

This matter is being dealt with by
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Kerry Trueman on behalf of Anne Jordan and
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6th November 2025

Dear Anne Jordan (BA(Hons) MRTPI) and Alison Partington (BA(Hons) MA MRTPI),

EXAMINATION OF THE CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2023 - 2041

Hearing Statements - Prepared by Story Homes

Matter 5: Hearing Statement

Introduction

1. Marrons has been appointed by our Client, Story Homes Limited (hereafter referred to as "Story Homes") to prepare this hearing statement for the Matter 5 session of the Examination of the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041.
2. Story Homes interest in the emerging CLLP lies in its control of land with the plan area which our client has proposed to be allocated for residential development
3. Story Homes' Regulation 19 representation prepared by Stantec UK Ltd (ref ID: A60) responded to the proposed Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy of the draft Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP), along with the proposed policies for a Balanced Housing Market (Chapter 4) and High Quality Environment (Chapter 7). This core representation was supported by individual site submissions and appendices.
4. The CLLP should provide a wide range of deliverable and developable sites across the plan area in order to provide competition and choice to ensure that housing needs are met in full. Story Homes made a strong case in their Regulation 19 representation (Ref ID: A60) that the draft Plan does not allow for an appropriate balance of development in a way that ensure the area's full housing needs are met. This concern is covered in detail in our hearing statement for Matter 2.
5. This Statement responds to the MIQs of relevance to Story Homes' previous representations and considers the merits of individual housing allocations in the context of overall strategy housing development within the Plan area. Particular focus is given to housing allocations in South Ribble and Chorley, with specific reference to site allocation HS3.3 (Land South of Chapel Lane, Longton) and Story Homes land interests at the Former Camelot Theme Park site and the Cuedale Garden Village (CGV) site, all of which are subject to current planning applications.

6. This statement should be read in conjunction with our Matter 2 Hearing Statement, which covers Story Homes' position concerning the re-distribution of housing and implications for delivery in South Ribble and Chorley, as well as housing needs in relation to planned economic growth and employment land allocations.

Matter 5 – Housing Allocations

Issue 5 – Are the proposed housing allocations justified, effective, developable, deliverable, in line with national policy and otherwise soundly based?

Housing Allocations - Chorley (Policy HS2)

5.1. Do the sites allocated for residential development provide an appropriate range of sites in terms of their type and size?

7. The Publication version of the draft CLLP omits draft Green Belt allocations which were previously included in the Preferred Options draft, on the unfounded claim that the Councils no longer have exceptional circumstances to warrant release of Green Belt land.
8. Story Homes have identified this as a particularly negative approach to planning for Chorley, since it results in the Council being unable to meet its own objectively assessed housing need. Instead, the CLLP seeks to relocate the Chorley housing requirement to Preston. This is likely to have significant implications for both the affordability of market housing and the availability of affordable housing in Chorley. These implications are not appropriately considered through the draft CLLP and its supporting evidence base.
9. Story Homes are of the firm view that there are exceptional circumstances which justify the review of Green Belt boundaries. The exclusion of any Green Belt allocations is a flawed and generic approach that ignores sustainable and available sites assessed by the Councils own evidence as having positive and suitable housing development potential. We invite the Inspectors to make a decision on this point, with regard to the questions raised in Matters 1, 2 and 2 and the supporting evidence, as well as Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook MP's letter¹ concerning PINS recommending as part of the Examination in Public that a Green Belt review be undertaken, in line with national policy, to meet development needs. Story Homes position is that the CLLP is unsound without Green Belt releases in South Ribble and Chorley.

Former Camelot Theme Park

10. Story Homes are of the firm opinion that the allocated sites do not provide an appropriate range of sites to meet the identified needs in Chorley.
11. The Councils support a brownfield first approach (Policy SS1 and paragraphs 2.16, 3.7 and 4.16), yet they have now dismissed the former Camelot site which is the largest brownfield land site in Chorley (27 ha).

¹ MHCLG - Local Plan examinations: letter to the Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate (October 2025)

12. The former Camelot site was unjustifiably dropped between the Preferred Options and Regulation 19 version of the CLLP. The Camelot site previously went through a rigorous assessment during a full site selection process for the adopted Chorley Local Plan (2015). At the Preferred Options stage, having undertaken a robust site assessment process, the Councils recognised the site's sustainable development potential and selected the site, including it under Policy CH/HS1.8.
13. The Camelot site's omission is further questioned in the context that the Chorley Local Plan (2015) was only found sound by the then Inspector Shelagh Bussey, on the condition that it was appropriately included:

'However, in the light of what was observed at my accompanied inspection of the Park Hall/Camelot Leisure Complex, its boundaries should be amended... Although the revised boundaries may not reflect land ownership boundaries, I conclude that they would correctly define the extent of this previously developed Green Belt site. Therefore, the Plan would not be sound unless the Policies Map was amended accordingly, as detailed by (MMMEC5).'
14. Therefore, the CLLPs omission of draft Green Belt allocations has created a significant problem for the Councils since now the site selection process is fundamentally flawed in so that it ignores the largest brownfield site in the district, in context of unmet need in Chorley, and a proposed spatial strategy that supposedly prioritises brownfield development. Therefore, Story Homes do not believe Policy HS2 is justified nor soundly based.
15. Note, this matter is covered in more detailed in relation to Policy EN15 in our Matter 12 Hearing Statement.

Matter 5 – Housing Allocations

Issue 5 – Are the proposed housing allocations justified, effective, developable, deliverable, in line with national policy and otherwise soundly based?

Housing Allocations – South Ribble (Policy HS3)

5.4 Do the sites allocated for residential development provide an appropriate range of sites in terms of their type and size?

5.5 Is each site allocated for residential development sound? In particular:

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

b) Are the various requirements set out in the policy clear, justified and effective?

c) Have the indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?

d) Is there robust evidence that the assumptions regarding the infrastructure required for the development are realistic and that it will be deliverable?

e) Is there evidence that the development of the allocations is viable and developable during the plan period?

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

5.6 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?

Chapel Lane, Longton

16. Story Homes have interests and partial control of Land South of Chapel Lane, Longton which is Site HS3.3, allocated for housing development for up to 270 dwellings in Policy HS3. Story Homes strongly supports the allocation of land at Chapel Lane. It is backed by a developer and capable of delivering with the first five years of the Plan. The site is well advanced in the planning process, with a full planning application (07/2025/00498/FUL) for 140 dwellings with access, landscaping and other associated works, currently out for consultation.
17. Land South of Chapel Lane is considered sound for residential development. Story Homes have no concerns regarding the delivery of the site. Through the planning application process, the site constraints are being fully considered, and our client is committed to delivering an appropriate infrastructure strategy.
18. Appendix 4 sets out key development considerations for certain housing allocations, including Chapel Lane, Longton. Previously, Story Homes have challenged that criterion 2 of Policy HS3, stating '*development meeting these conditions will be supported*' is not justified because the Appendix 4 schedules are only very broad 'considerations', and not prerequisite for granting permission. As such, there is no need to include this statement in the policy wording.
19. At the Regulation 19 stage, Story Homes also made a case that unnecessary weight is placed on an unjustified need for a wintering bird survey for the land at Chapel Road and called for Policy HS3.3 and Appendix 4 to be amended. A wintering bird survey could be one of many surveys required to support a planning application and its inclusion in the list of allocations suggest it is a higher priority than other considerations. It also duplicates content in the Appendix 4 schedules and is therefore not justified.

Cuerdale Garden Village

20. Regarding the overall provision of site allocations in South Ribble, Story Homes does not agree that there is an appropriate range of sites. At the Regulation 19 stage, Story Homes argued the CLLP does not robustly seek to meet the area's housing and employment needs and believe the Plan to be unsound as it fails to account for development needs across the plan period and beyond. Story Homes have suggested this shortfall addressed by reconsidering deliverable Green Belt sites which have been dismissed by the Council due to an unjustified refusal to review and release Green Belt land.
21. Story Homes have proposed a new settlement with South Ribble known as Cuerdale Garden Village (CGV), a strategic land promotion covering 284ha of land with capacity for 2,300 residential dwellings, 429,000 sqm of employment floor space² plus supporting amenities, civic infrastructure and extensive open space. This site has a live planning application (07/2022/00451) for a 'Phase 1' which currently being determined.
22. Story Homes were previously invited by South Ribble Council to develop the CGV proposal as part of wider economic growth discussions, recognising the need to provide aspirational homes in the context of key highly skills employment opportunities in the A59 growth corridor and Samlesbury Enterprise Zone, which now includes the prospect of the National Cyber Force headquarters at Samlesbury. The potential for long term growth in this location was also recognised in the Regulation 18 Preferred Options document, yet the Submission CLLP is now silent on this without explanation.
23. In reference to our Matter 2 Hearing Statement and Turley's Matter 8 and 9 Statements on behalf of Story Homes, the Councils have overlooked the need to support economic growth with a sufficient and appropriate range of housing development. Consequently, the CLLP will not effectively meet housing needs and is not justified, in line with national policy.

Conclusion

24. In conclusion, the Councils' approach to the re-distribution of housing does not reflect and is not supported by the evidence that has been provided to seek to justify the Plan. As such, Story Homes do not agree that the Plan is positively prepared and justified and thus is not soundly based.
25. The issues of housing re-distribution are discussed in more detail in response to questions raised under Matter 2 and Matter 3.

Yours sincerely,



² The employment land provisions are considered Story Homes' Matters 8 & 9 Hearing Statement prepared by Turley Associates Limited, which should be read in conjunction with this statement.



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