PLANNING STATEMENT

OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR UP TO 123 HOUSES; DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING HOUSE (74 HIGHER ROAD) AND FORMATION OF ACCESS TO HIGHER ROAD.

LAND AT HIGHER ROAD, LONGRIDGE

FOR AND ON BEHALF OF: VH LAND PARTNERSHIP

OCTOBER 2016
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INTRODUCTION

1. Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by VH Land Partnership to submit a planning application on their behalf for a residential development on land off Higher Road in Longridge.

2. In this statement we will demonstrate that the proposal comprises sustainable development, which complies with national and local planning policy and which, accordingly, should be supported by the Council.

APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3. The site lies at the eastern end of the built up area of Longridge. It is located to the north-east of the junction of Higher Road with Blackburn Road/Dilworth Lane (B5269), and is to the rear of houses and bungalows fronting Higher Road. The surrounding area to the north, west and south is mainly residential in character, with a caravan park to the north east beyond Tan Yard Lane. The land becomes more open to the east and includes the two Spade Mill reservoirs.

4. The application site measures approximately 6.5 ha. The main part of the site comprises open fields in agricultural use with a number of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and other boundary features, generally in poor condition. The site also includes an existing house, 74 Higher Road. The site slopes down from the north/north-west to the south/south-east. A large pond is situated to the north of the site off Tan Yard Lane.

5. Open fields between the southern boundary of the site and Blackburn Road/Dilworth Lane are the subject of planning permission 3/2015/0688 for approximately 195 houses.
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6. This application seeks permission in outline for the development of the land for residential purposes. Approval is also sought for the location of a new access to the site to be formed onto Higher Road. All other matters (including appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) are reserved for future approval.

7. The application includes the demolition of an existing house, 74 Higher Road to facilitate the provision of the access to the site. The new access would serve the whole site.

8. The development will also incorporate the provision of areas of public open space and landscaping and would incorporate a number of open SUDS basins, all part of an integrated approach to green infrastructure provision, as shown on Sten Architecture’s Masterplan proposals SK03, which accompanies this application. The Masterplan and the accompanying Green Infrastructure Strategy explore how key landscape buffers, green links and areas of open space could be incorporated within the site.

PLANNING HISTORY

9. There is no relevant planning history on the site.

Recent decisions on planning applications for residential development in Longridge

Land to north of Dilworth Lane (Taylor Wimpey) – immediately adjacent to the south-east boundary of the site

10.3/2015/0065 – Outline planning application for the development of up to no. 195 dwellings with all matters reserved, save for access from Dilworth Lane. Planning permission was issued on 31 March 2015. The permission is subject to a s106
agreement which covers phasing, affordable housing, and contributions towards open space, education, highways, travel plans and sustainable transport.

11.3/2015/0688 – Application for detailed approval for appearance, landscape, layout and scale (reserved matters following outline planning permission 3/2015/0065 for up to 195 dwellings with access from Dilworth Lane). Approved 13 November 2015.

Land west of Preston Road (JWPC)


Land east of Chipping Lane, Longridge (BDW Trading Ltd)

13.3/2014/0764 - Development of up to 363 homes including affordable housing and housing for the elderly, relocation of Longridge Cricket Club to provide a new cricket ground, pavilion, car park and associated facilities, new primary school, vehicular and pedestrian access, landscaping and public open space, with all matters reserved except for access. Approved 29 October 2015. Permission subject to s106.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

14. A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council in respect of the proposed residential development on the application site. The Council responded on 6 July 2016 setting out relevant policies and providing comments in respect of the principle of development, visual amenity and other matters together with a list of submission requirements.

15. The pre-application advice concluded that the proposal for 160 dwellings on the site would not be acceptable. The main reason for concern was expressed as being that the proposal would amount to a surplus of about 14% above the overall requirement for Longridge and that such a surplus would undermine and cause harm to the
development strategy and be contrary to the development plan. This matter is addressed in detail later in this statement. In a meeting held prior to the pre-application response, the council’s Urban Design Officer offered comments regarding the potential visual impact of the proposal. This matter has been specifically addressed by this application as part of the integrated approach to landscaping and green infrastructure and has informed the production of the masterplan.

**PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

16. Local planning authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In order for this planning application to be approved it must satisfy as far as possible the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF adopted March 2012) and the relevant policies of the Council’s Core Strategy (Adopted Version).

**Development Plan**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy Adopted 2014**

17. The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014 and forms the central document of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Ribble Valley. Due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

18. One of the Council’s Strategic Objectives, as set out at 3.12 in the Core Strategy is “To increase the supply of affordable and decent homes in the borough to help meet identified needs.” A further Objective at 3.13 seeks to “Ensure a suitable proportion of housing meets local needs.”

19. The following Key Statements are considered to be of relevance to the determination of this application:
   Key Diagram - identifies Longridge as a Principal Settlement
   DS1 – Development Strategy
The first SHMA was adopted in December 2008. The document focuses on the type and tenure of housing available in the borough, whether there is a surplus or shortfall of housing (and of which type) and what actions should be undertaken in the future to ensure that there is sufficient suitable housing in the borough to match the needs and aspirations of residents. The SHMA also focuses on the issue of affordability and if further provision needs to be made to meet the required need. This document was updated in 2013.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2013
21. The first SHLAA undertaken by Ribble Valley in 2008 underwent various stages of public and stakeholder involvement. Since a pre-Issues and Options consultation that took place in April 2007, sites for consideration in the SHLAA were submitted to the Council for consideration in the exercise. In March 2008 a final call for sites exercise was undertaken which marked the end of site submission. Comments received were then considered and a final SHLAA report was published in November 2009. An update of this document was published in 2013.

**Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley - Adopted January 2012**

22. This sets out the Council’s position that “Everyone living in the Ribble Valley should have the opportunity of a decent and affordable home.” This document seeks to address not only the issue of affordability in the borough but in addressing the identified housing need gives priority to the needs of the elderly.

**National Planning Policy**

23. The main national planning policy guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

24. The adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012 means that it is now the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making and replaces a substantial number of documents previously in place. “The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.”

25. Paragraphs 11 – 16 of the NPPF highlight the presumption in favour of sustainable development confirming that “planning law requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making and therefore
proposed development that accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

26. Importantly, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states:

“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.”

27. For plan-making this means that:

- local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
  - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

28. For decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission, unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
  - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

29. Paragraph 14 clearly spells out the Government’s presumption in favour of allowing sustainable development unless the adverse impacts of doing so would be very significant.
30. Paragraph 15 states:

“Policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.”

31. Paragraph 17 says that one of the core principles of planning is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. It also states that planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed; should promote mixed use developments; and should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

32. Section 6 of the NPPF is headed “Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes” and sets out the Government’s policy in respect of housing delivery. There are various relevant paragraphs within Section 6 which we will quote and comment upon below.

33. Paragraph 47 states:

“To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should:

- use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;
- identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a
record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;

- identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- for market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target; and set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances."

34. Paragraph 49 states that

“Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In particular it states that “Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.”

35. The importance of good design is emphasised in paragraph 56. “The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.”

36. Paragraphs 57 and 58 require housing developments to be of a high quality design that function well, create a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; and are visually attractive. Paragraph 60 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through
unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness."

37. Paragraph 61 states: “Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

38. A presumption in favour of development is a well established planning principle that is indicated in Paragraph 187 which says “Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”

39. The NPPF requires LPAs to consider housing applications in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the LPA cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

40. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was launched on 6 March 2014. It was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which included a list of the previous planning practice guidance documents cancelled. The PPG provides planning guidance on a range of planning matters and supplements the policies contained in the NPPF.

New Homes Bonus scheme

41. In addition to changes in policy, the Government has introduced a number of incentives to encourage new homes to be built. A key incentive is the New Homes Bonus Scheme whereby local authorities are awarded a bonus council tax payment for six years on completion of every new dwelling. The proposal subject of this
application would clearly support the council in obtaining this additional bonus payment.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

42. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take action to boost significantly the supply of housing. The first step in such action is for local planning authorities to “use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, in as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework”.

43. The second step is for local planning authorities to “identify and update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under-delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% to achieve the planned supply.

44. Ribble Valley’s Housing Land Availability Schedule April 2016 sets out that at the time of publication the Council had a 5.36 year supply. This supply figure had dropped from 5.67 years in October 2016. As part of this submission we have not sought to challenge the council's housing land availability position. It is however noted that the appellant in appeal reference APP/T2350/W/16/3154410, relating to residential development at Preston Road Longridge, does make such an assertion. The appellant argues that the council has over estimated the total realistic housing land supply and, has in fact, only a 3.71 year supply.

45. It is evident however that, even if the council can demonstrate that it has more than a 5 year supply, its supply is on a declining trajectory and is anyway getting close to a ‘five year only figure’. Furthermore the council currently has a substantial shortfall (of 860 dwellings) in completions. Whilst it has over the past couple of years delivered in excess of its annual requirement, this is simply a slow catching up with
an historical poor rate of delivery. It is also notable that the council has delivered only 433 affordable homes since 2008.

46. What is apparent is that the district needs more housing, including affordable housing.

47. Even if the Council is correct and is currently able to demonstrate more than a five year supply, there is no requirement to stop granting planning consents once the required level of supply is achieved and it is clear from other applications and appeals that where sustainable residential development is proposed it should be supported. In appeal reference APP/Y2810/A/14/2228921 (New Street, Weedon Bec, Northamptonshire, the Inspector concluded on the housing land supply that:

"On the evidence before me at the Inquiry, I therefore conclude that the Council could deliver some 5.2 years HLS. It follows that the exclusion of policies for the supply of housing, in NPPF 49, should not apply. Nevertheless, the numbers in the JCS are not intended to be a maximum and the aim of policy in NPPF 47 is to boost significantly the supply of housing. It follows that just because the Council can meet its targets does not mean that more housing should necessarily be refused. Rather, the scheme would help the Council achieve what it recognises to be a challenging trajectory."

48. The development that is proposed is sustainable and the application should be judged against the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires local authorities to approve sustainable development that is in accordance with an up-to-date plan.

49. The Council’s Development Strategy set out at Key Statement DS1, states that the majority of new housing will be concentrated within an identified strategic site located to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59, and Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. The scale of planned housing growth will be managed to reflect existing population size, the availability of, or the opportunity to provide facilities to serve the development and the extent to which development can be accommodated within the
local area. Locationally, the proposed development is in accordance with this Key Statement.

50. Longridge is a suitable and sustainable location for housing development and the proposed development would make a significant contribution towards meeting the Council's housing needs. Whilst the site lies outside the present urban extent of Longridge, the settlement boundary as defined on the relevant Districtwide Local Plan Map was not saved and as such no longer applies. The Council's response to the pre-application submission states that “For information, Proposed Interim Settlement Boundaries (PSB) have been established as part of the evidence base for the Housing and Economic Development DPD. The boundaries cannot be preempted at this stage. In this instance, the site is adjacent to the PISB but outside it and as such would be identified as an area of open countryside”. The response goes on to suggest that the site might be considered appropriate for development at some time. The PISB has not yet been adopted and as such carries little weight at this stage. It is not clear whether the adjacent site to the south would be within the PISB but in any case the proposed site is located between a recently consented scheme and the existing residential properties fronting Higher Road and in this respect would not encroach into the open countryside.

51. CS Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations states that in the 'Principal Settlements', such as Longridge, development should consolidate, expand or round-off development, so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement. It is our clear view that the site is closely related to the main built up area of Longridge, that the development would consolidate the existing built up area of Longridge, and that the development is appropriate in terms of scale to the settlement. We establish later in this statement that the development would sit well in the landscape.

52. Table 4.12 in the CS sets out that the total number of houses required for Longridge over the Plan period is 1160. With commitments up to March 2014 of 327, the residual number of houses required for Longridge is 633. The Council's pre-application response sets out that the latest housing figures (as at September 2015) show a requirement for 960 dwellings for Longridge, 175 have been constructed and
there remained a requirement for 430 dwellings. It goes on that since then there have been further permissions granted in Longridge leaving a residual requirement of 27 units.

53. The application site and adjoining land to the south have been promoted through the SHLAA and its suitability for housing has been assessed by the Council. These sites, referred to as ‘Site 382 - Land between Dilworth Lane and Higher Road’ are considered by the Council to be available, achievable and deliverable for housing with a potential capacity of 660 dwellings. Due to interest from more than one landowner, the SHLAA considered the site (SHLAA Ref. 382) to be deliverable within the 11-15 year period. However, the application site together with the site to the south that already has consent are available within that time. The site represents an opportunity for sustainable development and permission should be granted without delay.

54. Whilst the proposal would exceed the residual requirement of 27 units suggested by the Council, this is not a maximum figure. The 'requirement' for Longridge is a target figure used to demonstrate how in general terms the overall minimum requirement for housing (to meet need) could be distributed around the district. It is therefore clearly a minimum target figure. It should be noted that in his report on 'The Examination into the Ribble Valley Core Strategy', the Inspector said (in paragraph 65):

"However, the Council also proposes to delete from Key Statement H1 the reference to the housing target as being “at least” 5,600. But there is nothing in the evidence to justify this change. Indeed, it seems to me that treating the figures as a minimum target reflects the Government’s broad aim of boosting significantly the supply of housing. As such, this revision is not needed to make the Plan sound."

55. The only outstanding questions therefore are: first, whether Longridge can accommodate this level of housing provision, and second, whether the approval of this additional housing would harm the council's distribution strategy. On the first issue, there is no doubt that Longridge has the infrastructure to support this sustainable development. On the second issue, it is important to note that the
development would provide much needed housing, adding to the variety of housing in Longridge, improving choice and contributing to meeting housing need (not least through the provision of affordable housing). It can be accommodated by the settlement. It would be beneficial to the settlement and, with the level of housing proposed, it would not hamper beneficial housing provision elsewhere in the district.

Meeting housing need – affordable housing and housing for older people

56. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF seeks to ensure the delivery of affordable housing in new housing schemes, in accordance with objectively assessed needs.

57. Policy H3 of the Council’s Core Strategy sets out the Council’s policy and threshold for providing affordable housing in new developments. In Clitheroe and Longridge, developments of 10 or more dwellings are required to provide 30% affordable housing on site. Reduced provision to a minimum of 20% will only be considered where this is clearly supported by viability evidence.

58. The Council’s own non-statutory policy paper, ‘Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley’ (January 2012), updates the 2009 ‘Affordable Housing: Memorandum of Understanding’, seeks to address the affordability of housing in the Borough and of meeting the housing needs of older people.

59. The Strategic Objectives set out above state that everyone in Ribble Valley should have the opportunity of a decent and affordable home. The Council is committed to helping local people who cannot afford to buy or rent homes on the open market, and a key corporate ambition is to match the supply of homes in an area with its identified housing needs.

60. A key priority of the Sustainable Community Strategy to 2013, Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy is therefore to maximise the supply of affordable housing. The document also sets out the requirements for meeting the needs of older people in the Ribble Valley, given the ageing population which is projected to increase by 49% in the next 15 years. This means that for developments of 30 or more units, 15% of
the units must be provided for the elderly and of that 15%, a minimum of half of the units (7.5% of a total scheme) must be made affordable and included within the affordable offer of 30%. The remaining elderly accommodation could be sold at market value.

61. The proposal set out in this application is consistent with the requirements of the adopted Core Strategy and the ‘Addressing Housing Need in Ribble Valley’ policy paper. A S106 Agreement will form the basis for the affordable housing provision and housing for older people to be provided as part of this scheme, as set out in the draft Heads of Terms accompanying this application. The proposed development would deliver 30% affordable housing, including accommodation for older people, in accordance with planning policy. This could be a mix of onsite provision and financial contribution to offsite provision. The proposed tenures would be agreed with the Local Authority and would be secured through an appropriately worded legal agreement. It is proposed that the precise tenure of these units will be agreed with the local authority during the determination of the application and confirmed through the completion of the s106 Agreement.

62. In this respect the development is in accordance with the Council’s development plan.

**Access and Highways**

63. The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which examines the potential transport impacts of the proposed development. All details of the layout and access are 'reserved' matters, to be dealt with at a subsequent detailed stage in the event of outline planning permission being granted. The low density/large plot size of the layout will enable more than sufficient parking to be provided for each dwelling.

64. The Transport Statement concludes as follows:-

- The surrounding area has a wide range of facilities and attractions to serve the residents' needs within walking and cycle distance
- There are no local highway capacity or safety issues along the road frontage.
• The site access improvement meets the site’s needs and allows 2 way car based flows.
• The site is accessible in nature.

65. The Transport Statement demonstrates that the proposal is in accordance with Policy DMI2 of the Core Strategy

**Landscape impact**

66. The application has had regard to the issues raised by the council in its pre-application enquiry response in relation to landscaping. This proposal follows a 'landscape-led' approach. Further work, following the pre-application advice, has enhanced this approach and has incorporated the following key features:

• The mass of built form has been further broken down throughout the development.
• More emphasis has been given to ‘green fingers’ and further drawing the green infrastructure routes in the adjacent Dilworth Lane scheme into these proposals.
• Ensuring that there are green routes, not just roads.
• Introducing a new amenity green space at the heart of the design. This marks the arrival point into the site.

67. The application is supported by the Longridge Landscape and Visual Assessment Report, prepared by re-form. This includes a detailed assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The Summary Conclusion of that report states:

"Overall it is considered that the proposals can be integrated without substantial harm to the character of the landscape context. The landscape has some capacity to absorb such development due to the presence of other larger scale residential developments that have been completed or are approved to be delivered within the wider Longridge area.

This is countered by the ‘slight’ to ‘moderate to substantial’ visibility of the development and its proximity to existing housing. The development will be visible
from a number of settings such as local B roads and public rights of way, although the majority of these views are long distance and have only slight visual effects. The most adverse effects are within close range, and are limited to the northern and western edges of the site where residential properties address the site. However, some of these visual effects can be reduced through landscape mitigation as described throughout this report.

68. The application demonstrates that the site could be developed for residential purposes without significant harm to the landscape qualities of the area. Any harm would be mitigated by the implementation of a significant landscape strategy for the site, including areas of public open space as well as structural landscaping, buffer areas, SUDS ponds, green streets. The proposal is in accordance with Policies DMG1 and DME2.

Design and layout

69. The application is in outline form, therefore, at this stage, we have concentrated on the general principles of design, which are set out separately in the accompanying Design and Access statement. What should be made clear, however, is that high quality homes are intended for this development. The design will seek to complement the characteristic forms of existing housing in the locality in terms of scale, density, massing and use of materials. The design has also sought to ensure an appropriate relationship to existing nearby properties. There would be adequate spacing and interface with existing properties and there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residents. The development would incorporate substantial landscaping and would provide public open space.

70. The high quality development would be in accordance with Policy DMG1.

Impact on residential amenity

71. The site is mainly surrounded by agricultural land, but does adjoin the neighbouring houses fronting Higher Road along the north-western boundary of the site. These existing properties have reasonable sized rear gardens. The indicative layout
indicates that the proposed houses would be set well away from this boundary with their rear gardens abutting this boundary. As such it is submitted that the development as proposed would not result in any undue harm to the privacy or amenity enjoyed by the occupiers of properties along Higher Road. There would be a landscape buffer along the south-eastern boundary of the site which would serve to mitigate against any adverse impact from the development on the new houses proposed as part of the approval on the adjacent site.

72. The proposed new access will increase the level of pedestrian and vehicular activity at this point on Higher Road in close proximity to adjacent houses. The width of the access, space to the side and opportunity for landscaping will mitigate against this disturbance to some degree and the situation would be similar to many in an established residential area.

73. The development would be in accordance with DMG1 in respect of amenity.

Ecology

74. The application is accompanied by an ecological appraisal carried out by Envirotech. The appraisal concludes:

“Bats are known to occur in the local area, there was however no conclusive evidence of any specifically protected species regularly occurring on the site or the surrounding areas which would be negatively affected by site development following the mitigation proposed.

75. The vegetation to be cleared has a low ecological significance in the local area; poor semi-improved grassland offers few opportunities for native species.

76. The protection of trees on the site boundary and landscaping will promote structural diversity in both the canopy and at ground level and will encourage a wider variety of wildlife to use the site than already occurs.

77. Contractors will be observant for protected species and all nesting birds. Should any species be found during construction, all site works should cease and further
ecological advice should be sought with a view to a detailed method statement and programme of mitigation measures being prepared and implemented."

78. Mitigation and improvement measures are suggested, including planting and habitat enhancement including bird and bat boxes; SUDS and improved hedges; and recommendations in respect of working practices during the development of the site. It is suggested that all of these measures could be dealt with satisfactorily by way of planning conditions attached to the development. The proposal is in accordance with Policies DMG1 and DME3.

Open space and sports facilities

79. Policy DMB4 – Open Space Provision of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy sets out that any housing development of a site over 1 ha will be required to provide adequate and useable open space on site. The proposed development as shown on the submitted masterplan and green infrastructure strategy will incorporate areas of public open space. These would best be located to the eastern side of the site close to the pond and bridleway, Tan Yard Lane. As such it will be useable and accessible in accordance with the relevant policy in the Core Strategy.

80. The Council is in the process of undertaking an assessment of need in respect of open space and sports facilities in the Borough. This is at an advanced stage and identifies specific areas for improvement in respect of the quality of these facilities. A contribution will be provided, in agreement with the Council, to mitigate against the impact of the proposed development on open space and sports facilities in Longridge and to improve the quality of provision.

Trees

81. The application is accompanied by an arboricultural impact assessment carried out by Bowland Tree Consultancy Ltd. The assessment advises that 40 individual trees, 13 groups of trees, two woodlands, and ten hedges were surveyed. Ten trees, one group, and the two woodlands were allocated a high retention value, ten trees and three groups were allocated a moderate retention value, and 11 trees, eight groups,
and the ten hedges were allocated low retention values. In addition, nine trees and one group were categorised as unsuitable for retention regardless of the proposed development. The proposal is projected to require the removal of one high quality tree, two moderate quality trees, one low quality tree, and three low quality groups.

82. The assessment concludes that it is projected that the necessary development related hedge loss can be adequately offset by the inclusion of extensive new tree and hedge planting, within the proposed areas of public open space. It also concludes that the provision of new tree and hedge planting as part of the development’s landscaping can be conditioned to an outline planning approval.

Flood risk and drainage

83. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment to ascertain the extent to which the site might be subject to flooding and also to assess the effects of the development on local surface water drainage conditions. The development site is located within Flood Zone 1 for the purposes of flood risk from rivers and watercourses. This is the lowest risk area and as such the site is in a sequentially preferable location for residential development in flood risk terms.

84. The proposed drainage strategy addresses the surface water discharge from the proposed development and incorporates open ponds as part of a SUDS drainage system for the development.

Response to climate change

85. The scheme would be a sustainable form of development in the wider context of the National Planning Policy Framework. No details are yet available at this outline stage to demonstrate how this might work in practice in terms of design and construction. This is an issue that would need to be fully explored as part of the detailed design of the scheme.

Planning obligations
86. Planning Practice Guidance sets out that planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Such obligations must meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. These tests are set out as statutory tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and as policy tests in NPPF.

87. Policies for seeking planning obligations should be set out in a local plan.

88. Discussions with regard to any planning obligations that may be identified by the Council as being necessary to make the development acceptable will be carried out during the consideration of the application. A draft Heads of Terms is submitted in support of this application.

The Planning Balance

89. If the appellant in the Preston Road appeal case is correct, that the council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, paragraph 49 of the NPPF would be brought into play. It states that “Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.” In such a circumstance, the council's policies relating to the supply of land for housing would not be considered up to date and the presumption in favour of development set out in paragraph 49 would carry considerable weight in the determination of this application.

90. As it is our assertion that, in any case, this proposal does not conflict with the relevant development plan policies, the main material consideration to be taken into account in determining this application is its acceptability as sustainable development, in accordance with the objectives of both the NPPF and the development plan. The application should be determined with full regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal has been
demonstrated to be in accordance with the development plan and should be approved without delay in accordance with para 14 of NPPF.

91. It has been demonstrated above that the proposal would contribute to the overall housing supply of Ribble Valley in a location identified for new housing growth and is in accordance with the development plan. It would also contribute to the diversity and mix of housing provision in the locality, contributing to meeting the housing needs of the area. The site is in a sustainable location, with appropriate access to a range of educational, social, cultural and economic facilities.

92. With reference to the environmental, economic and social considerations set out in the NPPF, the following may be summarised:

Environmental

93. The proposed development would secure a high quality design, respecting and enhancing the character of the area. It would have an acceptable relationship to neighbouring properties, with no adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers. It would provide new public open space and substantial landscaping.

94. The proposal would enhance the landscape. Ecological compensation and enhancement measures as set out in the accompanying Ecological Appraisal will enhance site biodiversity.

95. The development would have no impact on designated or non-designated heritage assets including any archaeological remains.

96. The proposed access arrangements are acceptable and the development could be safely accommodated on the site without adverse impact on the local highway network.

97. The development would not result in any adverse impacts in terms of contamination/pollution, flood risk, air quality or noise. Appropriate arrangements would be made for site waste management.
98. The proposed development would provide high quality housing built to a high standard of energy efficiency, contributing to tackling climate change.

Economic

99. The proposed development would contribute to the local economy in the following ways:
   - enhanced construction activity retaining and providing jobs, as well as supporting other local businesses and contractors
   - increasing the local population, contributing to future expenditure, assisting local businesses and services
   - increased contribution to Council Tax generally, and, specifically, increasing the amount of New Homes Bonus received by the council

Social

100. The proposed development would make a much needed contribution to the supply of housing in Ribble Valley. It would add to the availability, diversity and mix of housing, including affordable housing and housing for older people.

CONCLUSION

101. Key Statement DS1 of the Core Strategy identifies Longridge as one of the principal settlements to provide the majority of new residential development in the Borough.

102. Key Statement DS2 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in NPPF and sets out that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

103. This statement and the other supporting documentation accompanying the application clearly demonstrate that the proposed development is in accordance with
policies in the development plan. It represents 'sustainable development' when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. There are no material considerations that would indicate that the presumption in favour of granting planning permission is outweighed, rather, the NPPF lends support to the proposal.

104. Planning permission should therefore be granted for the development proposed.