

SITE NAME: Dawber's Lane, Euxton

LPA: Chorley Council

Date: April 2025

Introduction

Story Homes controls land at Dawber's Lane, Euxton. 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, we draw conclusions regarding the deliverability of many sites selected for allocation by the Authorities 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 via the current transitional arrangements, rather than a thorough assessment of what can realistically be delivered.

Story Homes also raises objections to the Green Belt review. In short, by focusing on very 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. Our accompanying Development Framework Document provides a Green Belt Assessment of the Site

which demonstrates that the Site provides a limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and is considered to be suitable for development.

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

Site Description

The site lies to the south of Dawber's Lane, Euxton, which is a third-tier sustainable settlement (Urban Local Service Centre) for growth, offering a reasonable range of local shops, services all within a close walking and cycling distance as well as excellent access to public transport opportunities via local bus and rail connections. It is contained by development on all sides and the proposed development of the Site would round off the existing settlement in this location. The Site is currently greenfield and in agricultural use and lies within the Green Belt.

Access to the Site is provided from Dawber's Lane. 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 100 homes.

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 circumstances exist 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 Dawber's Lane lies within assessment Parcel P15, extracted below. The P15 area as assessed is broadly the same size as the entire settlement of Euxton but has been assessed in its capacity to provide a development site to provide a level of growth compatible with the role and function of this third tier settlement. Therefore, the consultant arrives at an inevitable conclusion that that there is a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes (in relation to preventing urban sprawl and encroachment into the countryside) as it has assessed a huge area. We highlight in detail how this assessment is flawed in relation to our Client's Site.

The LUC Green Belt Assessment text provides a summary that:

"There is some residential development along roads within the parcel, but this is low in density and does not have a significant impact on openness"

In terms of urban sprawl, it states:

“The parcel is characterised by rural uses and contains land that has strong distinction from Euxton due to the presence of dense tree cover to the east. Development would be a significant encroachment on the countryside.”

In relation to encroachment into the countryside, it states:

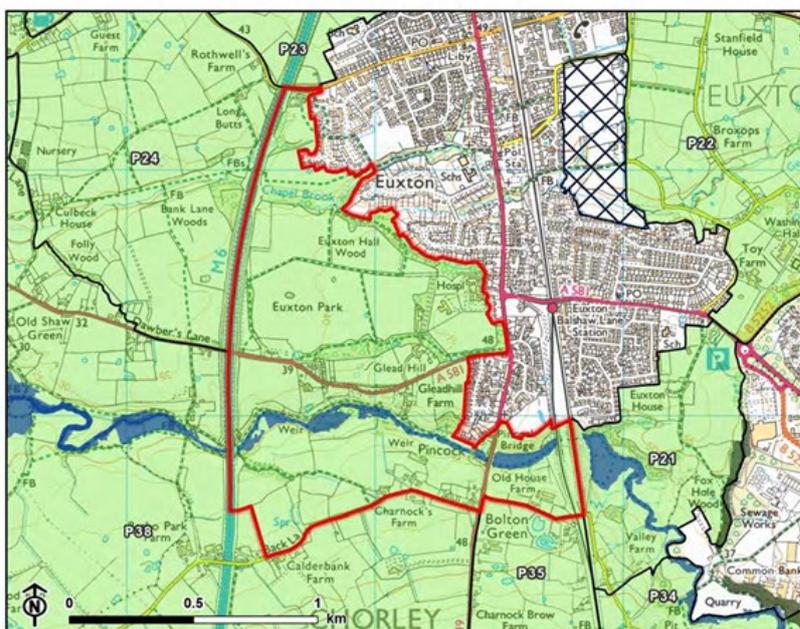
Dense tree cover forms a consistent boundary between Euxton and any strategically-sized areas within the parcel. Any expansion of Euxton into this parcel would therefore result in the loss of land which makes a significant contribution to the Green Belt purposes:

The above conclusions are arguably true of the entire of parcel P15 above. However, the logic used to discount the suitability of the Site as a wider parcel can be conversely applied to our clients Site. The Site is surrounded by residential development and further enclosed by tree cover which envelopes the Site into the settlement of Euxton to which it sits adjacent. Indeed, its eastern boundary which abuts the rear gardens of Fieldside Avenue is predominantly not tree lined but made up of the rear domestic fenced boundaries of those properties.

It is plainly untrue that our client’s site is separated by a consistent boundary to Euxton; instead our Site is included within that boundary. It is unclear why the Green Belt Assessment has sought to reach conclusions in relation to strategically sized Sites which would be contrary to the spatial strategy for Euxton.

The extremely broad approach undertaken, cannot therefore assist the Councils’ site selection process.

Parcel P15



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

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| P15 | Policy BNE3 and G3: Safeguarded land |
| Neighbouring parcel | Absolute Constraint(s) |
| Central Lancashire boundary | Ancient woodland |
| Neighbouring Local Authority | Flood zone 3b |
| Green Belt | |

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 Dawber's Lane, Euxton provides no, or very limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and should be released for development.**

Purpose of the Green Belt	Assessment
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	The Site is very well contained and well related to the existing built form. Development would not result in a continuation of urban sprawl as there is no evidence of that in this part of Euxton. Development can be sensitively designed to reflect the landscape character of the Site should the parcel be released from the Green Belt. Development of the Site would not extend the settlement any further west than the existing built form as a result of the planning permission to the north and urban boundary.
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	The Site is very well contained. It does not fulfil the role of providing a gap between Euxton and other settlements. Crucially the Site does not sit within an area of separations between Euxton and Chorley. Development would not lead to any coalescence.
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Development of a Greenfield site would by nature lead to some degree of encroachment on the countryside. However, the Site is well contained by existing built form and landscape features, ensuring the proposed development would not lead to any wider erosion of the countryside. The Site is separated from the wider countryside on all sides by urbanising or distinct landscape features preventing further encroachment. Given the lack of available Brownfield Land, development on Greenfield sites is necessary to meet housing need.
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	This criterion is not relevant as the Site does not fulfil any role in preserving the setting of a historic town. It does not lie within a conservation area or its setting.
5. Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling or urban / derelict land	Euxton is not a settlement which has significant derelict land or regeneration needs. There are also very few Brownfield sites available in Euxton and across the Borough.

Table 1 : Green Belt Assessment

Safeguarding land

Separately and when defining Green Belt boundaries, the NPPF requires Authorities to, where necessary, 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 / Salmesbury.

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 Dawber's Lane, Euxton 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.