covered and secure cycle storage to ensure adequate parking provisions and to promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transport.

In addition, the development is expected to incorporate at least one electric vehicle (EV) charging point per dwelling to further encourage sustainable travel choices. In line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance on Electric Vehicle Charging in Residential and

Non-Residential Buildings, charge points must deliver a minimum power output of 7 kW and be equipped with a universal socket capable of charging all types of electric vehicles.

Public Right of Way
The site is bound by Public Right of Ways, to the North lies Footpath FP0346018 and to the West, Bridleway, BW0346027. The Public Right of must not be obstructed during the proposed developments. The granting of planning permission does not constitute the diversion of a Definitive Right of Way. The applicant should be advised to contact Lancashire County Council's Public Rights of Way section by email on PROW@lancashire.gov.uk, quoting the location, district and planning application number, to discuss their proposal before any development works begin.

The applicant must be certain that they have private vehicular rights along this public path before driving on it either during construction or for subsequent access. Without private vehicular rights or permission from the owner it is a criminal offence to drive a motor vehicle on the public path.

Conclusion
Given the above information the LHA is of the view that significant further evidence would be required to show that a safe, suitable and deliverable means of access could be secured to serve the proposed development. Significant uncertainty remains regarding land ownership, access rights, highway widening, visibility provision, drainage modifications and pedestrian infrastructure. The LHA is not satisfied that Vicarage Lane at this time is capable of safely accommodating the additional traffic generated by the proposal without substantial off-site improvements, and there is no evidence that such works can be secured or delivered.

Yours sincerely

Kate Walsh

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