

## Wyre Council Local Plan Examination

### Hearing Session 10

#### **Matter 8: Allocations: Inskip**

**Hearing Session Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018**

#### **Submission on behalf of Metacre Ltd**

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1. This submission is made for and on behalf of Metacre Ltd concerning Hearing Session 10, Matter 8 'Inskip'. The submission is made with respect to the Examination in Public (EiP) *Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions* (April 2018) and supplements the representations lodged with Wyre Council on the *Local Plan, Publication Stage* (September 2017). The two should be read together. This submission is particularly concerned with issues 2, 3 and 4.

#### **Issue 2 : Inskip Extension (SA1/13)**

*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;*

2. It is noted that there have been concerns raised regarding the scale of the proposed allocation at Inskip in comparison to the size of the village. However, NPPF paragraph 52 confirms that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns. This is considered appropriate to Inskip, where the allocation will be facilitating an extension to the primary school, the provision of a convenience store, village green and public open space. The need to direct development to settlements which do not suffer from the same level of constraints experienced elsewhere within the Borough is also a material consideration.
3. The Settlement Study (ED114) identifies Inskip as the fourth largest of the 10 identified Main Rural Settlements (MRS) in terms of population size, behind Pilling (1,070),



Barton (940) and Stalmine (870), but ahead of the other 6 settlements which have populations ranging between 315 and 405.

4. Two of the MRS (Pilling and St. Michaels) are significantly impacted upon by flood zones 2 and 3, with the entire settlements being sited within the flood risk area. Four other MRS (Bilsborrow, Bowgreave, Preesall Hill and Scorton) are also constrained by flood risk. Whilst Barton is not affected by flood risk, it is located within the A6 severe restriction zone which includes localities which have a high chance of contributing to congestion at Junction 1 of the M55. Barton is the closest settlement within Wyre to this Junction and LCC have concluded that no further development should be allocated to any localities within the severe restriction zone, other than that which has been previously considered by the LCC. The remaining three MRS comprise Inskip, Forton and Stalmine. As expanded upon in iv) below, once the recently enhanced bus service is taken into account Inskip would be ranked higher than both Forton and Stalmine in the Overall Settlement Ranking at Appendix 5 of the Settlement Study. Bearing in mind that Stalmine is to receive 216 dwellings from completions, sites with planning permission and new allocations (Local Plan table 4) and Forton is to receive 511 dwellings, the proposal to direct a total of 289 to Inskip is considered reasonable. Despite flood risk constraints Bowgreave is also to receive 246 dwellings. Both Bowgreave and Forton have smaller populations than Inskip.
5. In this context, and given the wider development constraints affecting the Borough and the benefits to be secured from the development, it is considered that the size of allocation SA1/13 is appropriate and sustainable.

*ii) the effect on the character and appearance of the village and the surrounding countryside;*

6. The allocation is contained by existing natural features together with existing and approved housing. Development would extend the village in a form consistent with the 20<sup>th</sup> century growth of the village, following the cessation of a former army camp to the north of Preston Road and more recent 21<sup>st</sup> century commitments. The delivery of public open space including a proposed village green, reinforced hedgerows and field pond enhancements, together with boundary landscaping would all give beneficial effects. The impact of the development would diminish over time as the landscaping establishes; softening the development edge. It is considered that whilst the allocation would have some impact on the character and appearance of the village and

surrounding countryside, this is the case for any major settlement extension, but with an appropriate masterplan / landscaping scheme there would not be a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the village or the wider countryside.

*iii) the availability of services and employment within or close to the village, including school places, health services and convenience store;*

7. Inskip has an existing MUGA and bowling green, primary school, two churches (only one is identified in the settlement study), a public house youth club and community hall, whilst outline planning permission was granted in 2017 for a convenience store<sup>1</sup> (yet to be delivered and not counted in the Settlement Study). Inskip is also ranked 15<sup>th</sup> out of 30 settlements in the settlement Study with regards to employment.
  
8. Allocation SA1/13 will further enhance the sustainability of Inskip by including land for the extension to the primary school, together with a village green and significant areas of public open space. Furthermore, and as highlighted below, the allocation is within walking distance to bus stops with an hourly service to the Rural Service Centre of Great Eccleston, which has a bus journey time of just over 10 min, as well as the larger towns / cities of Poulton-Le-Fylde, Blackpool, Preston. The allocation is also approximately 5km from Great Eccleston centre, placing it within cycling distance.

*iv) choice of modes of travel to access services and jobs;*

9. The Institute of Highways and Transportation (IHT) 'Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot' suggests that around 80% of walk journeys and walk stages in urban areas are less than 1 mile (1.6km) with the average length of a walk journey being 1km (0.6 miles). With regards cycling, it is generally accepted that cycling can substitute car trips for journeys of 5km. The existing and proposed services and jobs within the settlement are therefore within a convenient walking /cycling distance from the allocation. Great Eccleston is also within cycling distance.
  
10. There are existing bus stops close to the allocation located on Inskip Lane (by Pinfold Lane) and by St Peters Church. Whilst the Settlement Study only ranks Inskip 13<sup>th</sup> in terms of Transport Accessibility and Connectivity with a score of 7, this was based on the published timetables at April 2016 when there was only one bus service (service 80). This has now been replaced with two bus services (77 and 77A) which combined

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<sup>1</sup> Planning permission 16/00481 : Land to the north and south of Preston Road



provide an hourly service between 7:17am and 19:57pm Monday to Friday, stopping at Poulton-Le-Fylde, Little Eccleston and Great Eccleston in Wyre, together with Blackpool, Preston and settlements in Fylde Borough Council. They also provide an effective hourly service on Saturdays between 07.57am and 19:52pm. Based on table 4 of the Settlement Study Inskip should therefore have a score of 22 for transport accessibility and connectivity. This would elevate the ranking of the settlement in relation to this matter to 8<sup>th</sup> out of the 30 settlements, placing it on a par with Barton and Bilborrow.

	No. of Marks
Number of services, 1 mark per service	2
Frequency of service M-F daytime, one per hour	2
Evening service	2
Weekend service – Sat only	1
No. of internal destinations served, 1 mark per destination	3
No of external destinations served, 5 for Blackpool, 4 for Fylde and 3 for Preston	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>

11. This is considered to represent a good bus service provision for a main rural settlement and the proposed allocation would have a choice of modes of travel to access services and jobs.

*v) loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;*

12. It is acknowledged that allocation SA1/13 comprises BMV agricultural land, however, the presence of BMV land does not automatically make a development unsustainable. It is just one factor to be weighed in the overall balancing exercise. Furthermore, in the Council's response to the Inspector's Preliminary Questions on Allocations (EL1.002b), the LPA confirm that all proposed allocations without planning consent comprise Grade 3 agricultural land. However, as the available evidence doesn't distinguish between grade 3a and grade 3b it is possible that many of these allocations also comprise BMV land. Furthermore, and as confirmed by the Council, the reasonable alternative options at Inskip are significantly constrained by flood risk and the presence of an Ethylene pipeline. The loss of agricultural land does not therefore make the allocation unsustainable. Indeed, planning permission has already been secured on part of the allocated site on the grounds that the proposals comprised sustainable development.

*vi) the highway network;*

13. There were no objections from statutory bodies in relation to the highway network to the planning application approved on the land to the immediate north and south of Preston Road, which forms part of the allocation. In respect of the remaining allocation, Metacre have had formal pre-application discussions with Lancashire County Council as Local Highway Authority (LCC). LCC confirmed that there is sufficient capacity for an additional 200 dwellings between the two settlements of Inskip and St Michael's in addition to the already approved housing development. LCC confirmed that as the Council are not proposing any allocations in St Michaels (washed over by Flood Zones 2 and 3), the level of development proposed does not present any concerns in respect of highway capacity. The required level of technical highway surveys and assessments to support a planning application has been discussed with LCC and these surveys are in the process of being commissioned by Metacre Ltd.
  
14. In terms of site access, LCC advised in pre-application discussions that they do not wish to allow vehicular access to/from the remaining allocation north of Preston Road via the approved development, although they support a link with the consented scheme for cyclists/pedestrians with an emergency vehicular access. In this respect LCC have confirmed that a single vehicular access off Pinfold Lane would be adequate to serve the remaining part of this allocation and that required visibility splays are achievable. There will be a requirement to widen Pinfold Lane to 5.5m, with a further allowance for street lighting, whilst the current speed limit along the site adjoining this stretch of Pinfold Lane would need to be reduced to 30mph. All of these can be delivered.

*vii) the creation of inclusive and mixed communities;*

15. There is no reason why this allocation would not create inclusive and mixed communities. The site has the potential to provide a range of housing types, tenures and sizes, including the provision of affordable housing. The allocation would also provide significant areas of open space, including a village hall, and allow for additional education and retail services to the benefit of the existing and future residents. In this respect Metacre Ltd own all of the remaining land within the allocation and they are committed to releasing the land adjacent to the school for expansion purposes, having already commenced discussions with the education authority in this regard. They are also committed to delivering the proposed village



green and other open space as part of the proposed development. It is also understood that Metacre have received interest with regards to the approved convenience store.

*viii) flood risk and drainage;*

16. There were no objections from statutory bodies to the planning application approved on the land to the immediate north and south of Preston Road in relation to flood risk and drainage. Indeed a detailed drainage strategy for the Create Development scheme has been approved by way of a discharge of condition application (ref. 16/00481/DIS). The residual allocation to the east of Pinfold Lane and south of Preston Road is within flood zone 1 which means it is assessed as having the lowest probability of flooding and there is no reason at this stage to assume that a satisfactory and sustainable drainage scheme cannot be designed.

*ix) biodiversity impacts;*

17. There were no objections from statutory bodies to the planning application approved on the land to the immediate north and south of Preston Road in relation to biodiversity impacts. Metacre Ltd have also commissioned ecological assessments for the wider allocation. In this regard, ecological consultancy, Cameron S. Crook and Associates, has undertaken a series of ecological surveys including Great Crested Newt (GCN), breeding and overwintering birds, badgers, water voles and bats. The results of which are summarised below.
18. The vast majority of the site comprises agricultural grassland which is of limited ecological value and there do not appear to be any major ecological issues that would preclude development on this land.
19. There are three ponds within the northern land parcel, two of which are considered to be of moderate to high quality ecological habitat, although no protected species were found within these ponds. The easternmost pond within the northern parcel is not considered to represent optimum ecological habitat. Whilst a small population of GCN was detected in an off-site pond, approximately 100m from the northern site boundary, an appropriate landscaped buffer and ecological mitigation areas within the development can be provided as part of the scheme.

20. A ditch is located in the northern land parcel alongside an internal hedgerow. This was found to have little or no potential for water voles and there were no signs of GCN. Neither did the ditch contain any plants or habitats of particular ecological interest. It has been confirmed that the ditch could be utilised for surface water drainage run-off without resulting in any adverse ecological impacts and it could be retained as part of the development.
21. The wintering birds surveys showed no records of significance, just the occasional lapwing, curlew and oystercatcher which were spotted on adjacent sites or seen flying over and none in any numbers (only single birds of each species at any one time). There were no breeding birds of significance recorded, nor any roosting bats.
22. There are trees on site but these are mainly limited to the site boundaries and could be retained as part of the development. Hedgerows are also largely limited to the site boundaries, although an internal hedgerow is also present in the northern land parcel. None of the hedgerows qualify as Important Hedges in respect of the Hedgerow Regulation, although the masterplanning exercise would look to retain these hedgerows where possible. Any loss of trees / hedgerows could be kept to a minimum and replacement / additional tree planting provided where loss is unavoidable.
23. Ultimately, it is considered that there is no reason to assume that the allocation would have any unacceptable biodiversity impacts and there is potential to enhance biodiversity bearing in mind that the vast majority of the site comprises agricultural grassland which is of limited ecological value.

*x) climate change implications;*

24. The site is located adjacent to sustainable transport options as previously referred. It is located outside the flood zone and is developable without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

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

25. KDC1 refers to the land directly east of the existing school only being used for the creation of a village green. Metacre Ltd are committed to delivering the village green



but when considering different options for the masterplanning of the entire allocation, it is evident that there are other possible options for its location. It is questioned whether the policy should simply refer to the need to provide a village green rather than specify its exact location, so as to retain an element of flexibility.

26. KDC5 - It is questioned why a Habitat Regulation Assessment may be required. There was no such requirement when planning permission was granted for the land to the north and south of Preston Road. No significant populations of important bird species have been recorded during more recent surveys on site and there will be no direct impact due to the distance involved and presence of other houses and major roads between the proposed development site and the SPA.

### **Issue 3 : Infrastructure**

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

27. With regards to allocation SA1/13 the entire allocation is owned by Metacre Ltd, who have a track record of delivering residential and mixed use development across the North West and England. They are already in discussions with the key stakeholders with regards to the release of land for the extension of the primary school and are able to deliver the associated village green and open space as part of the development. As highlighted above, from pre-application discussions with LCC it is not envisaged that there will be a need for any significant transport / highway network infrastructure to facilitate the development. With regards to health, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan suggest that most of the residents at Inskip use the health centre services at Great Eccleston. Metacre Ltd are promoting mixed use allocation SA3/3 at Great Eccleston, which is to include a new Medical Centre and as per the submissions to Session 11, they are already seeking discussions with the CCGs and other stakeholders regarding this site.

### **Issue 4 : Delivery**

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

28. Part of allocation SA1/13 already has both outline and reserved matters consent for 55 dwellings, with Create Homes due to commence development once the remaining

conditions are discharged, which is expected shortly. It is anticipated that the site will be delivered at a rate of 30 dpa.

29. Metacre Ltd own the remainder of the allocation (200 dwellings) and are at an advanced stage in the production of a masterplan. In this respect, with the exception of highways all survey assessments have been undertaken, discussions have already commenced with key stakeholders and a public consultation on different masterplan options for the site is due to commence shortly. The residual allocation is also to have its own separate vehicular access rather than being accessed through the approved development being brought forward by Create Homes. Based on the above there is no reason why allocation SA1/13 could not be delivered in its entirety within the Plan period.