

**Representations on Central Lancashire Publication Version
2025**

**Land North of Knoll Lane
Little Hoole**

SHLAA Reference: 19S101

LAND NORTH OF KNOLL LANE
LITTLE HOOLE

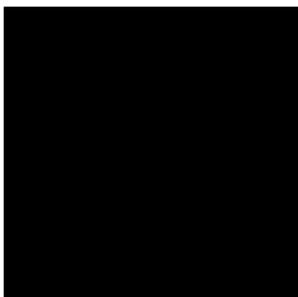
SHLAA REFERENCE: 19S101
REFERENCE: CLCFS00371

1. Instructions

- 1.1 This firm is instructed for and on behalf of the landowner, [REDACTED] to submit representations in respect of the land north of Knoll Lane, Little Hoole (SHLAA Ref: 19S101), supporting its inclusion as a suitable site in the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan (2023 to 2041) and beyond this plan period.
- 1.2 These representations seek to promote the Site for inclusion within the submission draft Central Lancashire Local Plan and to also have consideration to the purpose of this consultation, which is to address whether the Local Plan is:
- Legally compliant – whether the document has been prepared with all relevant legislation
 - Soundness – whether the content of the document represents a ‘sound’ document with regard to whether the document is:
 - i) Positively prepared
 - ii) Justified
 - iii) Effective
 - iv) Consistent with National policy

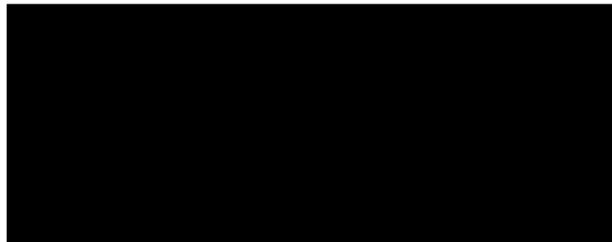
2. The Parties

Landowner’s details:



Agent’s details:

Mr. Robert Rawlinson
Acland Bracewell



3. Interest in the Site

- 3.1 The Landowner is the single Freehold Owner of the Site.

4. The Site

Name: Land north of Knoll Lane,

Little Hoole
Preston
Lancashire

Size: 4.446 ha (10.9 acres) or thereabouts defined by the area edged red on the attached plan.

Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: Easting: 348060
Northing: 423732

5. Proposed Future Use of the Site

- 5.1 Under the previous consultations, we have, on behalf of the land owner, sought to promote the Site for Housing and / or Employment use.
- 5.2 Whilst we maintain that the site is suitable for these proposed uses and continue to promote the land for such allocations, we have had further review with the Landowner in relation to alternative uses, which we consider are appropriate either in conjunction with, or instead of, a housing and / or employment allocation.
- 5.3 The site is situated in the village of Little Hoole, with built form development of Walmer Bridge situated to the north west and Much Hoole to the south. The Land's boundaries are clearly defined by Longton By-pass (A59) to the north, and Knoll Lane to the south.
- 5.4 Situated within the site is an existing employment site, and the proposed allocation seeks to infill the land, between the clearly defined established boundaries and represents a sustainable extension to the existing employment development.
- 5.5 The site extends to 4.45ha (10.90 acres) or thereabouts and comprises an existing employment site, with bare low quality agricultural land to the west and east, all within the same land ownership, which would represent a sustainable extension to the existing employment development to the east.
- 5.6 The primary access points are off Knoll Lane and Longton By-pass.
- 5.7 The site is not subject to any difficult land ownership or access issues.
- 5.8 The site is well connected to the existing transport system and local amenities.
- 5.9 The location and characteristics of the site also support its inclusion within the settlement boundary in that it is:
 - i. Accessible to services and facilities of the settlement and by public transport.
 - ii. Site within 5 miles of an identified employment area
 - iii. Accessible to GP/ Health Centre (within 1.8 miles)
 - iv. Accessible to dentists (within 4.2 miles)
 - v. Accessible to primary school (within 0.7 miles)
 - vi. Accessible to secondary school (within 3.9 miles)

- vii. Accessible to University (6.0 miles)
 - viii. Within 4.0 miles of publicly accessible open space
 - ix. Within 4.0 miles of outdoor sports provision
 - x. There is access off Longton Bypass and Knoll Lane.
 - xi. Has no ecological constraints/nor is it at risk from flooding.
 - xii. Is in single ownership and is immediately available for development.
 - xiii. Not visibly open, being highly contained by defined boundaries with limited public views into/from the land.
 - xiv. Close proximity to existing residential development to both the east.
 - xv. Will form a sustainable urban extension to the existing employment development.
 - xvi. Will assist with the delivery of the Central Lancashire Councils employment supply.
- 5.10 The Central Lancashire Publication Draft (2025) has classified this area as Tier 4 – Local and Rural Centres, being land adjacent to Walmer Bridge. The Tier 4 settlements are described as being suitable to accommodate limited new development, appropriate to the settlement size, to help meet local housing and employment needs and help sustain local services and facilities.
- 5.11 We consider that housing and employment on this site would help sustain meet local housing and employment needs in this area.
- 5.12 Beyond this, due to the accessible nature of the site with access to the A59, we considered that the site represents a unique opportunity to support new local services and facilities which would help support recent and proposed development in the wider area, along with alleviating pressure on existing services.
- 5.13 We consider the Site would be suitable for accommodating a new Health Centre, Dentist and Ambulance Hub which would be beneficial to the local area and health services. The Landowner has expressed interested in progressing an application for such uses and therefore we request consideration be given to the suitability of the site for such allocation. Included as an appendices to these representations is a letter from Dr. John Cairns, which sets out the need for such services within the local area, and which provides further justification for such an allocation within the emerging Central Lancashire Local Plan.
- 5.14 In terms of the Publication Draft Central Lancashire Local Plan, we consider that additional housing to that proposed to be allocated is required. Whilst it is accepted that the Plan will be subject to examination under the previous National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF23'), we do feel it would be prudent for additional employment and residential allocations to be made in order to better align the Plan with NPPF24.
- 5.15 We consider that it is in the interest of the Central Lancashire authorities to ensure that there is sufficient land allocated to meet employment and housing needs throughout the plan period. This is because whilst the Plan would be examined under NPPF23, future planning applications following adoption of the Plan would be considered under NPPF24 and failure to allocate sufficient land to meet housing and

employment needs under NPPF24 could result in development in less desirable plans and / or the plan needing to be reviewed soon after adoption and / or open to legal challenges.

6. Market Interest

6.1 The site is immediately available and deliverable, and all the landowner is committed to bringing this site forward within the immediate future.

6.2 There is existing market interest from parties that are seeking employment (B8 Use) on the basis it is an existing employment site and has lawful employment use. The existing buildings situated centrally within the site boundary are used for employment purposes, as it is an existing and has a lawful employment use. The bare land situated to the west and east of the existing employment site is currently occupied for agriculture.

7. Planning Position

7.1 The site is classified as Green Belt in the adopted South Ribble Borough Council Local Plan (2015). The Publication Draft Central Lancashire Local Plan is currently promoting the retention of this allocation.

7.2 Whilst the Plan would be examined under NPPF23, we do consider it appropriate to pay some consideration to NPPF24.

7.3 A revised National Planning Policy Framework was adopted in December 2024 (the 'NPPF24'). The NPPF24 included a number of changes, including in relation to national Green Belt policy. NPPF24 introduces the 'Grey Belt', which is defined as follows: "For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143."

7.4 The Land North of Knoll Lane is considered to meet the definition of Grey Belt.

7.5 Due to it being bounded to the north by the A59, to the south by Knoll Lane and to the east by existing commercial development, the roughly triangular parcel of land is built up on all sides and therefore does not check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (NPPF24, Para. 143(a)) or prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another (NPPF24, Para. 143(b)). The Site also does not lie within or contribute to the setting and special character of a historic town (NPPF24, Para. 143(d)).

7.6 Allocation of the Land North of Knoll Lane would therefore have no impact on the Green Belt in the South Ribble authority as it's allocation would not prevent the Green Belt from serving any of it's five purposes. Indeed, this site makes no contribution to the purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 and therefore meets the definition of Grey Belt land.

7.7 NPPF24 Paragraph 148 states that "Where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt, which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.". Paragraph 148 also requires, when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, consideration to be given to the sustainability of a site's location.

7.8 Land North of Knoll Lane is in a highly sustainable and accessible location due to its proximity to the A59, which runs along it's northern boundary. The A59 being a major A-Road linking Merseyside to North Yorkshire.

7.9 The Site can be accessed directly off Knoll Lane, and a suitably worded allocation and site-specific policy could make appropriate provision to required improvements to Knoll Lane along the southern boundary of the Site.

7.10 There are a number of bus services close to the Site, including along Liverpool Old Road.

8. Environment/Ecological Matters

14.1 The Site is not subject to the following constraints:

| Potential Constraint | Result |
|--|--|
| Flood Zone 3/2 | No – Not located within the Flood Zone |
| Site of International/National Nature Conservation | No |
| Historic Parks and Gardens | No |
| Coastal Erosion | No |
| Cemetery | No |
| Areas of Local Nature Importance (LWS or LGS) | No |
| Regional Important Geological Sites | No |
| Conservation Area | No |
| Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) | No |
| Listed Buildings | No |
| Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest | No |
| Recreation Areas (playing fields and Golf courses) | No |

9. Regulation 19 Consultation

9.1 Included as an Appendix is the completed Regulation 19 Representation Form.

9.2 The Form confirms that we do not consider the current plan to be sound. This is our view that the current plan does not allocation sufficient land for residential and employment purposes and therefore results in the Plan failing to be effective throughout the entirety of the plan period.

9.3 The Regulation 19 Plan outlines a housing requirement for Central Lancashire of 23,652 between 2023 and 2041, or an annual average of 1,314 dwellings. This is broadly aligned with requirement identified

within the preceding Regulation 18 Preferred Options Local Plan which identified a need for 1,334 dwellings per annum.

- 9.4 1,314 dwellings represent 79.98% of the stock-based method housing requirement of 1,643.
- 9.5 Despite being below the 80% requirement, we anticipate that due to being just 0.02% below the 80% requirement, the Plan will benefit from the transitional arrangements of Paragraph 234 and that the Plan will be assessed at examination under the previous version of the NPPF ('NPPF23').
- 9.6 Notwithstanding, we do consider that it would be prudent for the Plan to seek to make provision for additional employment and residential allocations to reduce the risk of legal challenges during Plan's term. Increasing the number of allocations would ensure greater certainty and longevity for the Plan.
- 9.7 It is also noted that, in terms of employment land, the Plan makes provision for 173ha which marks a substantial decrease on the 225ha identified over a shorter period within the Regulation 18 Preferred Options Local Plan. This is despite an increase in the total housing numbers proposed.
- 9.8 There is also a concentration of employment allocations within the Preston district, with just two allocations within the South Ribble District, both of which are in Leyland. There is also one mixed use allocation in Cuerden.
- 9.9 We consider that additional smaller employment allocations are required in other areas of the South Ribble district in order to ensure the wider sustainability of the Borough and Plan area. We agree that major employment opportunities should be directed towards the larger, higher tier settlements, but consider the smaller settlements also require the benefits of economic development in order to ensure sustainable growth of the economy across the Central Lancashire area.
- 9.10 Land North of Knoll Lane represents a suitable opportunity for a smaller employment development to meet localised needs. Development of this Site has the potential to attract interest from smaller and / or local businesses looking for new or expanded spaces and has the potential to cater to businesses that would not be well served within the larger settlements where they may be out-competed by larger or more national businesses with greater capital.
10. Conclusion
- 10.1 The current Green Belt policy would not permit the extension of the existing employment site for employment (B8 Use Class), as it would be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 10.2 There is an existing employment site centrally located and there is a demonstrable demand for additional employment development in the locality. Due to the restrictive Green Belt policy, it would not be possible to sustainably provide additional commercial development beyond the existing lawful employment site, unless a) very special circumstances can be demonstrated through the submission of a planning application, b) the site is allocated for employment or c) the site is considered Grey Belt.
- 10.3 The site is highly contained with the main arterial A59 road defining its northern boundary and public highway defining southern boundary. There is existing commercial development along the east boundary.
- 10.4 It is therefore considered that the Site does not make a contribution to the purposes for including land within the Green Belt and should be removed from the Green Belt.
- 10.5 Other than this policy allocation, given the above factors, the site has no significant insurmountable constraints to further its development. The development of this site would be of a scale appropriate to

the locality and in line with the presumption of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.6 It is considered that this site is a logical urban extension and would be entirely appropriate.

Contact

Robert Rawlinson

