

Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination

Matters, Issues and Questions

Matter 4 – Strategic Sites & Mixed Use Allocations (Policies SS3 – SS6 & EC5 & 6)

Issue 4 – Are the proposed strategic allocations justified, effective, developable, deliverable, in line with national policy and otherwise soundly based? Note: This matter focusses on the merits of the individual strategic sites and mixed use allocations, the process for selecting site allocations is dealt with in Matter 2.

Policy SS3 North West Preston/Bartle

4.1 Why was the site selected as a strategic site? What evidence supports the allocation in terms of:

- **Size**
- **Capacity**
- **Layout**
- **Infrastructure requirements**
- **Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations**
- **Delivery**
- **Viability**

The site has been deemed a strategic allocation due to its size and the fact that it is a continuation and extension to the existing strategic MD2 allocation in the current Local Plan. The site is the largest housing allocation in Central Lancashire and Preston and therefore this allocation reflects the contribution it has made and will continue to make towards delivering the plan's housing requirement. The existing MD2 allocation area has a detailed [North West Preston Masterplan](#), and a large proportion of the additional area allocated under SS3 has planning permission (Bartle Garden Village under 06/2020/0888).

Regarding evidence supporting the allocation:-

- Size/Capacity - the developable area comprises 45.1 ha permitted at Bartle Garden Village and 18.29ha new allocations north of Bartle Lane, north of existing MD2 allocation. Since SS3 was drafted, further permissions have been granted to the total of 429no dwellings within the existing MD2 area. Therefore,

the remaining capacity of MD2 is now c.841, without planning permission. The remainder of SS3 is made up of c.397 dwellings to the north of the existing MD2, creating an extension to the existing allocation and Bartle Garden Village of c.1100 dwellings. This capacity quantum is broadly consistent with the 'Suburban' density defined within the Housing Density Study (HO05), when applied to the residual undeveloped area

- Layout – as detailed within the KDCs of SS3, the majority of the North West Preston area is covered by the North West Preston Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document and the Bartle Garden Village masterplan approved under outline planning permission 06/2020/0888.
- Infrastructure requirements – SS3's infrastructure requirements are set out within the Key Development Considerations (KDCs). The KDCs are not intended to propose infrastructure extending beyond that already agreed within the area covered by existing planning permissions. A recent £208m highway investment has unlocked land to the north of East West Link Road, within the current MD2 allocation, and land surrounding the Preston Western Distributor to facilitate Bartle Garden village.
- Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations – The plan's thematic policies provide a framework within which the likely effects of the development will be fully understood. Site specific studies are also identified within the KDCs.
- Delivery – forecasts/evidence are set out within the [HO18b Appendix 2 Five year housing land supply Preston](#) proformas and [HO18e Appendix 5 Overall housing land supply Preston](#) forecasts.
- Viability - The plan's strategic sites were viability tested in Section 7 of the Local Plan Viability Report (IT05). SS3 is discussed in detail within table 7.1, 7.2 and para 7.28, concluding that the site is within a high value zone and is considered to be marginally viable. Much of the information necessary for a full test was not made available to the consultants, although the agent representing two of the most significant landowners there are limited site concerns.

4.2 Does the policy provide sufficient information on site specific constraints and requirements such as the physical and social infrastructure that may be required as part of the development and its phasing?

Yes, the Policy sets out the main site constraints and infrastructure requirements in the Key Development Considerations. As stated above, the site is a continuation (and expansion) of the current strategic site allocation MD2, and therefore the existing [masterplan](#), and extant planning permissions also deal with this issue.

4.3 Does policy SS3 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? Are there any necessary modifications to the policy?

Yes, SS3, through the use of Key Development Considerations, provides clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal. No modifications are proposed.

Policy SS4 – Fulwood Barracks

4.4 Why was the site selected as a strategic site? What evidence supports the allocation in terms of:

- **Size**
- **Capacity**
- **Layout**
- **Infrastructure requirements**
- **Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations**
- **Delivery**
- **Viability**

The site has been deemed as a strategic allocation due to the historic value of the site and the importance of the barracks to the surrounding area and its community; there are 16 Grade II listed structures within the site, and it is located within Fulwood Conservation Area.

Draft Policy SS4: Strategic Allocation Fulwood Barracks, Site Topic Paper (TP07) has been prepared (September 2025) to provide additional information on the allocation. The Topic Paper addresses the site opportunities and constraints alongside the design and technical considerations and provides the evidence base for the proposed allocation. The Topic Paper has been jointly produced by PCC and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

4.5 Does the policy provide sufficient information on site specific constraints and requirements such as the physical and social infrastructure that may be required as part of the development?

The Policy sets out the main site constraints and infrastructure requirements in the Key Development Considerations. These are further detailed in the Topic Paper. The site will be subject to a Masterplan which will ensure a comprehensive, strategic framework for the development of the site to ensure all constraints highlighted are correctly taken account of and all physical and social infrastructure requirements are met.

4.6 Does policy SS4 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? Are the Council's proposed modifications to the policy needed for soundness? Are there other necessary modifications to the policy?

Yes, SS4, using Key Development Considerations, provides clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal

The Council's proposed modifications for SS4 are purely factual corrections requested by Historic England and the DIO, the DIO requested the areas of the ancient battlefield be removed from the site boundary, this is the suspected location of the Battle of Preston. Whilst this area is currently only accessible from within the barracks, it would not form part of the developable area, and as such the site boundary is updated to reflect only the area the DIO are looking to develop.

Policy SS5 – Preston West

4.7 Why was the site selected as a strategic site? What evidence supports the allocation in terms of:

- **Size**
- **Capacity**
- **Layout**
- **Employment / Housing land split**
- **Infrastructure requirements**
- **Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations**
- **Delivery**
- **Viability**

The site has been deemed as a strategic allocation due to its size. It is the second largest housing allocation in Central Lancashire and in Preston and this allocation

reflects the significant contribution it will make towards delivering the plan's housing requirement in this plan period and into the next.

Draft Policy SS5: Strategic Allocation Preston West, Site Topic Paper has been prepared (September 2025) (TP08) to provide additional information on the allocation. The Topic Paper has been jointly prepared by PCC, The Harworth Group and Tallentire Ltd who represent the landowners. The Topic Paper outlines the issues and constraints, in the context of the draft Local Plan policy, and how these can be addressed to ensure the delivery of development at the site.

4.8 Does the policy provide sufficient information on site specific constraints and requirements such as the physical and social infrastructure that may be required as part of the development?

The Policy sets out the main site constraints and infrastructure requirements in the Key Development Considerations. These are further detailed in the Topic Paper. The site will be subject to a Masterplan which will ensure a comprehensive, strategic framework for the development of the site to ensure all constraints highlighted are correctly taken account of and all physical and social infrastructure requirements are met to create a cohesive and vibrant new settlement.

4.9 Does policy SS5 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? Are there any necessary modifications to the policy?

Yes, SS5, using the 4 bullet points and the Key Development Considerations, provides clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal.

In relation to bullet point (g) Harworth identified concern this indicated that the developer is expected to fund delivery of the new station, this is not the intention of the wording in this bullet. If the Inspectors believe further clarification is required on this point the Councils would be open to consideration of additional wording suggesting the developments role in supporting the delivery of the station only. The purpose of this bullet is to reflect the importance of delivery of Cottam Station for securing sustainable transport options for this site. LCC are currently working on the delivery of this station, and this bullet is therefore to reflect the role of this development in enabling delivery of the station, not in providing the funding required.

Policy SS6 – Pickering’s Farm

4.10 Why was the site selected as a strategic site? What evidence supports the allocation in terms of:

- **Size**
- **Capacity**
- **Layout**
- **Infrastructure requirements**
- **Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations**
- **Delivery**
- **Viability**

SS6 – Pickering’s Farm was selected as a strategic site due it being the largest allocation in South Ribble and significant contribution it will make towards delivering the plan’s housing requirement. The CLAs agreed with Homes England’s request to subdivide the allocation based on the site’s development status. Much of the northern area (SS6A) has planning permission and a delivery partner (Taylor Wimpey). Delivery progress regarding the southern area (SS6B) area is less advanced. Subdivision has consequently enabled drafting the site’s Key Development Considerations (KDCs) to be refined and deliverability to be more accurately presented.

Regarding evidence supporting the allocation:

- Size / Capacity – The size/capacity of SS6A remain unchanged from that within the adopted South Ribble Local Plan (2015) and has been rolled forward. For SS6B, the site’s size/capacity is not explicit within adopted policy, but as Safeguarded Land, has historically been recorded as being able to accommodate c.545 dwellings. This capacity quantum is broadly consistent with the ‘Suburban’ density defined within the Housing Density Study ([HO05](#)), when applied to the residual undeveloped area. It is also consistent with Homes England’s expectations regarding yield (see Regulation 19 representation ref D4 – no modifications proposed).
- Layout – As detailed within the KDCs of SS6A, a masterplan covering most of the SS6A area was approved as part of permission 07/2021/00886/ORM and 07/2021/00887/ORM. Indicative layouts covering the whole of the SS6A + SS6B area were also submitted within the Design and Access Statement of permission 07/2021/00886/ORM but were not secured by condition. These documents can be made available to the Inspectors upon request. For SS6B, concept designs

are included within Homes England's Regulation 19 representation ([D4](#), pages 47-58).

- Infrastructure requirements – SS6A's infrastructure requirements are set out within the KDCs. The KDCs are not intended to propose infrastructure extending beyond that already agreed within the area covered by permission 07/2021/00886/ORM and 07/2021/00887/ORM. A Cross Borough Link Road (CBLR) is however necessary to deliver the wider site. This was identified within the adopted South Ribble Local Plan (2015) and has been rolled forward. The KDCs have consequently been drafted so as to require applicants for the residual area to contribute towards the CBLR. For SS6B, the infrastructure requirements are less developed and are still being explored by Homes England (see Regulation 19 representation D4, section 1.3.2). However, it is unlikely the site will require any unusually significant items of infrastructure.
- Assessment of the effects of development and necessary mitigations – The plan's thematic policies provide a framework within which the likely effects of the development will be fully understood. Site specific studies are also identified within the KDCs.
- Effects of the allocation have been addressed within the following documents:
 - Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) South Ribble Profiles, Appendix 7 ([HO14e](#)) – Site Profiles 32 and 34.
 - Transport Assessment (see Matter 14 for further details):
 - Stage 1b ([IT06e](#)), Figures 5.68-5.73. Summarised at p149.
 - Stage 2A ([IT06gi](#)), Figures 5-26 + 5-27. Summarised at p40
 - Stage 2A ([IT06gi](#)), Figures 5-32 +5-33. Summarised at p54
 - Stage 2B ([IT07](#)), Figures 6-5 + 6-6. Summarised at p44
 - Stage 2B ([IT07](#)) Figures 6-11 + 6-12. Summarised at p58.
 - Stage 2B ([IT07](#)) Figures 7-9 +7-10. Summarised at p95
 - Stage 2B ([IT07](#)) Figures 7-17 +7-18. Summarised at p111

The study broadly concludes that whilst congestion is likely to increase on the roads surrounding Pickering's Farm, most are still unlikely to exceed capacity, once sustainable transport mitigation is delivered.

- Integrated Appraisal ([CD05](#)) – Assessment of SS6 against sustainability objectives can be found in Table 6.6.

- Delivery – forecasts/evidence are set out within the ‘Appendix 3 Five-year housing land supply South Ribble’ proformas ([HO18c](#)) and ‘Appendix 6a Overall housing land supply South Ribble’ ([HO18f](#)) forecasts. Broadly, it is expected that SS6A will deliver first, followed by SS6B.
- Viability – The plan’s strategic sites were viability tested in Section 7 of the Local Plan Viability Report ([IT05](#)). SS6 is discussed in detail at para 7.34, concluding that the site was not viable. This conclusion is heavily caveated, however. Much of the information necessary for a full test was denied to the consultants. Section 4 of Homes England / Taylor Wimpey’s Regulation 19 representation ([B50](#)) explains the reasons behind the data gap and confirms the site is viable. More generally, Homes England’s involvement should give the Inspectors confidence that any viability difficulties could be overcome.

4.11 Does the policy provide sufficient information on site specific constraints and requirements such as the physical and social infrastructure that may be required as part of the development?

SS6 contains a suite of KDCs, setting out site specific constraints and requirements. These are intended to be read alongside their respective parent policies found in other sections of the plan.

4.12 Does policy SS6 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? Are there any necessary modifications to the policy?

SS6 provides clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal. No modifications are proposed.

Policy EC5 – Mixed Use Allocations Chorley

4.13 For each site, why was the site selected as a mixed-use site? In particular:

Policy EC5 allocates 7 sites for mixed use development (housing and employment) in Chorley. All of these sites were promoted as mixed use sites by the landowner/site promoter.

a) Have the site constraints been appropriately taken into account in the allocation of the site?

The site selection process undertaken through the development of the CLLP, has been based on a comprehensive appraisal of sites. This appraisal of sites was carried out through the SHELAA, with the methodology developed and agreed by the CLAs in line with national guidance. The SHELAA provides a complete audit of available land by identifying all the sites available for development across Central Lancashire and assessing their suitability for different uses. The assessments included consideration of relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

The site assessment profiles for the Chorley sites are provided through SHELAA Appendix 5 ([HO14c](#)), they detail how the constraints have been considered and assessed for each site, and, where relevant, identify potential mitigation measures that may be needed.

Additional information has been drawn from other evidence, including Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) (FR01-FR04).

Two allocations are accompanied by Key Development Considerations (KDCs) (CLLP Appendix 6) ([CD01](#)) that detail how the identified constraints should be mitigated through development proposals, including early engagement with service/ infrastructure providers, scheme design and the use of planning obligations. Key development considerations were not considered necessary for all allocations. They have only been prepared for the allocations where there are known constraints and/or other issues that make developing the site more complex i.e. the site is in multiple ownership.

In March 2025, after the Regulation 19 CLLP had been published and was in the process of being consulted on, the Environment Agency published updated flood maps. The Environment Agency submitted a representation to the Regulation 19 consultation advising that the updated flood maps resulted in more of site EC5.7 (Land south west of The Green and Langton Brow, Eccleston) being classified as having a high risk of flooding, and as such they advised the developable area of 1.19ha for housing will have to be reduced.

The proposed allocation applies a 50/50 split between housing and employment. Previously approximately 50% of the site fell within Flood Zone 3, it was envisaged that the employment uses would be developed on this part of the site. On the new flood maps approximately 75% of the site now falls within Flood Zone 3. It is expected that

the amount of housing identified for site EC5.7 in Policy EC5 can still be achieved through higher density housing being provided on the part of the site not in Flood Zone 3 (possibly apartments) or by providing housing/apartments on upper floors of employment uses provided access is not within Flood Zone 3. This will need to be addressed through any future planning application to which the Environment Agency will be a consultee.

b) How was the balance of employment and housing arrived at? Have the indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?

Balance between housing and employment

The split between housing and employment on each of the mixed use sites was guided by site promoters as well as site assessment work undertaken through the SHELAA. Further information is provided on each site below:

- EC5.1 – the site was originally considered for employment allocation in the SHELAA and proposed for employment allocation in the Preferred Options CLLP as it has planning permission for 5 office units, with one completed. However, in response to the site promoter survey undertaken in August 2024, the site promoter requested that the site be taken forward as a mixed use site. This was due to a lack of interest in the remaining office units permitted. The total site area after excluding the part of the site where the office unit has been built is 2.04ha. The site promoter did not specify a mix therefore an appropriate mix was determined through the SHELAA process. A road (Station Approach) runs through the site therefore the site is effectively split into two parcels. The parcel to the east of Station Approach contains the newly built office unit which covers approximately 50% of that parcel. Further employment units are located to the east of this parcel. It was therefore considered that employment uses were most appropriate on this part of the site. The remaining land within this parcel measures 0.54ha therefore this is the amount of land allocated in Policy EC5 for employment. The parcel to the west of Station Approach is located adjacent to existing residential areas therefore this part of the site was considered more appropriate for housing. This parcel measures 1.5ha therefore this is the amount of land allocated for housing in Policy EC5.
- EC5.2 – the site is in two separate ownerships (Homes England and Chorley Council). The split between housing and employment reflects the proposed uses being promoted by the site owners. Homes England are proposing housing on their part of the site (6.1 hectares) with Chorley Council proposing housing and

employment on their part of the site (3.1 hectares for housing and 0.3 hectares for employment).

- EC5.3 – this site was proposed as a mixed use allocation by the site promoter throughout the SHELAA and CLLP process. The mix reflects that proposed by the site promoter. Employment development is proposed on the southern part of the site that is at flood risk with housing only proposed on the northern part of the site not at flood risk.
- EC5.4 – this site is owned by Chorley Council. The site was previously proposed as a housing allocation, however a small part is now proposed for employment to allow the expansion of an employment unit on the adjacent industrial estate.
- EC5.5 – the site was promoted as a mixed use allocation through the SHELAA process. 6.7 hectares of the site has planning permission for employment development which has commenced. This amount of land is therefore allocated for employment. The remainder of the site is allocated for housing. It previously had outline planning permission for 100 dwellings, but this permission has now expired.
- EC5.6 – this site is owned by Chorley Council. The split between housing and employment reflects the Councils proposals for the site in a live planning application.
- EC5.7 – the allocation proposes a 50/50 split between housing and employment as agreed with the site promoter. As stated in the answer to question 4.13a) above the extent of flood risk has increased on the new flood maps published in March 2025. The site area for housing will therefore need to be reduced but it is considered that the same number of dwellings can be achieved.

Indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations

These considerations have been adequately addressed when selecting sites for allocation and determining the development potential of each allocation.

The SHELAA report ([HO14a](#)) details how sites were assessed. The site assessments were informed by the specialist views of key organisations (including LCC Highways, Environment Agency etc). Alongside this, the assessments included an appraisal of constraints, realistic capacities and development potential. Section Two of the SHELAA details the methodology for estimating the development potential and yield of

sites, which includes identifying the quantum of land that is suitable for development and for the residential part of mixed use allocations, applying a density multiplier to the developable area of sites (i.e. the 'gross site area' where a site is unconstrained, or the 'net developable site area' where a site is partially constrained). The density multiplier applied was dependent on a site's location, context and surrounding built form. The Central Lancashire Density Study ([HO05](#)) was the starting point for selecting an appropriate density for each site.

If a landowner or site promoter has prepared a masterplan or provided information to the Council regarding their proposed mix and yield, this was used to inform the mix and density assumptions (where agreed by the Council). Equally, if planning permission has been previously granted, or a planning application was under consideration, the quantum of development approved/proposed within the planning application was assumed to constitute the development potential of a site.

The Viability Assessment ([CD13/IT05](#)) included a whole plan viability assessment of the draft policies and proposed site allocations within the emerging CLLP. For the non-strategic residential allocation sites, including the residential element of mixed use sites, the appraisals considered the viability of greenfield and brownfield sites in different value zones. In Chorley there is a small area within the lower value zone which is considered unviable. Only one of the mixed use allocations falls within this area, EC5.2. However, the site owners which are Chorley Council and Homes England have not identified any viability issues and are progressing with proposals to develop the site.

The Employment Land Study 2024 Update ([ER06a](#)) reviewed the employment element of the mixed use allocations in terms of both their qualitative attractiveness to the market and their likely deliverability, including consideration of some of the practical barriers they may face to development. It provides a recommendation as to whether each site being considered for employment development should be considered for allocation. It identifies that all allocations except EC5.2 and EC5.7 should be considered for allocation. For those two sites it identifies they should 'maybe' be considered for allocation. It identifies that EC5.2 will require public sector support and coordination. This site is owned by Chorley Council and Homes England who are progressing proposals to develop the site and will seek public sector support where necessary. It identifies that EC5.7 can be allocated assuming flood risk issues can be addressed. Flood risk has been addressed through the SFRA. In light of the change to the flood risk map for this site, and the subsequent comments from the Environment Agency, any development proposal must ensure there is no residential development on the part of the site within Flood Zone 3.

A site promoter survey took place in August 2024, which sought information from those promoting sites being considered for allocation in relation to proposed yields, development timescales and other considerations including feasibility and viability. None of the site promoters that responded identified viability issues.

The number of dwellings and amount of employment land on each allocation within Policy EC5 are indicative based on evidence.

c) Are the various requirements set out in the policy clear, justified and effective? Do the policies provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?

Yes, the requirements of Policy EC5 are clear, justified and effective and will sufficiently guide a decision maker.

Policy EC5 identifies 7 sites that are allocated and protected for mixed use development, with an indicative split between housing and employment. For 2 sites, marked by an asterisk, development meeting the KDCs set within Appendix 6 will be supported. It also identifies the sites, marked by a #, where a planning application is required to be accompanied by a wintering bird survey in accordance with Policy EN7. The requirements of Policy EC5 are therefore clear. For allocations without KDCs, requirements set out in other policies in the CLLP will apply. It is not appropriate to repeat all of these requirements in Policy EC5 and it is not considered necessary to do so as the plan should be read as a whole.

The site allocations are justified, because they have been identified through a robust assessment process (SHELAA (HO14)), taking into account all reasonable alternative sites and based on proportionate evidence. The policy is also effective because the sites have been determined to be deliverable over the plan period and identified through effective joint working between the CLAs (and their partners).

d) Is there evidence that the development of the allocation is developable and deliverable during the plan period?

Yes, the SHELAA ([HO14a](#)) methodology details how sites were assessed as developable and deliverable. All sites that were determined to be suitable, available and achievable have been included as mixed use allocations.

There are not considered to be any viability issues that will prevent the sites from being developed in the plan period and it is considered that any constraints identified through the SHELAA can be mitigated.

e) Are there any omissions in the policy, and is it sufficiently flexible?

The Council does not consider that there are any omissions in Policy EC5. The sites have been identified through a robust SHELAA process, which has included four Call for Sites consultations and then the assessment of all sites suggested to the Council as well as additional sites identified by the Council. The assessment of those sites has been transparently documented through the SHELAA evidence.

Policy EC5 is sufficiently flexible. It details the sites allocated and protected for mixed use development and clearly states, for those site that have KDCs, they will be considered in line with the KDCs of Appendix 6. The KDCs provide the appropriate guidance and sufficient flexibility to ensure development proposals respond to identified constraints but without being wholly prescriptive. Irrespective of whether a housing allocation site is accompanied by KDCs, the plan should be read as a whole Through the Regulation 19 consultation, some requests were made by Historic England (D02.16), National Grid (D05.4) and United Utilities (D15.02-03) for the inclusion of specific, detailed requirements within the KDCs. However, these matters are addressed through other policies, including EN13, or through the development management process.

Policy EC6 – Mixed Use Allocations South Ribble (Cuerden)

4.13 For each site, why was the site selected as a mixed-use site? In particular:

The [South Ribble Local Plan](#) (2015), Policy C4 – Cuerden Strategic Site, allocates 65ha of land at Cuerden for employment-led use. The policy confirms that alternative uses, such as retail, leisure and housing, may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that they help deliver employment uses on the strategic site. The policy also states that planning permission for the site is subject to the submission of i) an agreed Masterplan, b) phasing and infrastructure delivery schedule and c) an agreed programme of implementation.

In 2015, the Cuerden Masterplan ([CLA08](#)) was adopted which considered the requirements of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and South Ribble Local Plan. It recognised (page 5) that “*the scale and complexity [of the site] requires a certain mix of uses*” and that “*high value enabling development is essential... to the scale of*

infrastructure investment that is required before land can be made available to occupiers...”. An outline planning permission was submitted to, and granted by LCC, in December 2023 (planning reference LCC/2022/0044) for a mixed-use scheme, including employment, retail and residential. Reserved matters approval (LCC/2025/0007) for the residential phase of the scheme was granted on 15/10/2025.

Whilst the site is designated as a strategic employment site within the South Ribble Local Plan, it has been re-designated to a mixed-use allocation site within the CLLP because of the mixed-use outline permission extant on the site, the need for the site to meet the employment land needs of Central Lancashire, rather than functioning on a wider strategic scale, and discussions between the Central Lancashire authorities and LCC in respect of ‘strategic’ allocations. This is explained in paragraphs 5.28 and 5.29 of the Statement of Common Ground with Lancashire County Council (Sept 2025) ([DC11](#)).

a) Have the site constraints been appropriately taken into account in the allocation of the site?

Constraints are identified through the Masterplan ([CLA08](#)), and within Appendix 6 of the CLLP. They include:

- Viability – which is addressed through enabling mixed-uses. The Employment Study ([EC06a](#)) and the Viability Study ([IT05](#)) confirm that the site is considered viable; and the majority of the site has outline planning permission (LCC/2022/0044), supported by a viability assessment.
- Highways/road infrastructure – early dialogue with the Highway Authority (LCC) is recommended. LCC have confirmed that work is currently ongoing to design the required off-site highway mitigation packages together with the initial phase of the on-site highways and infrastructure layout. Further information is provided under part (d) of this response.
- Environmental and historic features on the site – early assessments and dialogue with specialist advisors is recommended. The planning application for LCC/2022/0044 is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement explaining how matters such as the environment and heritage have been considered through the outline designs of the site.
- Infrastructure – including phasing, drainage and existing site infrastructure. Again, the key development considerations identify the need for a Phasing and

Infrastructure Delivery Schedule, early dialogue and a requirement for planning obligations.

The site Masterplan, the existing planning consent, and the CLLP's Key Development Considerations (Appendix 6) demonstrate that the constraints can be overcome.

b) How was the balance of employment and housing arrived at? Have the indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?

CLLP Policy EC6 identifies a total site area of 66ha, including 50ha of employment land and up to 220 dwellings. A minor modification has already been proposed through [CD03](#) (modification reference MA12), to correct the 16ha listed under 'Site Area for Housing (ha)' to 'Site Area for Enabling Mixed Uses (ha)'.

The basic rationale for the balance of uses on the site is guided by the Masterplan ([CLA08](#)) (2015). The Masterplan (page 5) confirms that the scale and complexity of the opportunity at Cuerden requires a certain mix of uses to ensure viability, support infrastructure delivery and employment opportunities, and create a vibrant daytime and evening place. In relation to viability and phasing (page 51), the Masterplan states that an initial phase of high value enabling development (residential) is needed to generate the value to sustain and deliver the on and off strategic access infrastructure and unlock development across the rest of the site.

The proportion of non-employment uses can only be that which provides sufficient value to make the scheme viable. A Viability Assessment was submitted as part of the planning application LCC/2022/0044 and was independently reviewed by chartered surveyors Roger Hannah. The review concluded that the proposed development, including development mix, is deliverable albeit at absolute minimum profit levels, and, as a result, the proposed amount of non-employment uses is required so to protect the viability of the scheme. Outline planning permission LCC/2022/0044 was subsequently granted by LCC, for a mixed-use development including employment, retail, and residential use, demonstrating that the development mix for the majority of the Cuerden site has been adequately addressed.

A reserved matters application for the residential phase of LCC/2022/0044 was approved by LCC on 15/10/2025, under the reference LCC/2025/0007. A further planning application for residential development on other land is currently being determined by SRBC under the reference 07/2025/00654/FUL.

With regard the remainder of the site, Cuerden is a greenfield site and paragraph ES29 of the CLA's Viability Study ([CD13](#)) confirms that "*medium and higher-value greenfield sites, both within and outside settlement boundaries, are viable*". The appropriate development-mix for the remainder of the site would be expected to be addressed through subsequent planning proposals.

c) Are the various requirements set out in the policy clear, justified and effective? Do the policies provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?

Yes, the policy is clear, justified and effective. It is considered justified because it is an existing allocation, carried forward in the CLLP to meet employment land needs, and the majority of the site has an extant outline planning consent for mixed-use development. It is considered effective because the site is deliverable over the plan period, and constraints can be addressed through the Masterplan, Policy EC6 and the Key Development Consideration (KDCs), and through the outline permission.

Policy EC6 states that the Cuerden site (EC6.1) is allocated and protected for mixed-use development, and that development meeting the KDCs for the site, set out within Appendix 6, will be supported. Thus, the policy makes clear that a development proposal should be assessed against the KDCs.

d) Is there evidence that the development of the allocation is developable and deliverable during the plan period?

Yes. The majority of the Cuerden site is already covered by outline permission and residential applications approved (LCC/2025/0007) or pending determination (07/2025/00654/FUL). The site has been assessed as developable and deliverable through evidence studies, including the SHELAA (HO14) and Employment Land Study ([ER06a](#)).

Planning applications have been received for residential areas of the site – LCC/2025/0007 seeking reserved matters approval for 74 dwellings on Phase E of the outline consented site (granted by LCC 15/10/2025); and 07/2025/00654/FUL seeking full approval for 76 dwellings on the north-western parcel of the allocation site. Landowners and developers have already indicated their timescales for development of these sites, and these are detailed through the Council's housing supply forecasts. Both sites are expected to be built out within five years. A further part of the Cuerden allocation site has already been developed for 9 dwellings (07/2021/00973).

LCC have confirmed that work is currently ongoing to design the required off site highways mitigation packages together with the initial phase of the onsite highways and infrastructure layout. The planning condition on highway mitigation does not require all of the highway mitigation to be in place before any employment/mixed use development can start; just that the designs and a phasing programme have been agreed. The offsite highways mitigation designs are moving at pace but are large pieces of work involving both the Local Highways Authority and National Highways. For this reason, it is not possible to give a precise date for conditions discharge submissions and subsequent Reserved Matters, but LCC confirm this is likely to be in the order of months rather than years away.

Two southern parcels of the allocation site were purchased in November 2024 by the Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trusts as part of the proposals for a new hospital to replace Royal Preston Hospital. At the time of finalising the CLLP, the CLAs had not received any direct confirmation from landowners, nor the NHS Trust as purchaser, as to the relevant land within Cuerden which was had been acquired for the proposed hospital site. The sale of 15.5 hectares of land was confirmed through the [New Hospitals Programme \(NHP\) website](#) in May 2025.

The NHP website confirms that, whilst the Trusts have secured the site for a potential new hospital, no final decisions have been, or can be, made at this stage. Fully formed proposals for the new hospitals are still being developed and will depend on many factors including the outcome of a public consultation. The purchase of a potential site is intended to support evidence of deliverability, to enable consultation to commence in the future. This consultation includes suggestions of alternative sites for the Trust to consider.

The Trust has an exit plan in place. Should the position change and the site no longer be required for the replacement Royal Preston Hospital, then the Trust and Integrated Care Board (ICB) will review the preferred way forward for the site, including interim site management and potential disposal.

Therefore, there remains a large degree of uncertainty about a new hospital on the Cuerden site. As Paragraph 6.25 of the CLLP ([CD01](#)) notes, the CLAs are continuing to work with the NHS to understand the detail and timescale of any forthcoming proposals. At this time, however, it is considered premature to make any changes to the policy or allocations. The CLAs will continue to liaise with the NHS, Hospital Trusts and ICBs to monitor progress on a new RPH, and any new hospital will, of course, be considered through future reviews and iterations of a Local Plan.

e) Are there any omissions in the policy, and is it sufficiently flexible?

The CLAs note that concerns were raised through representations that the policy as drafted contains omissions. These include: a failure to identify Cuerden as a strategic employment site (A06.01); a failure to acknowledge alternative uses on the site may be acceptable (A06.02); a need for the council to consider the appropriateness of the site for housing types and purposes (A24.18); a failure to adjust land supply areas to account for the proposed hospital on the site (A31.15); and a failure to reference specific constraints (D05.07, D15.21 and D16.6).

The CLA's response to those representations confirms that the CLAs do not consider there are any omissions in the policy. Cuerden is allocated in the CLLP as a mixed-use site, thereby supporting a mix of development types and the CLA's response to Q4.13 of this Matter explains why the site is no longer defined as 'strategic'. The Masterplan confirms development-mix is subject to viability.

Planning applications have been submitted for residential uses on the site, and they will be determined against adopted and emerging policies guiding residential types and purposes.

For the reasons set out against question 14.3(d), the CLAs do not consider that the land supply figure should be adjusted due to the uncertainty surrounding the proposed new hospital. With reference to the constraints raised by infrastructure bodies, these issues can be addressed through a Phasing and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and early engagement with infrastructure providers, and these requirements are set through the KDCs. Specific constraints may also be addressed through the Development Management process.

The CLAs consider the policy sufficiently flexible to guide expectations for development on the site, whilst not seeking to prescribe every element of development. The KDCs make clear that development of the site should, where possible accord, with the adopted Cuerden Masterplan (2015) ([CLA08](#)) or future versions.