

**SITE NAME:** Cottage Lane, Bamber Bridge

**LPA:** South Ribble Council

**Date:** April 2025

---

## Introduction

Story Homes controls land at Cottage Lane, Bamber Bridge. 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.

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. Individual Site Submission (this document)
5. 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 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.

Story Homes also raises objections to the Green Belt review, for various reasons set out in this and other submissions. In short, by focusing on vary large parcels in the Green Belt review, the author has assessed land with very different functional characteristics than the smaller parcel candidate sites actually being proposed by developers. In doing so, it has arrived at illogical conclusions regarding the contribution various parcels make to the Green Belt.

Accordingly, Story Homes considers that it is evident the Local Plan requires further land to be allocated for development. Land at Cottage Lane, Bamber Bridge is an obvious candidate site.

### **Site Description**

Land at Cottage Lane is currently greenfield land which is designated within the Green Belt. The Site lies to the north-east of Bamber Bridge, which is part of the main built-up area of South Ribble; a key service centre which offers a good range of shops, services and public transport opportunities all within a close walking and cycling distance.

The Site is enclosed by an area of mature woodland to the north, the M6 motorway to the east and a tree belt beyond which lies existing development to the west. Cottage Lane is located to the south of the site, beyond which lie playing pitches associated with Walton-le-Dale High School.

The Site is accessible via Cottage Lane. To the east, Cottage Lane becomes Kittingborne Brow, connecting Bamber Bridge with Higher Walton. To the west, Cottage Lane becomes School Lane and connects to the B6258 and Station Road which forms the main high street at Bamber Bridge.

The accompanying Development Framework provides Story Homes design proposals and sets out how, through an imaginatively designed scheme, the Site can provide for a high-quality development of up to 105 dwellings alongside improved pedestrian and cycle links, and the provision of accessible public open space.

### **Assessment against evidence base**

It is Story Homes' case that the Central Lancashire Local Plan does not identify sufficient land for development, and, that exceptional circumstance exists to warrant a review of the Green Belt in Central Lancashire (NPPF 145 and 146 apply). The Regulation 19 document does not provide sufficient land and is unsound on this basis. To rectify the lack of overall supply, the Council needs to release further Green Belt land for development.

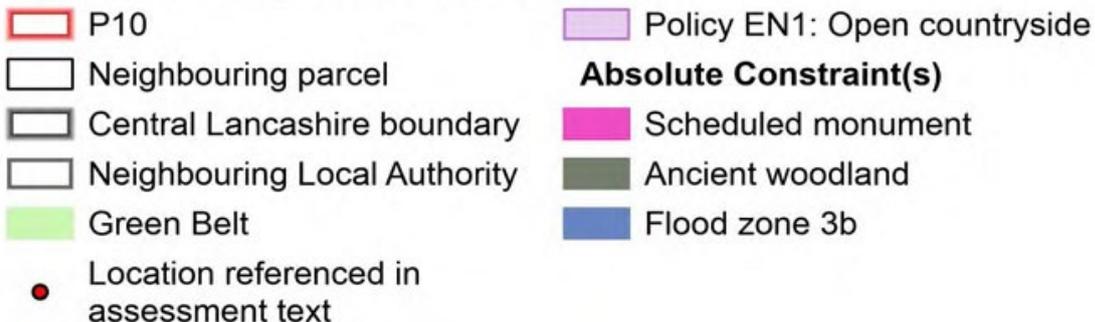
The evidence base for the Council's Green Belt review is contained in document EV7, "Open Land Designation Study" (2022) prepared by LUC. One of the criticisms that Story Homes has of that evidence-based report is that the parcel areas selected by the author are so large that it is almost impossible to arrive at any meaningful conclusions regarding individual parcel contributions towards the Green Belt. By selecting such vast areas in the first place, the findings of the consultant team provide very little assistance to the Council as part of the site selection process.

Land at Cottage Lane, Bamber Bridge lies within a much larger parcel of land assessment, referred to as Parcel P10, which is identified on the extract below.

## Parcel P10



© Crown copyright and database rights, Ordnance Survey license number 09121572.



The consultant arrives at the conclusion that assessment parcel makes a 'significant' contribution to Green Belt purposes, on the basis that the land parcel makes a 'significant' contribution to Green Belt purposes 1 and 3, 'moderate' contribution to purpose 2, 'limited / no' contribution to purpose 4, and an 'equal' contribution to purpose 5.

The extremely broad approach undertaken, cannot assist the Council's site selection process. The author appears to recognise the flaws in its own methodology, by including specific qualification text that is intended to provide a further layer of detail that cannot be achieved when looking at the parcel as a whole.

## Story Homes - Green Belt Assessment

As part of its Local Plan submissions, Story Homes has provided a Development Framework document which included the company's own assessment of the Green Belt as below. **It is Story Homes' case that land at Cottage Lane in Bamber Bridge provides no, or very limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and should be released for development.** The conclusion is reached by virtue of the Site's location near to urban influencing features and being entirely contained by existing man-made and natural defensible boundaries.

Purpose of the Green Belt	Assessment
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Site is entirely contained by existing landscape features and the existing M6 motorway. To the south of the Site lies Walton-le-Dale High School and its playing fields. The Site, therefore, lends itself to a localised Green Belt release and would not lead to any further encroachment in to the open countryside or enable urban sprawl to continue.
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	The Site does not provide a physical or visual gap between settlements. The M6 motorway provides a defensible boundary to the growth of Bamber Bridge to the east. The Site is not identified within a strategic gap or area of separation.
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The land is already, in part, urbanised by virtue of the School, NHS facility, Charnley Court and the M6 motorway on its boundaries. The wider countryside, beyond the Site, is protected by the M6 motorway which is the dominant feature. Given the lack of available Brownfield land, development on Greenfield sites are necessary to meet housing need.
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The criterion is not relevant as Bamber Bridge is not a historic town and development of the Site would not adversely the town's setting.
5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling or urban / derelict land	The Site comprises one of the remaining greenfields to the north east of Bamber Bridge. Development would effectively round off the settlement to the north and east. Development would not lead to any further encroachment given the strongly defined boundaries to the Site, comprising woodland to the north and the M6 motorway to the east.

## **Safeguarding land**

Separately and when defining Green Belt boundaries, the NPPF requires Authorities to identify areas of safeguarded land to meet the longer-term needs stretching beyond the plan period. Criteria c) and d) apply as below.

148. When defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should:
- a) ensure consistency with the development plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
  - b) not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
  - c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
  - d) make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development;
  - e) be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period; and
  - f) define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

In the case of Central Lancashire, the need for safeguarded land was discussed briefly at the Preferred Options stage. In that document, at page 33, the Authorities recognise the role that safeguarded land has played in identifying land beyond 2015, particular in South Ribble and Chorley.

In the case of South Ribble, the report states that safeguarded land has not been required to come forward and is therefore not needed in the new Local Plan. However, this is qualified by concerns raised in the progress of Pickering's Farm, and the need to consider the role safeguarded land can play in considering the strategic growth of Curden / Samlesbury.

In the case of Chorley, the Preferred Options document states that the majority of these allocations have been granted planning permission upon appeal and are therefore included in the housing supply, with other remaining safeguarded sites either discounted due to constraints or proposed for allocation.

Noting the above findings, the Council clearly accepts that safeguarded land has provided a useful policy mechanism to help deliver homes beyond the original plan period. It is counter intuitive to therefore not consider the role of safeguarded land further in this Regulation 19 document.

Furthermore, as the Regulation 19 Local Plan is based on achieving only 80% of the standard housing methodology, it is self-evident that land needs to be safeguarded to meet future needs. The inconsistency in the Council's approach to Green Belt at this stage is misleading to the public and not justified.

## **Summary**

Story Homes controls land at Cottage Lane in Bamber Bridge which it is promoting for development. Story Homes' own conclusions on the site align with the Council evidence base in that the Site provides a very limited / no contribution to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It should therefore be allocated for development.

Should the Inspector find that there is sufficient land in the plan period to achieve the 80% of housing needs being advanced as part of this strategy, then the site should at least be identified as safeguarded land under the provisions of the NPPF.

### **Supporting Documents**

- Development Framework document prepared by Stantec.