

Central Lancashire Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) Draft

Representation on behalf of Northern Trust Land Ltd Policy SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

- 1.1. De Pol Associates are retained by Northern Trust Land Ltd to submit representations to the Publication (Regulation 19) draft of the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041 (CLLP). This representation relates to Policy SS2 'Settlement Hierarchy'.
- 1.2. Policy SS1 'Development Patterns' states that new housing, employment and commercial growth and associated infrastructure will be focused on the most sustainable locations in Central Lancashire where development can, amongst other things, benefit from, and/or provide, a range of facilities, services, open spaces, and jobs; and support and reinvigorate the role of centres as focal points for services, facilities, employment, and sustainable transport. The explanatory text to the policy states at paragraph 3.6 that the purpose of the policy is to shape and support the achievement of a sustainable pattern of development in Central Lancashire over and beyond the plan period. That key locational principles are identified which will play an important role in guiding development to locations that will best deliver the Local Plan's spatial vision and strategic objectives and support sustainable communities.
- 1.3. The explanatory text to Policy SS2 'Settlement Hierarchy' states at paragraph 3.14 that the use of a Settlement Hierarchy in the Local Plan ensures that development is distributed to and takes place in the most sustainable and appropriate places through a plan led approach. The hierarchy reflects the role and function of places, the level and range of services and facilities, the extent of employment opportunities and how accessible places are. It states that as a general principle, settlements higher up the tiers in the hierarchy will be the focus for more growth than those lower down, reflecting the range of services and facilities, levels of accessibility, employment opportunities and transport connections. The policy identifies the following settlement hierarchy, whilst Table 1 confirms where individual settlements fit within this hierarchy.

a) The Preston Urban Area (Tier 1) will be the primary focus for development growth and investment, the largest amount of new development will be directed here. This will be delivered through a combination of redevelopment and regeneration activity and major new development to meet strategic general housing, employment, and commercial development needs.

b) Key Service Centres (Tier 2), including the towns of Leyland and Chorley and the South Ribble Urban Area will be the secondary focus for development, complementing the role of the Tier 1 Urban Area. This will be delivered through allocated sites in and adjoining the towns, windfall sites and town centre renewal activity to meet development needs.

c) Urban Local Service Centres (Tier 3) will be a tertiary focus for development and accommodate new development and investment within settlement boundaries. The scale and type of development will be appropriate to the settlement size and reflect its characteristics.

d) Rural Local Service Centres (Tier 4) will accommodate limited new development, appropriate to the settlement size, to help meet local housing and employment needs and help sustain local services and facilities.

e) Smaller Rural Villages and Hamlets (Tier 5) will accommodate more limited new development and investment, other than on the sites identified on the Policies Map.

1.4. The same basic settlement hierarchy was proposed in the Regulation 18 Preferred Options plan but this treated both Tier 3 and Tier 4 settlements the same in so far as they were both identified as being suitable for moderate growth and investment to help meet housing and employment needs. This was considered reasonable bearing in mind that Tier 4 includes settlements such as Croston and Eccleston in Chorley which are as sustainable as the identified Tier 3 settlements in terms of the level and range of services and facilities.

1.5. Croston for example is a settlement containing a designated Local Centre with a variety of food and non-food retail shops including Morrisons and Lonsdale supermarkets, chemists and a post office. It has two doctors surgeries and dentist, secondary and primary schools, churches, public houses, eating establishments, hot food takeaways, cafes and a community centre. There is a sports club with football, cricket, tennis and netball facilities as well as restaurant, sports bar and function room. There is also a village recreational ground and industrial estate. It also has sustainable transport options including a railway station providing regular services to Preston

and Ormskirk and a bus route through the village providing regular services to Chorley, Preston and Rufford. It is clearly an accessible settlement with a level and range of services and facilities which makes it suitable to accommodate growth in line with the sustainability objectives of the CLLP and NPPF.

- 1.6. Similarly, Eccleston has designated Local Centre with both food and non-food retail including a Sainsbury's supermarket and community market, opticians, chemists and post office. It has a library, doctors surgery and dentist, primary schools, churches, public houses, eating establishments, hot foot takeaways and cafes. It also has a youth centre and recreational ground. It has employment areas including a proposed employment allocation and there are also public transport links with regular bus services with Chorley, Leyland and Preston. It is a settlement which has historically been considered sustainable for housing development.
- 1.7. In light of the above it is unclear why policy SS2 of the Regulation 19 Publication Plan is now treating Tiers 3 and 4 differently, with development now permitted in Tier 3 settlements provided it is of a scale and type appropriate to the settlement size and character, but in the Tier 4 settlements the policy now states development is to be 'limited'. This is further confused by the policy referring to Tier 5 settlements accommodating 'more limited' development, especially as the housing allocations in policies HS2 relating to Chorley propose more housing allocations at the Tier 5 settlements than at Tier 4. For example, the Regulation 19 Plan is allocating 5 sites totalling 122 dwellings at the village of Mawdesley despite this being a Tier 5 'smaller rural village and hamlet' where policy SS2 states "*more limited new development*" is acceptable and the village is nowhere near as sustainable as Croston where only 2 dwellings are allocated. The CLLP is allocating more housing at these Tier 5 smaller rural villages and hamlets in Chorley (332 dwellings across five villages) than at the more sustainable Tier 4 Rural Local Service Centres in Chorley i.e. Croston and Eccleston (just 83 dwellings).
- 1.8. As currently worded it is considered that policy SS2 fails the test of soundness as it is not consistent with national policy in so far as it does not reflect the objectives of NPPF or indeed the CLLP to direct development to the most sustainable settlements. It also isn't justified as there are more appropriate alternative strategies. For example policy SS2 could be amended to remove the reference to limited development in Tier 4 so that it reflects Tier 3 in terms of permitting development which is of a scale and type appropriate to the settlement size and character, or Eccleston and Croston could be moved into Tier 3. Indeed it isn't clear from the evidence base supporting the CLLP as to how individual settlements have been assessed with

regards to where they should fall within the settlement hierarchy. It isn't based on robust evidence considering other alternative options. Representations to policies HS2 to HS4 address whether the CLLP then actually allocates land in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.