

WYRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

STATEMENT BY WYRE BOROUGH COUNCIL ON THE INSPECTOR'S MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

MATTER 8

Allocations – Great Eccleston and Over Wyre including, Stalmine, Hambleton and Pilling

Issue 1 – Identification of Sites

1.1 ***Is the approach within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to assessing the suitability and screening of sites in the settlements robust?***

1.1.1 Yes, it is.

1.1.2 The approach within the SHLAA to assessing the suitability and screening of sites at Great Eccleston and Over Wyre including, Stalmine, Hambleton and Pilling is the same as the approach in relation to all other settlements in Wyre. As summarised in the paragraphs below, the SHLAA provides a robust and detailed analysis of potential land supply for residential development in the various settlements including Great Eccleston and Over Wyre. The SHLAA has utilised appropriate data sources and conducted a detailed but proportionate analysis which has produced sound outcomes.

1.1.3 The methodology employed in the SHLAA¹ is broadly consistent with national planning practice guidance “Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment”². Any deviations are explained and justified at page 6 of the SHLAA. Pages five to 15 of the SHLAA describe the study methodology which is based on two main elements:

- a) *Site identification* – sites were identified from a range of sources – the 2010 SHLAA, two call for site exercises held by the Council in 2012 and 2014, the Issues and Options consultation of 2015, and internal survey work.
- b) *Site assessment* – after an initial assessment of planning status, sites were assessed in three stages – two suitability stages (basic parameters and detailed assessment) and an availability stage. At each stage sites considered not to be suitable took no further part in the process (they were “sieved out”). Availability drew on information from the call for sites exercises and an extensive process of engagement with known landowners. Sites with a planning permission were assumed to be suitable and available.

1.1.4 To inform the assessment of site suitability, the Council captured information on a wide range of factors for each site, including policy constraints, ecological and environmental designations, environmental matters such as the presence of contaminated land, agricultural land classification, heritage features, potential land

¹ Submission Document Library Reference ED089

² Submission Document Library Reference ED014

use conflicts and physical constraints. This process was informed by the use of GIS-mapping, site visits and consultation with internal technical officers.

1.1.5 Sites “sieved out” of the 2010 SHLAA were reassessed as part of the process.

1.1.6 The SHLAA at pages 15 – 18 describes the assessment outcomes. It shows that 344 sites were identified through the initial assessment. Of these, 11 were completed housing developments and 168 sites were deemed to be unsuitable for residential development. A further 21 sites were considered to be suitable but availability could not be confirmed. Overall, including sites under construction and with a planning permission, the assessment identifies a suitable and available supply of 144 sites with an estimated capacity of 10,751 dwellings. As noted at page 17 of the assessment, the vast majority of this supply lies outside of settlements in areas of countryside. The SHLAA does not use the countryside designation as a reason for sieving out sites – the designation of countryside being a matter for the emerging local plan. It is also explained at page 17 that the SHLAA does not have regard to the Local Plan evidence on highway matters³.

1.1.7 The SHLAA identifies a total of 90 sites in the Over Wyre settlements (including Knott-End and Preesall Hill) and Great Eccleston as summarised below (excluding five completed sites at the time of the assessment):

	Category	Sites
1	Under construction*	4
2	Planning permission**	6
3	Not suitable (basic parameters)	44
4	Not suitable (detailed assessment)	4
5	Not available	5
6	Suitable and available	22
	TOTAL	85
7	All final sites (sum of 1, 2 and 6)	32

* Includes technical starts. ** includes sites where planning permission is pending the signing of a legal agreement (aka. Minded to Approve)

Issue 2 – Land west of Great Eccleston (SA3/3)

2.1 ***Would any of the following issues in isolation or cumulatively lead to a conclusion that the allocations would not comprise sustainable development:***

- (i) the scale of the allocations relative to the size of the village;***
- (ii) the effect on the character and appearance of the village and the surrounding countryside;***
- (iii) the availability of services and employment within or close to the village, including school places and health services;***
- (iv) choice of modes of travel to access services and jobs;***
- (v) the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;***
- (vi) the highway network and parking provision in the village;***
- (vii) the creation of inclusive and mixed communities;***

³ Submission Document Library Reference ED094a

(viii) flood risk and drainage;
(ix) biodiversity impacts;
(x) heritage assets; and,
(xi) climate change implications.

2.1.1 No, they would not.

2.1.2 The Site Allocations Background Paper⁴ establishes the rationale for the allocation of SA3/3 – Land West of Great Eccleston (pages 71 to 74). It describes a process of identifying a “long list” of potential sites and a consideration of site attributes, including constraints. It describes the fact that SA3/3 is the most suitable site for allocation, being free of any significant constraints and available for development. It is the Council’s position that the development of site SA3/3 will comprise sustainable development.

The effect on the character and appearance of the village and the surrounding countryside

2.1.3 The allocation consists of open fields extending south west from the western edge of Great Eccleston. The development of site SA3/3 will change the character and appearance of the settlement and immediate surrounding countryside from certain view points and on approach from Copp Lane. The Local Plan includes policies, (CDMP3, CDMP4 parts 14-16), to ensure that development is sensitively designed that respects the character and appearance of the settlement and the surrounding countryside. The specific allocation policy SA3/3 requires that notwithstanding existing planning permissions (see above) development should come forward through a masterplan with the development forming an organic extension to the village, with particular attention given to the nature and quality of boundary treatments.

The availability of services and employment within or close to the village, including school places and health services –

2.1.4 Great Eccleston is classed as a “Rural Service Centre” in the Local Plan settlement hierarchy (which reflects the extent of the service offer and public transport connectivity. Within and close to the village, residents have access to primary education provision (two schools), a health centre with pharmacy (open six days a week), dentist (open five days a week, Monday to Friday), convenience shopping, recreation provision (including children’s play area), churches, community halls and public houses⁵.

2.1.5 It is inevitable, as with many rural villages in Wyre, that residents will mainly access employment outside the particular settlement. However, to support the local economy, the Local Plan makes provision for 43 hectares of employment land across the borough, which includes the allocation of 3.92ha of land within the rural area. The allocation of 1 hectare of employment land at Great Eccleston will provide rural employment opportunities in the local area. There is also a small existing employment area in Great Eccleston at Back Lane/The Weind. Great Eccleston also provides easy access to the A586 and to employment opportunities

⁴ Submission Document Library Reference ED012a

⁵ Submission document Library Reference ED114

in Poulton and Thornton and beyond to the A6 with access to employment opportunities in Garstang and Catterall.

- 2.1.6 The Council has considered the implications for infrastructure requirements from individual development proposals as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁶ and reflected in individual allocation policies. Allocation Policy SA3/3 requires additional primary education provision, a re-located health centre and a neighbourhood centre incorporating a village hall and a convenience store.

Choice of modes of travel to access services and jobs

- 2.1.7 Great Eccleston is readily accessible to several regular bus services that are routed along the A586 and Copp Lane and provide access to Poulton-le-Fylde (some every 10 minutes), Blackpool, Lancaster and Preston. School bus services serve Garstang High School and Mysercough College.

The loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land –

- 2.1.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)⁷ advises that local planning authorities should seek to locate development on poorer quality agricultural land in preference to areas of higher quality. The NPPF does not require that high agricultural land should not be lost or that exceptional circumstances should be demonstrated. The NPPF however requires that local authorities to boost significantly the supply of housing and to make provision in their Local Plans to meet their needs in full, (paragraph 47).
- 2.1.9 Wyre is a borough with a very limited supply of previously developed land. Inevitably agricultural land is required to meet identified needs. As noted under Matter 1 the distribution of development in the Local Plan is influenced by constraints and in particular highway constraints.
- 2.1.10 Some 50% of Site SA3/3 north of Copp Lane lies within an area of Grade 2 (very good quality) agricultural land. The remainder of the allocation lies in an area of Grade 3 agricultural land. Wyre contains some 8,367 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land and 12,088ha of Grade 3 agricultural land⁸. In this context, the impact of the on the supply of Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land by the development of SA3/3 is minimal in the context of the overall supply. It should be noted that most land outside the Forest of Bowland AONB and the urban areas is either Grade 2 or 3.
- 2.1.11 Although the preference is that the least-best quality is developed, this is not always possible and a balance has to be struck between development needs and the loss of agricultural land. It should be noted that the Local Plan does not fully meet its objectively assessed need for housing.

⁶ Submission Document Library Reference ED004

⁷ Submission Document Library Reference ED013, paragraph 10

⁸ Submission Document Library Reference SD005a, Appendix A, page 17

The highway network and parking provision in the village

2.1.12 The development of SA3/3 creates an opportunity to provide an alternative route from the south of the village to the A586 avoiding the centre of the village. This is covered in the Key Development Considerations in Policy SA3/3.

2.1.13 With regard to car parking, the allocation includes the site of 90 dwellings currently under construction which includes additional village car parking with 26 spaces. Furthermore the inclusion of a health centre, community hall, and convenience store will include the provision of appropriate car parking to be determined as part of the masterplan.

The creation of inclusive and mixed communities

2.1.14 The allocation of SA3/3 will create a mix of new market and affordable housing and support the development of new social infrastructure in the form of additional school provision, a relocated health facility, village hall and convenience shop.

Flood risk and drainage

2.1.15 The National Planning Framework⁹ supports the policy of directing development to areas of least flood risk. Site SA3/3 lies wholly within Flood Zone 1. Parts of Great Ecclestone to the east and north lie within Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is the Council's view that the decision to direct development to an area of the village with the lowest probability of flooding is a sound strategic approach.

2.1.16 As part of its evidence base, the council has produced a detailed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 2)¹⁰. This found no reasons on the basis of flood risk and drainage to suggest that the site should not be allocated. It should be noted that the Environment Agency and United Utilities have not objected to the allocation of SA3/3. Policy CDMP2 - Flood Risk and Surface Water Management will apply to the development of the site. Furthermore the allocation policy requires that residual surface water should drain into the River Wyre via existing watercourses.

Biodiversity impacts

2.1.17 Although the development of an agricultural field may have some ecological impact, the land in question carries no national or local environmental or ecological designation. Policy CDMP4 Environmental Assets parts 10-13 (habitats, species and ecological networks) will apply to the development of the site and identified impact will need to be mitigated.

2.1.18 The Local Plan is supported by a Habitat Regulation Assessment¹¹ (HRA). Table 11, page 50, identifies no likely significant effects. However as a precautionary principle due to the scale of the allocation, the potential for a project level HRA is identified within the key development considerations. In-combination, mitigation is proposed for site allocation SA3/3 to require provision of home owner packs. This is due to the sites location within 3.5km of Morecambe Bay European Site and

⁹ Submission Document Library Reference ED013

¹⁰ Submission Document Library Reference ED111 a-i, ED112 and ED113

¹¹ Submission Document Library Reference SD006, paragraph 101

potential in-combination effects from potential increased recreational pressures. The HRA conclusions has been agreed with Natural England and this mitigation is identified in the Policy SA3/3 KDCs.

2.1.19 Advice has also been taken from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit in preparing the Plan¹². Allocation Policy SA3/3 requires that the development should consider ecological impact and be mitigated.

Heritage assets

2.1.20 The site includes a Dovecote which is a Scheduled Monument and Grade II listed building. The KDCs in Policy SA3/3 require the setting of the Dovecote to be protected and this will be a key matter for the masterplan. It is noted that planning permission was granted for residential development on the land immediately opposite on the other site of Copp Lane.¹³

Climate change implications

2.1.21 Climate change implications are not relevant only to Great Ecclestone but relevant across the Borough. They has been an important consideration in the balance in preparing the Local Plan. The NPPF deals with climate change specifically in chapter 10 with reference to flood risk and coastal change, a low carbon future, landscape and biodiversity. As noted in the Council's Response to Preliminary Matters (paragraph 20)¹⁴ climate change is a multi-facet matter and covered by a number of policies in the Local Plan which will apply in the development of the site.

2.1.22 Climate change matters were also considered through the Sustainability Appraisal¹⁵.

2.1.23 The allocation is located in a sustainable location with access to local services and public transport. SA3/3 requires the development of the site to be supported by a landscape and green infrastructure strategy, including play facilities, public open space and pedestrian/cycle connectivity.

2.2 *What is the up to date position in relation to applications/permissions affecting the site(s)?*

2.2.1 The position as of 31 March 2018 is (see plan at Appendix A):

- Parcel A – development of 90 dwellings and village car park under construction (planning reference 16/00973).
- Parcel B – outline planning permission granted on appeal 1 March 2018 to Metacre Ltd for up to 93 dwellings and up to 850 square metres of D1 floorspace on some 5.40 ha, planning reference 16/00650.
- Parcel C – no planning applications or approvals.

¹² Submission Document Library Reference ED100

¹³ Heritage England reserved their position at outline stage and raised no objection at reserve matters.

¹⁴ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.001b

¹⁵ Submission Document Library Reference SD005a

2.3 Are the extent of the allocations and their capacity appropriate?

2.3.1 Yes it is.

2.3.2 The allocation has been made to ensure that development remains within the limit set by the highway capacity which for Great Eccleston is 500 dwellings over and above commitments as of February 2017¹⁶ and to ensure that boundaries are clearly defined using features in the landscape (such as field boundaries) and the highway network.

2.3.3 On 6 September 2017 the council were minded to grant outline planning permission (pending the signing of a S106 agreement) for 22 dwellings on land at Great Eccleston outside of the allocation (planning reference 16/00651). As of 31 March 2018 the permission has not been issued. As the site is pending a permission it is classed as a contributing to the 500 dwelling highway capacity. A modification is proposed to Policy SA3/3 to reduce the capacity by 22 dwellings to 568 dwellings and the contribution expected to be delivered within the Plan period to 428 dwellings.

2.3.4 The allocation covers 33.70 hectares with a capacity of 568 dwellings (as proposed to be modified). Of this, 90 dwellings are under construction (see above), leaving the remainder of the allocation to accommodate 478 dwellings. At an assumed 30 dwellings per hectare, an additional 15.93 hectares of land (net) is required to deliver 478 dwellings. This requirement is met by the allocation as follows:

Total site area = 33.70 hectares

Less 1 hectare for employment = 32.70 hectares

Less 4.63 hectares under construction (90 dwellings) = 28.07 hectares

Assumed net developable area at 60%¹⁷ of 28.07 = 16.84 hectares

2.3.5 Based on these assumptions, the allocated area exceeds the required land take by 0.91 hectares, although this is sensitive to assumptions on density (a lower density requires a higher land take for the residential component). In addition it is noted that 40% of the residential development area (11.23 hectares) is put towards social and physical infrastructure provision including primary school, health centre, community hall, convenience store and green infrastructure. The 40% figure allows sufficient flexibility for matters such as Sustainable Drainage Systems and highway works to be fully incorporated into future development. It also allows for the setting of the Grade II listed Dovecote that lies within the site to be properly allowed for in the future development. As such, the Council is of the view that the allocation is appropriately made.

2.4 Would the requirement for a masterplan to be agreed at planning application stage prejudice delivery of the site (or part of it)?

2.4.1 No it would not.

¹⁶ The planning permission for 90 dwellings on part of the site was already a commitment at February 2017.

¹⁷ Submission document Library Reference ED089, page 8

- 2.4.2 Within the context of meeting development needs, it is important that development takes place in a manner that respects and integrates well with existing settlements and creates high quality environments for future occupiers and current residents. The requirement for a masterplan allows flexibility in determining the distribution of permitted uses across the site.
- 2.4.3 The process for requiring the preparation of a masterplan is set out in the Local Plan¹⁸ paragraph 9.1.5-9.1.6. For SA3/4, it is also important to ensure the required housing and employment development is brought forward in a comprehensive and coherent manner. Bringing the site forward within the context of an overall masterplan will avoid piecemeal development which could undermine the successful delivery of the whole site and prejudice the delivery of key infrastructure, including social infrastructure and highway works.
- 2.4.4 The preparation of a master plan requires all landowners to work together and involve stakeholders. Although masterplans will be prepared by developers/landowners, the Council expects to have a role in facilitating the process and providing a steer. The Council will proactively work with landowners to bring forward the required master plans. A masterplan will assist in the smooth progression of subsequent planning applications. Masterplanning is therefore considered to provide beneficial outcomes for the development of a site and the development management process.

2.5 Are all the Key Development Considerations, including the requirement for a through route to the A586, necessary and clear to the decision maker?

- 2.5.1 Yes, they are.
- 2.5.2 The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary question¹⁹ in relation to the key development considerations and proposed modifications to improve the format of the policies.
- 2.5.3 The KDCs as proposed to be modified address relevant matters which must be taken into account in preparing the masterplan and the details of a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers and the local community.

Issue 3 – South Stalmine (SA1/9)

3.1 Can development of the allocation be mitigated so that it would not lead to severe transport/highway and flooding impacts?

- 3.1.1 Yes it can.
- 3.1.2 The highway evidence provided by Lancashire County Council (ED094a) at page 95 to 97 considers the highway network in the vicinity of the allocation. It identifies no significant local constraints such that a severe transport/highway impact can be identified. The highway evidence identifies a constraint at the A588/A585 junction to the south of Stalmine beyond Hambleton which has directly influence the overall

¹⁸ Submission Document Library Reference SD004

¹⁹ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b, paragraph 42

highway cap for this part of Wyre. The allocation, which includes a site of 77 dwellings currently under construction, fits within the highway cap.

- 3.1.3 The National Planning Framework²⁰ supports the policy of directing development to areas of least flood risk. The subject site lies wholly within flood zone 1. Parts of Stalmine to the north and east lie within flood zones 2 and 3. It is the council's view that the decision to direct development to an area of the village with the lowest probability of flooding is a sound strategic approach.
- 3.1.4 As part of its evidence base, the council has produced a detailed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 2)²¹. This found no reasons on the basis of flood risk and drainage to suggest that the site should not be allocated, although a history of surface water flooding was identified on part of the site²². It should be noted the Environment Agency and United Utilities have not objected to the allocation. Policy CDMP2 - Flood Risk and Surface Water Management will apply to the development of the site. Moreover Policy SA1/10 requires that residual surface water should drain into the River Wyre via existing watercourses, with off-site works required.

3.2 *Are all the Key Development Considerations necessary and clear to the decision maker?*

- 3.2.1 Yes, they are.
- 3.2.2 The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary question²³ in relation to the key development considerations and proposed modifications to improve the format of the policies.
- 3.2.3 The KDCs as proposed to be modified address relevant matters which must be taken into account in preparing the masterplan and the details of a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers and the local community.

Issue 4 – North of Garstang Road, Pilling (SA1/10)

4.1 *Are all the Key Development Considerations necessary and clear to the decision maker?*

- 4.1.1 Yes, they are.
- 4.1.2 The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary question²⁴ in relation to the key development considerations and proposed modifications to improve the format of the policies.
- 4.1.3 The KDCs as proposed to be modified address relevant matters which must be taken into account in preparing the masterplan and the details of a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers and the local

²⁰ Submission Document Library Reference ED013, paragraph 101

²¹ Submission Document Library Reference ED111 a-i, ED112 and ED113

²² Submission Document Library Reference SRFA reference SFRA_29_05, ED112

²³ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b, paragraph 42

²⁴ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b, paragraph 42

community.

Issue 5 – Land at Arthurs Lane, Hambleton (SA1/12)

5.1 What is the up to date position in relation to applications/permissions affecting the site(s)?

5.1.1 The site has the benefit of outline planning permission for up to 165 dwellings granted to Gladman on 13 February 2018 (reference 16/00217).

5.2 Can development of the allocation be mitigated so that it would not lead to severe transport/highway impacts?

5.2.1 Yes it can.

5.2.2 As stated above, the site has the benefit of outline planning permission for up to 165 dwellings. Highway matters have been considered by the highway authority. The decision notice is conditioned such that off-site highway works are provided to make the development acceptable.

5.3 Are all the Key Development Considerations necessary and clear to the decision maker?

5.3.1 Yes, they are.

5.3.2 The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary question²⁵ in relation to the key development considerations and proposed modifications to improve the format of the policies.

5.3.3 The KDCs as proposed to be modified address relevant matters which must be taken into account in preparing the masterplan and the details of a planning application. They provide a useful reference for developers and the local community.

Issue 6 – Employment Sites at Preesall Hill and Out Rawcliffe (SA2/1 and SA2/2)

6.1 Should these allocations be dealt with as commitments rather than allocations?

6.1.1 No they should be not.

6.1.2 The Council has responded to the Inspector's preliminary question²⁶ in relation to the Preesall Hill and Out Rawcliffe employment allocations.

6.1.3 It should be noted that site SA2/2 has planning permission covering the whole allocation and the change of use to B8-Use has been completed during 2017/2018 monitoring year. When the allocations are updated in line with the 31 March 2018 monitoring, allocation SA2/2 will be deleted through a modification.

²⁵ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b, paragraph 42

²⁶ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b, paragraph 72

- 6.1.4 The Council considers it to be important to include Preesall Hill as an employment allocation to meet need within the rural area.

Issue 7 – Infrastructure

7.1 Will the infrastructure to support the scale of development proposed in the settlements be provided in the right place and at the right time, including that related to transport, the highway network, health, education and open space?

- 7.1.1 The Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)²⁷ that sets out the level of new or improved infrastructure required to deliver the Local Plan. It has been produced through a proactive and on-going process of engagement with all infrastructure providers, including those involved in delivering health, education, utility and highway infrastructure.
- 7.1.2 Open space is recognised as a part of the borough’s infrastructure. The Local Plan, through Policy CDMP4 and HP9, provides the policy basis for the provision of Green Infrastructure, both on and off site as appropriate.
- 7.1.3 Section 23 of the IDP sets out a schedule of infrastructure provision, with costings and delivery agencies identified where known. This includes the need for additional primary school places at Great Eccleston and Hambleton, and a relocated health centre and a neighbourhood centre in Great Eccleston. These requirements are reflected in the relevant allocations. Allocation SA1/9 South Stalmine makes provision for a primary school (if required – see the council’s response to the Inspector’s preliminary questions²⁸ on the site allocation). The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers to ensure that the right infrastructure will be delivered in the right place and at the right time.

Issue 8 – Delivery

8.1 Are the assumptions about the rate of delivery of houses from the allocations realistic?

- 8.1.1 Yes, they are.
- 8.1.2 The updated housing trajectory is appended to the Council’s statement on matter 4, this shows the anticipated delivery rates for each allocation. There is nothing to prevent sites coming forward in a different manner to that set out in the trajectory, for example if a site is selling faster than expected a faster build out rate could be achieved. Equally, there may be a delay in a site commencing if unanticipated issues that require to be addressed emerge in early survey work.
- 8.1.3 The trajectory is a representation in time of expected delivery using annual monitoring and information received from land owners/agents/developers.²⁹ The outcome of the monitoring and contact with owners/agents/developers has informed the application of the standard assumptions on build out rates set out in

²⁷ Submission Document Library Reference ED004

²⁸ Examination Document Library Reference EL1.002b

²⁹ Agents / developers and landowners were contacted in May / June 2017. A similar exercise has not been possible in 2018.

paragraph 7.27 in the Housing Background Paper.³⁰ The Council has applied planning judgement on available information as to what is considered an average likely lead in and build out rate.

³⁰ Submission Document Library Reference ED010

