

## **Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP) Examination**

### **Statement to Matter 2 on behalf Lilford (2005) Limited (Representor ID A62)**

**6 November 2025**

This Statement is provided by Lilford (2005) Limited (hereafter ‘Lilford 2005’) and relates to its land interest at South Road, Bretherton which is subject to draft allocation HS2.6 of the CLLP.

Lilford 2005 is the sole owner of this site. It is Lilford 2005’s position that this site represents a sustainable development opportunity, utilising land outside of the Green Belt and within the settlement boundary of Bretherton. The site is being actively promoted for development by its owner and is available for development in full during the plan period.

The allocation of Site HS2.6 is aligned with the overall strategy for the Local Plan, providing a modest scale of development suited to its context within the established settlement of Bretherton. It will make an important contribution to meeting the residential development needs of Central Lancashire and the settlement of Bretherton more specifically, being the only sustainable site opportunity capable of doing so. The site is deliverable and can come forward in full during the next five years.

**Question 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?**

Lilford 2005 does not wish to comment on the overall soundness of the spatial strategy and distribution of development.

However it is noted that the proposed approach is broadly aligned with Option 1 (Roll forward the current approach) assessed within the Integrated Appraisal (IA). On this matter, the IA concludes that Option 1:

*‘...maintains a settlement hierarchy based approach. The main focus for new development remains on the urban areas (Preston and South Ribble) and towns (Chorley and Leyland/Farrington), complimented by a lesser focus on urban and rural local service centres. This spatial approach maintains the current urban structure. The distribution of housing requirements between the three council areas in Policy HS1: Scale of Housing Growth and Distribution of Housing Requirements (see Chapter 6) further reinforces this spatial approach.’<sup>1</sup>*

Inherent within this is a hierarchical approach in respect of settlement size and status with development being directed to different settlements on this basis. Settlements are identified as falling within one of five settlement tiers from Tier 1 (the Preston Urban Area) to Tier 5 (Smaller Rural Villages and Hamlets).

As a point of principle, Lilford 2005 considers it vitally important that a spatial approach is taken which provides a vehicle for all settlements to be able to accommodate the development they need to be sustainable in the long term as a minimum.

Tier 4 and 5 settlements (Rural Local Service Centres and Smaller Rural Villages and Hamlets respectively) cumulatively accommodate allocations with a capacity for just 1,077 homes, representing a very small proportion of the CLLP’s overall development requirement. This is intended to reflect the spatial approach being taken and inherent within Option 1.

In that respect, we would note that even if an alternative spatial strategy approach were pursued, such as creation of a new settlement option as a deviation from the strategy of ‘maintaining the current urban structure’ characteristic of Option 1, the provision of development at the scale proposed within the Tier 4 and 5 settlements would still be achievable, and appropriate as a minimum. The numbers concerned do not have a strategic influence on the plan in that regard.

Accordingly, the provision of development in Tier 4 and 5 settlements, at the levels proposed, as a minimum, is appropriate in the context of any of the Spatial Options which the Local Plan may be based on. To that end, and reflecting the importance of ensuring these settlements accommodate some growth, as expanded on further below, such provision can and should be a constant and fixed component of all of the Options and not reliant on Option 1 being selected.

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 415 of the Integrated Assessment of the Central Lancashire Local Plan Pre-Submission Local Plan - Main Report (January 2025) (Evidence document CD3) Integrated Assessment of the Central Lancashire Local Plan

As qualification to this point, we would note that smaller settlements such as Bretherton face a number of challenges and threats to their long term social and economic sustainability. A positive and proactive Local Plan response is required in acknowledgement of and to address such issues.

As examples, typically these settlements are the least affordable for working families with local households constrained in their ability to meet their housing needs. They also often have an ageing population which undermines the sustainability of certain services and facilities and do not have the critical mass of population more generally for services to be sustained on a profitable or cost-effective basis – be they services provided by the private or public sectors.

The closure of post-offices, public houses or the withdrawal of bus services or loss of funding for community facilities is a common indicator of this.

We expand on this point, in the context of Bretherton specifically, below.

This point, and the need for a proportionate level of new development within smaller settlements, is acknowledged within the Submission CLLP at paragraph 3.16 which states that:

*An appropriate level of development in smaller and rural settlements is important in supporting the economic vitality and viability of local communities. The type of development proposed in all settlements must be appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement, its place in the hierarchy and local community needs. South Ribble and Chorley have a number of rural settlements to the east and west of the boroughs*

Lilford 2005 supports this acknowledgement.

### **The Bretherton context**

Consistent with the above, evidence would support that Bretherton, as a rural settlement, faces a number of challenges to its long term sustainability and thus there is a need for a Local Plan response to support its economic (and social) vitality and viability. In this regard, it is noted that:

- Based on the 2021 census 21.4% of the population of Bretherton was aged 65 or above, against a national average of below 17% with the proportion of people<sup>2</sup> aged 75 or above in Bretherton expected to rise to 12.4% against 7% in 2038.

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<sup>2</sup> Table 5.7 and para 208 of the Bretherton Housing Needs Assessment (January 2023) Report which forms part of the evidence base to the Bretherton Neighbourhood Plan

- The average house price in Bretherton in 2024 was £535,000 – the second highest of any settlement in Chorley<sup>3</sup>.
- The median house price in Bretherton is 13.8x the median household income, compared to a Chorley average of 5.1x. This is the highest ratio in Chorley by some margin<sup>4</sup>.

The provision of a proportionate level of new development in Bretherton is an important part of the response to these issues. This can:

- Provide homes for working age households in the interests of creating a more balanced and mixed demographic and supporting the viability of services.
- Provide affordable homes.
- Provide the market with additional housing options and in turn support a natural resetting of house prices.
- Enable investment in the creation of new or improvement of existing civic infrastructure.

In respect of the final point, Lilford 2005 is in a unique position in its ability to contribute to this outcome due to its significant land ownership across Bretherton. This extends to a number of the settlement’s recreational uses, including Bretherton Cricket Club and agricultural land surrounding the settlement through which Public Rights of Way run.

Lilford 2005 has a long history of investment in the village and its civic infrastructure as part of its aspiration to make Bretherton a sustainable place to live which offers a high quality of life for its residents. Recent investments include the donation of the land accommodating the war memorial within the village to the Parish Council and donation of £7,500 towards upgrading the children’s playground in the village.

Lilford 2005 is committed to continuing to invest in the village and its community into the future. This is part of Lilford 2005’s broader aspiration to leave a positive legacy in Bretherton through enhancing the village and securing a long term sustainable future for the settlement.

Reflecting the above points, whilst Lilford 2005 does not wish to comment on the wider merits and soundness of the CLLP spatial strategy pursued, it would note that the principle of a proportionate allocation of sites within rural settlements specifically reflects a sound approach. This ensures the development needs of these settlements

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<sup>3</sup> Table 3.3 Chorley Borough Housing Demand and Need Assessment 2024 (December 2024) (Evidence document HO10) [ho10-chorley-housing-need-and-demand-assessment-2024-final-report.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> Table 3.13 Chorley Borough Housing Demand and Need Assessment 2024 (December 2024) (Evidence document HO10) [ho10-chorley-housing-need-and-demand-assessment-2024-final-report.pdf](#)

are met and supports their long term sustainability. This is aligned particularly with paragraph 83 of the NPPF which notes:

*To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.*

**Question 2.3: What other spatial strategies and distributions of growth were considered during plan preparation, and why were they discounted? Where is the evidence for this? Were alternative approaches tested in the Integrated Assessment work?**

As noted in response to Question 2.1, whilst Lilford 2005 does not wish to comment on the merits of other spatial strategies and distribution of growth, it considers it important that as part of any such strategy, individual settlements should, where achievable, accommodate a proportionate level of minimum growth to ensure their long term sustainability.

This, as noted, should, and can be, a constant in relation to whichever spatial strategy is pursued whilst giving scope for strategies to differ in respect of the distribution of development beyond this minimum level within each settlement.

**Question 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?**

In considering the above points in relation to Lilford 2005's land at South Road, it should be noted that this represents the only residential site in the settlement which is able to accommodate a diversity of accommodation by virtue of its scale.

No other sites in Bretherton have been appraised for allocation in the assessment process (See Document HO14c Appendix 5) and so it is assumed the Council's site search exercise, informed by a call for sites, has not revealed any other credible candidate sites. This reflects that Bretherton is constrained by the Green Belt, with Green Belt options having been discounted by the plan making authority before sites are subject to detailed appraisal.

In this context, attention is drawn to the following attributes of Site HS/6 which are important considerations in establishing its suitability as an allocation in the context of meeting Bretherton's development needs:

- It is located within the settlement boundary of village and outside of the Green Belt.
- It is not subject to any proposals in the emerging Bretherton Neighbourhood Plan which would conflict with the principle of residential development.
- It is located within Flood Zone 1.
- It does not comprise best and most versatile agricultural land.
- It is located on the main village road front with direct access provided to it.

The above provide a sound basis for the site's allocation when compared to alternatives within Bretherton which may theoretically exist.

**Question 2.5: Does the Plan allow sufficient development in rural local centres, smaller villages and hamlets, rural areas and settlements to comply with paragraph 83 of the Framework? Are the proposed settlement development boundaries up to date and are these appropriately drawn? What factors were taken into account in designating these?**

As outlined in Lilford 2005's response to Question 2.1, the Local Plan must ensure sufficient development is directed to rural settlements to ensure their development needs are met and enable their long term sustainability. This is consistent with the requirement of NPPF paragraph 83.

Insofar as it enables the allocation of the minimum level of development needed in Tier 4 and 5 settlements to this end, the CLLP's selected spatial strategy is aligned with this principle (see CLLP paragraph 3.16). We would observe that the level of development directed to rural settlements for this purpose represents a small proportion of the total development requirement and represents a minimum requirement in these locations.

The level and type of development directed to Bretherton for this purpose is appropriate, reflective of its size and role in accommodating local facilities serving a broader catchment.