

**PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**

**UPDATE REPORT – PLANNING APPLICATION 10/17/0578**

**Land off Yew Tree Drive and Whinney Lane**

**Blackburn**

**Lancashire County Council Highways response to transport assessment addendum, dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

“Having read through the subsequent information supplied by Croft in response to my original concerns (email dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June) all the points raised have been addressed with the exception of the likelihood of traffic arriving from or turning north onto Whinney Lane. In this respect it is a matter of opinion whether or not this route would be deemed a viable alternative to Mellor and beyond. The existing peak flows travelling north on Whinney Lane do not suggest that this route is attractive for rat-running and with development in place there is nothing in the modelling to suggest that the operation of the Whinney /Yew Tree junction and the potential for delays will encourage any significant north bound movement from/to the proposed development.

On this basis the Highway Authority would have no further concerns regarding the proposed development”.

**Blackburn with Darwen Highways response to transport assessment addendum, dated 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

The transport assessment compiled has reviewed all access arrangements being proposed by the development. The assessment is robust in the nature and agrees with the masterplan TA that was adopted by the Council in 2016.

The primary access is served from Yew Tree Drive A6119 through a priority junction. This operates well within capacity with the secondary access served off Whinney Lane also operating well within capacity.

Travel plans are to be developed for the site highlighting multi-modal routes available. The primary access will serve the vast majority of the site with access to the M6 via A677 and also connecting in with the new traffic signal junction for the Lancashire Enterprise Zone at Salmesbury.

Internal site layout is designed to counteract any would be “Rat Runners” and supplemented with traffic calming, which is acceptable and desirable.

Further works are earmarked to reduce the speed limit along Yew Tree Drive with a provision of various off site highway works which will provide the dual carriageway environment with a different sense of place. There will be a detailed signage strategy to provide directions utilising the primary route network.

Lancashire County Council as neighbouring highway authority has been consulted in terms of the development/impact and has raised no objections. Comments received by Dave Bloomer, Highways Development Control, Lancashire County Council dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017:

**Further objection (1) from Dr Fitzer, received 13<sup>th</sup> November;**

Dear BwD Planning Committee

With respect to the Wainhomes planning application. I note that the planning report suggests that (section 3.5.12)

"..there is highly unlikely to be any traffic that would travel either to or from the site towards the north of the site on Whinney Lane towards Mellor. This direction of travel has no major destination other than Mellor itself, which is a very small village with very few attractors for travel to and from the site...."

This point is factually incorrect. Mellor Lane (that runs through Mellor), attracts approximately 20,000 vehicles a week according to LCCs latest traffic survey (I have a copy if anyone would like to check). The reason for such high numbers is that Mellor is slap bang in the middle of a rat-run to BAe and the M6, from Blackburn and beyond. An entrance onto Whinney Lane to serve the proposed housing development will no doubt encourage vehicles to use Mellor as a rat-run to BAe and the M6. Given the size of the housing development, I would assume that some form of traffic control would be required to control access to the site from Yew Tree Drive. If so, why would anyone wait to join the main road, when they can easily use the Whinney Lane exit to cut through Mellor?

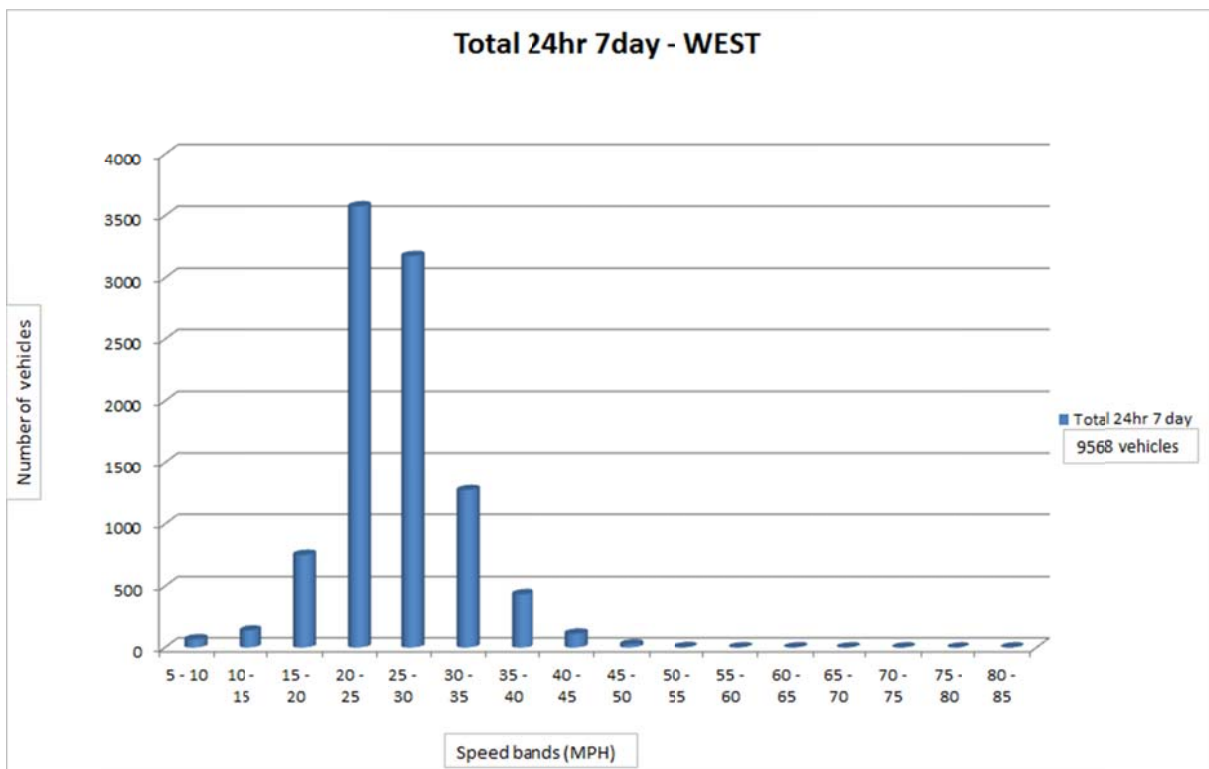
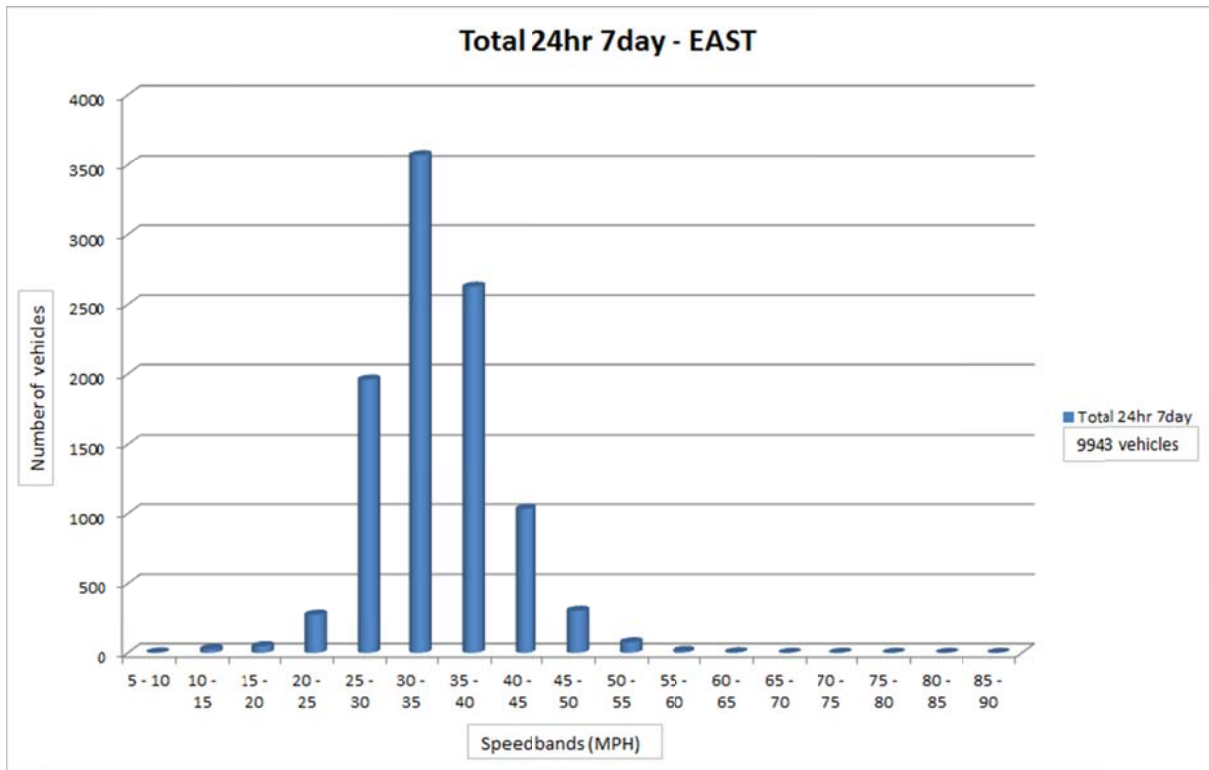
To conclude, I would like to strongly suggest that the BwD planning committee reconsider the exit onto Whinney lane or at the very least angle the junction to make it very difficult to turn right and travel north up Whinney lane (or return via Whinney Lane).

**Further objection (2) from Dr Fitzer, received 14th November;**

Dear BwD Planning Committee,

For those members of the Committee that attended the Whinney Lane site this afternoon, thank you for taking the time to listen to our views. As promised, further to my previous email, please find the enclosed pictures of an angled junction on a road similar to Whinney Lane. The road in question is a minor road into the village of Crawley, Winchester. The entrance/exit arrangement ensures that it is difficult for traffic to turn left out of the Arqiva (Crawley Court) site or right into it, thus discouraging traffic from using Crawley as a rat-run. The angled junction concept proves very effective and I believe could easily be implemented for the Whinney Lane access. I have also included the speed data and total vehicle usage for Mellor Lane, taken close to the Whinney Lane junction. The high number of vehicles serves to illustrate how Mellor village is already used as a rat-run and not a small village terminus as the planning report suggests. The LLC data also highlights that the majority of the vehicles travel between 8-9am and 3-6pm (i.e. the rush hrs). The current junction arrangement/plan onto Whinney Lane, taken from the Wainhomes plan, will only serve to increase the traffic through the village and thus increase the potential for traffic related accidents and issues.





**Further objection from LCC Ward Councillor, Alan Schofield, received 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

My concern as County Cllr all along has been on the potential impact of up to hundreds of cars on the minor roads and country lanes immediately to the north & then west of the application site (and the wider masterplan), particularly in Mellor parish - and how to mitigate what may otherwise exacerbate as a 'rat run'.



Rather than encouraging more traffic on those roads, shouldn't the outbound and return traffic be encouraged to use the available and nearby 'A' roads?

I appreciate that the professional advice of BwDBC officers - and the views/observations of LCC Highways Development Control officer (June 2017) included in the report, at 3.5.11.

In the next section – 3.5.12 – the applicant's transport consultants, Croft Transport Solutions, have demonstrated a lack of local knowledge in their challengeable statements. They seem to think Mellor Lane to Mellor village is a cul-de-sac, ignoring through traffic both ways beyond, via Mellor Brow.

So what do I suggest please for the Committee's consideration?

If a secondary access point for vehicles is necessary in respect of the number of intended dwellings per the application (272), and if that is not practicable to also be on the A6119, then my suggestion for the type of vehicle access on Whinney Lane is - positioning the access at an angle, and having an official No Right Turn sign.

BwDBC planning officer recommendation is to "APPROVE" and "subject to a Section 106 Agreement relating to the provision of off-site highway works to facilitate the development, affordable housing contribution for off-site provision and education" .

Therefore, can the contribution via s106 agreement please cover – or be increased slightly to cover – the above suggestion for the secondary (Whinney Lane) access for vehicles?

**Highway based objection from Ms Emma James, received 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

Dear BwD Planning Committee,

I am writing to you because I am concerned that traffic from the proposed new estate will use a new junction on Whinney Lane as a rat run to drive up to Mellor Lane and reach BAE systems/the M6 in one direction or Ramsgreave railway station (through trains to Manchester)/A666 in the other.

Routes using the lanes are popular with drivers because they are faster than the main road network. As you know, high volumes of traffic already use Mellor as a through route so traffic calming measures have had to be introduced on Mellor Lane (joining with Whinney Lane).

Whinney Lane northbound is narrow and unlit. It has no pavements and a blind bend. Increased traffic will endanger pedestrians and also cyclists who use this BwD recommended cycle route. Keeping Whinney Lane safe will, of course, benefit both new and existing residents.

Please will you consider ways of encouraging traffic to flow from the estate into the main road system. These might include: not building an exit onto Whinney Lane; or angling the exit so that right turns, into Whinney Lane northbound, are deterred.

**Highway based objection from Mr Chris Heys, received on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017, (this was an email sent directly to all the Committee Members on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017):**

**Dear BwD Planning Committee,**

I am a resident of Whinney Lane, between Yew Tree Drive and Mellor Lane.

I have followed a lot of correspondence throughout this planning application and am particularly concerned at the highways reports and the opinion that may be formed from reading incorrect information.

There is a report in circulation that I understand is from Highways that states that Whinney Lane and Mellor becoming a rat run for the new housing residents is 'a matter of opinion' – I am categorically confident that this is incorrect and attached is my reply to David Bloomer of LCC Highways, which spells out the facts behind my informed opinion.

Please consider that our children used this unpaved/narrow lane with a blind bend, to access their school travel services in addition to local amenities and sports in Mellor village on a regular basis. Generally their use is always at the peak traffic travel times and is 'hair-raising' enough with current volumes. We do not allow them to cycle on the lane anymore as we consider it is dangerous enough just walking.

A number of incidents/accidents have occurred recently but I am without all the facts on this, but as recent as yesterday a commercial vehicle collided with the wall adjacent our property. There was another 6 months ago where the railings, 2m from our front door were taken down with a vehicle and we have had a van overturn

Please can you ensure that in any of your decision making, it is made a condition that:

1. Site construction traffic will not use Whinney Lane
2. The final scheme will either, omit the entrance/exit onto Whinney Lane, or ensure that it is only accessible from Yew Tree Drive end thus keeping the increased potential volumes from this narrow country lane

Please can you acknowledge receipt of my email and I trust you will make the correct decisions for existing residents and their families throughout the process.

**Response to additional highway based objections from Blackburn with Darwen Highways & Network Manager, dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

Mellor Lane to gain access to the BAE site and M6 will be the secondary entry point with the primary focus off Yew Tree Drive . There is clearly more capacity on the primary route network via A6119 and A677 to gain access to the new BAE site entrance and via the M6 and with increased capacity comes reduced journey times to and from those destinations.

Placing a right turn restriction creates problems insofar as it is lack of enforceability, as small vehicles can still make the turn if they so desire and they will do so. Enforcement will not be carried out and increasing damage to the highway asset will be continual with an increasing cost to the highway maintenance and damage to vehicles, which in turn raises road safety risks.

The development itself is proposed to be designed in such a way to make the access to Mellor Lane convoluted with traffic calming of the internal layout within the development site, focusing the attention on the primary access from Yew Tree Drive.

Two access points clearly aids emergency services for a development of this size.

Lastly the transport assessment has assessed the site and the modelling outputs suggest that two accesses is a requirement.

Comments in relation to suggested traffic control measures:

The reality is the “Winchester access” serves a private road and as such is not part of the Highway and made to our standards. The signage is not enforceable and is below specification. You can see the overrun and damage caused by vehicles making the left turn even though they are not allowed to make it. The access road actually serves a private business and not residential estate, which in terms of transport assessment is very different in nature of outputs as the movements are not as staggered overtime and are condensed over a shorter period thus greater impact on the local network. The location of that site is very rural in nature and no primary route able to carry the additional volumes such as Yew Tree Drive i.e. limited route choice.

Additional suggested condition;

- *Scheme detailing revision to detached garage sizes, in accordance with the Council’s adopted internal space standard of 6m x 3m, to be agreed and implemented*

**General objection from Mr & Mrs Ralph, 114 Whinney Lane, Blackburn and Avalon Planning on behalf of Mr & Mrs Ralph, received 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017;**

(see attached).

The comments and objections raised in both documents have been addressed in the main report.

**Amendment to main report:**

Paragraph 3.5.43 should read:

- *Lack of places in local schools*

The Blackburn With Darwen Schools and Education Department were consulted and has confirmed that there are sufficient secondary school places to meet the pupil yield from the development. The additional pressure on primary school places necessitates a financial contribution of £860,000 from the developer that is to be directed to the expansion of education facilities in the North Blackburn area.

Gavin Prescott, Development Manager

16<sup>th</sup> November 2017

114 Whinney Lane  
Blackburn, BB2 7DL

8 November 2017

Martin Kenny  
Senior Planner  
Growth & Development Dept  
Blackburn with Darwen Council  
Town Hall  
Blackburn, BB1 7DY

Dear Mr Kenny,

**Re : Objection to planning application ref : 10/17/0578.  
Site at Land off Yew Tree Drive and Whinney lane, Blackburn.**

Please now find attached a report prepared by Avalon Town Planning on our behalf that highlights the real concerns we have about this proposed development.

We are currently in a house in a rural location with a high degree of privacy and amenity available. The proposed development completely changes the character of the locality around our house. Whilst the principle of the development is now accepted, it is the type of development proposed which we feel the application does not address and which will directly affect our amenity.

The masterplan for the site creates the impression that the development here will have a rural feel with green spaces, rural lanes, open space and leafy neighbourhoods with dwellings that typify the rural idyllic.

Those promises however have not come to fruition with this proposed scheme. The scheme proposed is overly urban in character completely out of keeping with this rural location. It also has far more houses than the masterplan envisages for the site and at a higher density than the Local Plan allocation or the masterplan guidance sets out. We feel that the developers are maximising the development area of the site without regard to the adopted guidance. The scheme is not therefore in compliance with the adopted planning policy for this site.

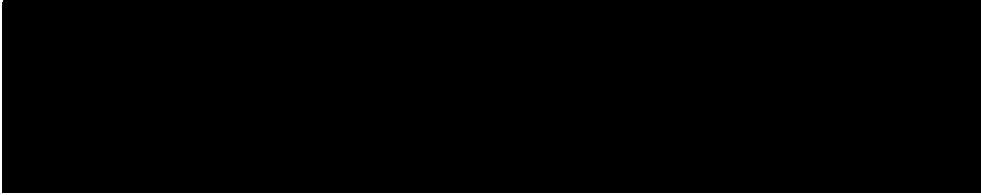
This site is a greenfield site and is the best housing site in Blackburn. The Council ought to be looking at achieving a very high standard of development and achieving a design of the site that improves the quality of life for existing residents and the residents of the development. Instead what is happening is that the developers are out to maximise and overdevelop this quality site and put development on it that is standard and achieves optimum development potential for the benefit of the developer not the residents. The attached report sets out that the number of houses proposed on this part of the site far exceeds the numbers envisaged in the masterplan and Local Plan allocation. To meet what was envisaged, the number of houses for this part of the site should be around 200, not the 272 proposed.

On matters of detail, the attached report explains the reason why we consider that plot 65 next to our house should be removed and why we take the view that more consideration needs to be given to the boundary treatment alongside our house to ensure that our privacy and amenity is maintained.



We trust the Council will take our submission seriously and ask the applicants to come up with a more suitable redesigned scheme with a far lesser number of houses and provide a development style that is a benefit to the area, not a detriment.

Yours Sincerely,



.....in the matter of

**Report of Objection to be submitted on planning application to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council that relates to: -**

**.....Residential Development comprising 272 homes, public open space, landscaping, drainage, associated highway works, infrastructure and engineering works and demolition of existing garages.**

.....site at:

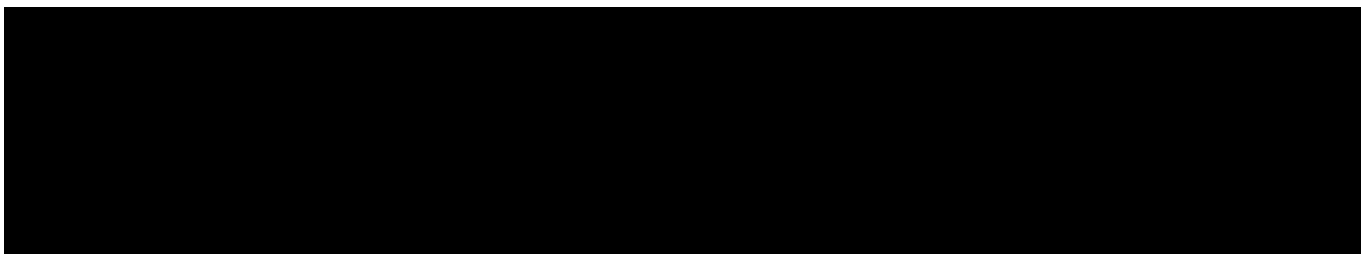
**Land off Yew Tree Drive and Whinney Lane, Blackburn**

.....reference for the Local planning Authority : -

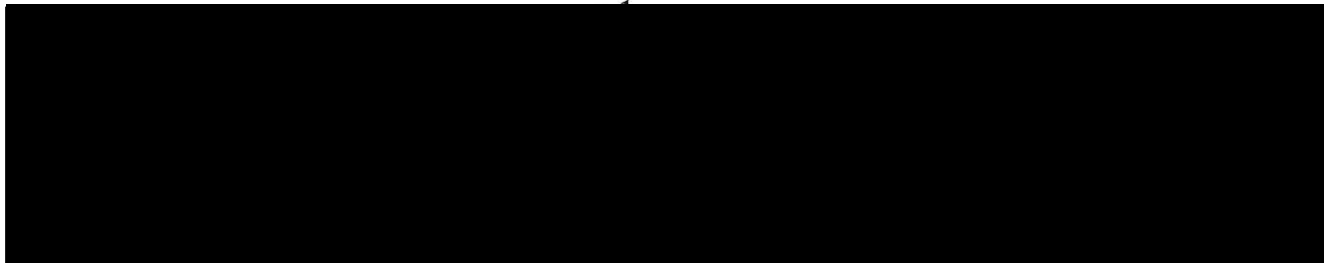
**10/17/0578.**

**Representations submitted on behalf of Mr and Mrs Ralph of 114 Whinney Lane, Blackburn. BB2 7DL.**

.....as at : **6<sup>th</sup> November 2017**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Avalon Town Planning Limited is instructed by the Mr and Mrs Ralph (the '*resident*') to lodge an objection on their behalf to the duly made planning application at land off Yew Tree Drive and Whinney Lane, Blackburn BB2 7DL submitted to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (the '*Council*'). The planning application is made in respect of the .... '*Residential development comprising 272 homes, public open space, landscaping, drainage, highway works, infrastructure and engineering works and demolition of existing garages* (the '*application*').

The resident's objection is in response to neighbour consultation on the application by letter sent by the Council dated 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 (amended). The resident has advised the Council that further representations on their behalf will be made by email dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017. The Council officer confirmed that ... '*all responses received in advance of the publication of the committee update report (commonly the day before the meeting) will be added to that report.* We understand the planning application is to be presented to the 16<sup>th</sup> November committee meeting. The resident has therefore instructed this report to be prepared with the expectation that it can be presented to that meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee.

The comments made in this report are based on the application submission plans and accompanying documents and information lodged with the Council and as made publically available on the Council's website. The comments are made independently to the resident with the express intention that they form the resident's planning objections to the application. It is not intended for any other purposes and therefore no responsibility can be accepted to any third party for the use of a part of the whole of its content. No part of this statement should be reproduced or used in any other document or circular without the prior approval of its authors as to the form and content in which it may occur, as the planning references used may not be appropriate for other purposes.

An inspection of the site and its surroundings was carried out from the resident's property on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017.

The comments of objection to the application are not intended to replace or supersede previous comments made on the application by the resident or any other interested third party.

## 2. KEY POINTS SUMMARY

Planning Policy – Policy 16 of the adopted Local Plan Part 2- Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (the ‘Local Plan’), allocates this site for residential development under site reference 16/2. The estimated number of houses to be delivered as shown in that policy is 450. That number is for the whole of the allocated site, which extends across two parts to the east and west of Barker Lane. The area of this whole site is given in Policy 16 as 28.8 hectares. This part of the allocated site relates to that to the west of Barker Lane leading up to Whinney Lane. This part of the site is 12.8 hectares in area. In the policy allocation, the 28.8 hectare area of land allocated in this site for 450 houses gives a density of 15.62 dwellings per hectare. The area of this site is 12.8 hectares. That means that the planning policy allocation for this part of the site is 201 dwellings (12.8 x 15.62). The number of dwellings proposed is 272, far above the local plan allocation. Whilst the local plan allocation explains that the total of 450 dwellings for the whole site is ‘estimated’, the degree of increase in housing numbers is far beyond what could be reasonably expected from the policy allocation. The housing density of this application is 32 dwellings per hectare on the northern part and 24.2 dwellings per hectare on the southern part, giving an average density of 28 dwellings per hectare. If that density is applied to the whole 28.8 hectare site allocation, there would be expected to be 806 new dwellings on this site. That is far beyond the numbers planned for in the site allocation of the Local Plan.

On housing numbers alone therefore, the housing allocation in the Local Plan is not met. It is noted that the masterplan allows for higher densities than the Local Plan and this is inconsistent. Where that is the case, the adopted Plan, takes priority. This leads to other significant issues as addressed below:

Compliance with the masterplan – key development condition 1 of Policy 16 of the Local Plan requires the site to *be brought forward in line with a masterplan to be produced covering the whole of the allocation*. A masterplan was adopted by the Council in February 2017. That document divides the allocated site into four areas, this area being ‘the Whinney’ and ‘Bullion Moss Fold’. The overarching approach to the development layout is stated in ‘Creating Place’ as being *permeated with gateways; spaces, squares and courtyards and building form could become looser around the rural open countryside and Green Corridor*. However, these principles are not carried through to the layout proposed in this application. There are no spaces, squares or courtyards in the development. What there is, is a repetitive standard layout design of estate road and accessways that could be repeated or taken from any housing estate. No regard therefore is paid to the site’s unique rural and edge of urban area character.



Other elements of the masterplan for this location are equally not followed through in this application. The masterplan for the The Whinney area shows a *village lane* onto Whinney lane. (figure 24 of the masterplan). There is no such lane shown on this application. That is because what is shown is an estate road with footpaths either side with table top junctions. The masterplan also shows a *gateway green*. Whilst illustrative, this part of the site is shown on illustrative diagram 24 of the masterplan as having a green square, housing squares and green corridors, none of which appear in the detailed layout submitted with this application.

Design – Policy 11 of the Plan requires all new development to have a good standard of design. This means new development must enhance and reinforce the established character of the locality. This site is not compromised because of previous change. What the layout should be providing is a transition to a rural development, reflective of the site's location. This is what is required by key development consideration 3 of Policy 16 of the Local Plan. What is actually proposed is highly urban in its layout and form by use of standard highways, footpaths and junctions and estate style layout.

Residential amenity. – proposed plot number 65 of the proposed layout appears to be 'squeezed in'. In relation to the resident, this creates problems of proximity. Whilst it is 5 metres and gable onto the resident's property, the masterplan allows for greater privacy to existing properties. As plot 65 does not appear to have any room for manoeuvre, it should be removed from the proposed layout. Further the boundary between the resident's property and the new housing site should be properly screened. This should be achieved by a decorative screen wall or similar supplemented by hedgerow or other suitable planting.

Recommendations – this site should be developed in a rural transition manner and not have standard urban estate style layouts imposed on it. This makes the development completely out of keeping with its rural setting. More open space, landscape corridors, squares and public space needs to be incorporated. To achieve this, a reduction in housing numbers and density on the site needs to be done. This is what is envisaged in Policy 16 of the Local Plan with the appropriate number of housing numbers given. If followed this would reduce the housing numbers to 201, thus allowing a better style of development. Plot 65 should be removed and the boundary treatment between the site and the resident's property should be much enhanced and screened.

### 3. THE PLANNING POLICY POSITION

The site is allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan. Policy 16 of the Local Plan sets out what that provision is. This is stated as being an edge of urban area, a site area of 28.8 hectares and to have a housing delivery of an estimated number of 450 houses. Whilst the housing numbers are estimated, this nonetheless equates to a housing density of 15.62 dwelling per hectare (450/28.8). Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise<sup>1</sup>. In the case of Blackburn with Darwen Council, there is an up to date Core Strategy, adopted in 2011 and Local Plan Part 2, also adopted in 2015. The site allocation for housing under Policy 16/2 of the Local Plan is subject to 13 key development considerations. The first of these is that a masterplan is brought forward to be agreed by the Council. A masterplan was agreed by the Council in February 2017.

In respect of housing numbers for the whole site, the masterplan continues the anticipated number of houses in its Vision where it states: *it will be an attractive place to live with approximately 450 new homes being provided... ..* The application proposes 272 new dwellings on this 12.8 hectare part of the site. That gives an average density of 21.21 (272/12.8). The whole of the allocated site is 28.8 hectares. At the density proposed, that will give a total number of houses for the site of some 610 houses. In a different interpretation of density, the housing density of this application is 32 dwellings per hectare on the northern part and 24.2 dwellings per hectare on the southern part, giving an average density of 28 dwellings per hectare. If applied to the whole site, that would mean a total of 806 new dwellings. Either way, the density proposed is far greater than that envisaged in the Local Plan or in the masterplan. Whilst the overall housing numbers in the Local Plan are estimated and the masterplan describes the total numbers as *approximately*, what the application proposes is far beyond either of those two variants. The proposals do not therefore accord with the Local Plan and are contrary to adopted planning policy. There are no material considerations put forward in the application as to why the Local Plan housing numbers allocated should not be adhered to. This overprovision causes difficulty with the implementation of the Local Plan allocations. Whilst the Local Plan Inspector accepted the development approach of accepting the need for edge of town and Green Belt allocations to allow for rebalancing the housing stock towards the provision of larger homes, an overprovision here would put at jeopardy the ability of the Council to bring forward other, perhaps less desirable sites in the urban area. The Local Plan is still focused on urban led regeneration and over provision of housing on a greenfield site would make this focus less likely.

<sup>1</sup> section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.



#### 4. THE POINTS OF OBJECTION

##### COMPLIANCE WITH THE MASTERPLAN

Key development condition 1 of Policy 16 of the Local Plan requires the site to *be brought forward in line with a masterplan to be produced covering the whole of the allocation*. A masterplan was adopted by the Council in February 2017. Being a requirement of the adopted Local Plan, any application should follow the principles laid down in it. However, the masterplan does not have development plan status and where any conflict between the masterplan and adopted planning policy arises, the adopted planning policy takes precedence.

The vision of the masterplan sets out that development of this site will ‘.....*build upon the unique character of the rural setting.....*’. This is to be done by providing approximately 450 new homes with a significant proportion of larger family housing; a strong local identity; maximise views with a landscape framework and network of green spaces; a permeable layout with linkages to the wider area; a ‘green corridor’. (section 2.1 ‘Vision’). In terms of housing layout, it is stressed that the development should provide a ‘semi-rural character’ (section 2.4.1 Housing Layout). None of these essential characteristics of the masterplan are shown in the application for the following reasons.

The character area in the masterplan for this part of the site is described as ‘The Whinney’ and Bullion Moss Fold. The Illustrative Masterplan Framework at figure 24 of the masterplan shows several features that are not on the application plans. First, there is a ‘gateway green’. This is not shown on the submitted layout. Second, there are open space squares and housing squares. These are not provided for in the application layout plan. Third, there is a ‘village lane’ through the site leading from Whinney Lane. There is no village lane with greenery around on the submitted layout plan.

What is proposed in the application is not reflective of the masterplan aims of creating a strong local character building on the unique character of the rural setting. The proposed layout is highway dominated and literally has a continuous ring road loop around the site for through traffic. The streets are not designed as pedestrian places, such as envisaged in Manual for Streets (MFS) guidance. What the proposed layout shows is a suburban estate without character, such as typifies many criticised large scale housing developments. MFS advises that the layout of buildings and places should be considered first and not be dictated by carriageway alignment. The proposed application does not display any signs that such guidance has been applied and this is obvious from the rigid approach to street layout and road hierarchy around which the layout is designed.

## **DESIGN**

The policy support for development to achieve good design is fundamental to the aims of achieving sustainability objectives. National guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework points out at section 7 that the Government places great importance to the design of the built environment. The main aims include : adding to the overall quality of the area; establishing a strong sense of place; incorporation of green and open space; reflect the identity of local surroundings; create safe and accessible environments and are visually attractive. These objectives are carried through to the policy objectives of the adopted Local Plan Part 2 at Policy 11, which is one of the core policies of the plan. That policy places great emphasis on enhancing and reinforcing the established character of the locality.

There is therefore strong policy support for achieving high quality design on this site. This is important as the site extends the built area into a rural setting. Thus, a rural 'feel' to the development would be expected and is what is envisaged in the masterplan guidance. However, the details of the proposed layout are 'urban' in nature as evidenced by the 'estate' type of development to be provided. Whilst there are a number of different house types proposed, this is insufficient to lead to a differentiation of character areas in the development, thus leading to the 'urban sprawl' type of mass housing development proposed. The masterplan seeks to achieve four character areas on the site. There is no, or very little, distinguishment between the masterplan objectives to create 'green leafy neighbourhoods' and higher densities close to the urban area. A similar building layout and form is used throughout the development leading to a monotonous layout which is highly estate dominated.

The layout proposed maximises the development potential of the site by providing for maximum housing numbers and this is at the sacrifice of good design. It is already established that the proposed housing numbers are in excess of what the masterplan envisages. If the masterplan numbers are followed there would be a reduction in housing numbers thus allowing for the green leafy neighbourhoods envisaged in the masterplan by allowing for more open space and green routes, also envisaged by the masterplan. To provide for this, the proposed housing numbers should be reduced from the proposed 272 to 200.

## **RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

The resident's property currently enjoys a high level of amenity and has a rural surrounding. The proposals will surround their property with estate development, completely changing that established



character and amenity. Plot 65 on the proposed layout is of particular concern. That plot appears to be 'squeezed in' as it is on a corner triangular plot and angled and not lined up with those proposed plots adjacent. This makes it appear out of keeping and because it is squeezed in it heightens the sense of enclosure to the resident's property. Plot 65 is approximately 5.5 metres distant from the resident's property and gable onto it. Section 2.4.2 of the masterplan states that development should '*... ..seek to give more generous privacy distances to existing dwellings*'. Because of the squeezed in nature of plot 65, we cannot see how it can be relocated to improve privacy distances and therefore *plot 65* should be removed from the development.

The submitted layout provides for a hedgerow along the northern boundary with the resident's property, based on the retention of the existing. However, the existing hedgerow is not good in that it is sparse with many gaps and does not provide a good screen. This is probably due to the site's conditions which are not good for traditional hedgerows to become established. Given the resident's property's current rural location this is not particularly problematic presently. However, the mass building of new housing next to it changes its environs. To secure privacy, the northern boundary should be provided with more secure treatment, perhaps with a decorative screen wall or similar supplemented with hedgerow planting. That treatment would provide a more secure environment for the resident's property. Conditions could be imposed on any planning permission granted requiring a scheme for this boundary treatment to be approved.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The masterplan provided for this site that follows on from the policy requirements of the adopted Local Plan Part 2 creates the impression that the development of this site will be high quality, with lots of green space, a rural village environment with houses that have a rural typology (section 2.5 of the masterplan). However, this idyllic is not what is proposed. What is proposed is density maximisation with standard house types, an estate road development layout that does not adapt the principles of design policies or MFS. The numbers of houses on the site needs to be reduced to reflect what was envisaged in the masterplan, which is about 200 houses for this part of the site, not the 272 houses proposed. To reflect the adopted development plan policies and masterplan for this site, a redesign of the proposed layout is required. Otherwise the masterplan is very misleading. In relation to the resident's property, plot 65 should be removed and a more substantial boundary treatment proposed along the northern boundary of the resident's property to provide for privacy.