

Savills on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Examination into the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041

Hearing Statement

Matter 2 – Vision & Objectives, Spatial Strategy & Location of New Development Process

(Policies SS1, SS2)

Issue 2 – Are the provisions of the plan in relation to the Spatial Strategy & Location of New Development justified and consistent with national policy?

2.1 Is the proposed spatial strategy and the distribution of development (as set out in policies SS1 and SS2) supported by robust and up to date evidence and otherwise soundly based? In particular:

- a). Does it reflect the vision and objectives of the Plan?
- b). To what degree is the distribution of development set out in Policy SS2 based on the settlement hierarchy in Table 1?
- c). Is the focus on the larger urban settlements justified and soundly based?
- d). How were the proportions of development proposed for each settlement arrived at?
- e). Would it provide sufficient development within rural areas and other settlements?
- f). Does the distribution of employment related development take appropriate account of national and regional programmes and strategies?

1. The Plan demonstrates good spatial distribution in line with the vision and objectives of the Plan noting a key part of the Vision of the Local Plan is to support a wide range of high-quality sustainable new housing and supporting infrastructure that will meet the needs of communities. This sits alongside Strategic Objective 3 of the Local Plan which states that the plan will meet a diverse range of housing to meet future needs.
2. The proposed approach of prioritising the most sustainable locations for development is considered to be in line with wider policy objectives. The proposed settlement hierarchy in policy SS2 supports the urban focussed approach and requirements of policy SS1.
3. The distribution of development in terms of the site allocations reflect the development patterns as outlined in Policy SS1 and the settlement hierarchy as outlined in Policy SS2.

2.2 What is the evidential basis for the settlement hierarchy in policy SS2? Is this consistent across all 3 authorities? Does this accurately reflect the pattern of settlements across the district? Is this up to date? How does this inform the development strategy? What other factors influenced the strategy, such as physical and environmental constraints?

4. The proposed settlement hierarchy is considered to be appropriate and logical in that it allows for a suitable and sustainable spatial distribution of sites and provides an appropriate development pattern.
5. Strategic sites are central to the delivery of the spatial strategy, policies SS1 and SS2, and achieving sustainable development in making best use of brownfield sites and in the case of site allocation SS4 Fulwood Barracks, bringing heritage assets back into a viable use consistent with their conservation.
6. As per the Housing and Employment Allocations: Site Selection Process document (HO15), site allocations were established taking into account the findings of the Stage 2 SHELAA (HO14a) assessment of sites and the proposed spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy.
7. This document (HO15) outlines that the SHELAA assessment (HO14a) discounted sites if they were affected by access issues alongside a number of environmental constraints such as flood zone 3b, SSI, SPA, Registered Park and Gardens etc.

2.4 Have the sites allocated for development in the Plan been appraised and selected in comparison with possible alternatives using a robust and objective process?

a). Is the site selection process transparent? How were different development constraints taken into account? Were they identified using up to date and appropriate evidence and guidance?

b). Were constraints given relative weight in the site selection process? If so, how was this determined?

c). In relation to flood risk, were sites at low risk preferred over those at greater risk? How did the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) inform site selection? Does the SFRA2 reflect the most up to date flood-mapping? Where sites are proposed for development in areas of flood risk, does the Plan take a sound approach in how these matters will be addressed?

d). What account was taken of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land?

8. As above, the Housing and Employment Allocations: Site Selection Process document (HO15), outlines the process of site selection which is informed by the accompanying Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) (January 2025) (HO14a). The SHELAA outlines the site assessment methodology which accords with requirements of the NPPF and NPPG in terms of ensuring a robust assessment of land availability in plan-making.
9. The initial survey of sites as detailed in the SHELAA site assessment methodology (HO14a) outlines that all sites were considered in the context of national policies and designations including a number of potential site constraints. The extent of such constraints were then considered further in respect of whether such sites were further assessed at Stage 2.
10. Stage 2 sites assessment then sought to consider the suitability, availability and achievability of sites in line with national policy requirements. As part of the Stage 2 sites assessments, Strategic Floor Risk Assessment (Level 1 and 2) was considered. A Summary of the site assessments, including discounted sites, is then provided in the SHELAA Appendices 1-4 (HO14b).
11. The approach to site assessments as outlined in document HO15, as supported by the SHELAA (HO14a and HO14b), is therefore considered to be transparent, robust and objective in this respect.