

**SITE NAME:** Land at Jepps Lane, Barton

**LPA:** Preston City Council

**Date:** April 2025

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## Introduction

Story Homes controls land at Jepps Lane, Barton. This site has been promoted by Story Homes at all stages of the Central Lancashire Local Plan but has not previously been selected for development. As such, it is an omission site.

Story Homes is aware that the Local Plan Inspector will only consider the development contribution from omission sites should there be conclusions that there is a lack of land supply overall. This is exactly the case in respect of the Regulation 19 Local Plan – there is insufficient land identified to meet needs.

As part of its submissions, Story Homes has prepared several documents which should be read in parallel to this individual site representation. For ease of reference, these comprises:

1. Central Lancashire Housing Need – Prepared by Stantec on behalf of a consortium of developers.
2. Housing Land Supply Assessment – Prepared by Stantec on behalf of a consortium of developers.
3. Core representations to the Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 19 – Prepared by Stantec on behalf of Story Homes.
4. Viability representations prepared by Roger Hannah.
5. Individual Site Submission (this document); and
6. Accompanying Development Framework and site assessment

Across these documents, Story Homes sets out its **objections** to the Central Lancashire Local Plan Regulation 19. We do not repeat all those arguments here, but it is plainly clear that insufficient land is proposed to be allocated in the Central Lancashire Local Plan and housing needs will not be met. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn regarding the deliverability of many sites selected for allocation by the Authorities, particularly regarding the certainty of supply in Preston, where delivery and viability are significant issues.

Objections are raised in respect of the site selection methodology and process undertaken in selecting allocations. This appears to be very much based upon sites chosen based on their aggregate yield (to achieve a *minimum* housing supply to 'get through' a Local Plan examination, rather than a thorough assessment of what can realistically be delivered.

Accordingly, Story Homes considers that the Council should allocate further land for development. Land at Jepps Lane, Barton is an obvious candidate site.

## Site Description

The accompanying Development Framework identifies the site in relation to the built-up area at Barton. The Site is located at the eastern edge of Barton and to the north of Jepps Lane. An existing farm track at Hool Fold provides the northern boundary. Existing hedgerow forms the eastern boundary, and the western boundary is formed by existing fences to rear of gardens along culs-de-sac Longcroft, St Lawrence's Avenue, South Grove and Green Drive. These estates are collectively based on four culs-de-sac accessed off Garstang Road and Jepps Lane. To the south of the Site and south of Jepps Lane, existing housing estates at Forest Grove, Homestead Crescent and Jepps Avenue provide a range of housing types built in the 1970's and 1980's and more recently. Barton St. Lawrence Church of England School is located off Jepps Avenue to the south of the Site.

Barton has a good range of local facilities including a primary school, hotel / leisure, public house, place of worship, public transport facilities (along A6) and local shop.

## Assessment against evidence base

Land North of Jepps Lane has been promoted at previous stages of the Local Plan and included within various assessments. The updated SHELAA January 2025 (HO15) discounts the site in one sweeping statement as below:

### Extract from SHELAA

19P062	Land to the north of Jepps Lane	Barton	Preston Rural North	Housing	Site does not accord with Spatial Strategy - site within OC
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This final column in the SHLAA states that it is not in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and that the site lies within the Open Countryside (OC).

Story Homes considers that the Council has failed to undertake a robust site selection methodology and process and the findings in relation to Jepps Lane are inconsistent with the approach taken elsewhere. The Council has simply chosen the sites it prefers, rather than follow a robust and transparent selection process. The process is not justified nor is it positively prepared and is fundamentally unsound.

We refer to Policy SS2 of the Regulation 19 document. Barton is identified (on page 27) as a Tier 5 settlement. Policy SS2 (extract below) states that Tier 5 settlements **will accommodate more limited new development and investment, other than on the sites identified on the Policies Map.**

Self-evidently, Tier 5 settlements are locations where the Council has chosen to allocate land and, where such sites have been selected, the SHELAA makes clear that Tier 5 settlements will be required to accommodate some growth. Such land will have fallen within the Open Countryside, by virtue of the tightly drawn development boundaries around Tier 5 settlements. As such, the SHELAA conclusion as to why Jepps Lane has not been selected, or considered any further, is plainly inconsistent as the Councils have made allocations in such locations and Tier 5 elsewhere

### Policy SS2: Settlement Hierarchy

The scale and location of development growth and supporting investment across Central Lancashire will reflect the following settlement 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.

Settlements identified against each Tier are set out in Table 1 on page 27.

### Summary

Story Homes' submissions have highlighted the lack of supply overall and the specific issues regarding the supply of land in Preston in particular. Sites in Preston will not come forward as expected by the Council. There are significant developable and viability issues which prevent certainty.

Story Homes controls land at Jepps Lane, Barton. This is a sustainable site which is well located at a Tier 5 settlement. Barton has a good range of local services to meet local needs, including a Primary School and public transport links.

The site has been discounted by the Council in a blanket approach in the SHELAA. The Council cites the spatial strategy and open countryside status as its reasoning. However, the spatial strategy enables land in the Open Countryside at Tier 5 settlements to be allocated, and the Council has selected sites with identical characteristics for allocation elsewhere. Accordingly, the site selection methodology underpinning the Regulation 19 document is flawed.

### Supporting Documents

- Development Framework document prepared by Stantec.