

Savills on behalf of Northern Trust Land

Examination into the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041

Hearing Statement

Matter 5

(Policy HS2)

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

HS2 – Housing Allocations: Chorley

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

1. HS2 allocates a wide range of sites for residential development within the jurisdiction of Chorley Borough from 2 homes to 332.
2. Site HS2.37 – Hill Top Farm, Whittle-le-Woods is draft allocated for circa 75 homes and thus represents a scale that can be delivered relatively early in the plan period, owing to its size and lack of physical infrastructure requirements, but of a sufficient size to deliver affordable housing and areas of landscaping and public open space.

Given the above, it is clear from the range of site sizes allocated in HS2 there is a sufficient mix provided as required by paragraph 72 of the NPPF. Paragraph 73 emphasises the role that small and medium sized sites can play in meeting the housing requirement. HS2.37 is a medium sized site that can be delivered quickly and provide much needed market and affordable homes for Chorley, on a Site that has been safeguarded for this purpose since the adoption of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy in July 2012.

5.2 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?

A.

3. Yes. The detailed information submitted alongside a planning application for the Site (23/00727/OUT) shows that, while there are some constraints present, in terms of topography, existing vegetation, and heritage assets, these can be mitigated by good design. It is noteworthy that the Case Officer has confirmed to the Applicant that there are no pending objections to the application from the Local Planning Authority, with the exception of Lancashire County Council Highways, which is discussed below.

4. Some of the consultation comments on the publication draft have referenced concerns in relation to the access to the Site via Birch Lane from Chorley Old Road.
5. Highways information by Curtins submitted with the planning application for the Site shows that works to the junction between Birch Lane and Chorley Old Road to facilitate residential development will result in an arrangement that can both safely handle the number of vehicular movements estimated, and improve the existing situation in terms of the safety of pedestrians.
6. Lancashire County Council is in the process of reviewing further information that it requested and was subsequently issued by Curtins on 22 August 2025. The experienced highways engineers of Curtins are firmly of the view that the junction arrangement presented, and supporting modelling, represents a positive improvement to the junction that will improve the existing situation in terms of pedestrian safety and facilitate access to the proposed development.
7. As would be expected, this evidence is technical in nature and runs to many pages. However, it can be provided at the Inspector's request. The Council is already in receipt of this.
8. Given the above, it is clear that the pending planning application means that there is more evidence available in terms of the constraints present on the Site and how these can be mitigated in order to inform a decision on the deliverability of an allocation. This evidence clearly shows that all constraints have been thoroughly assessed, taken into account and mitigation measures outlined, prior to the final decision to include the draft allocation in the submission version of the Plan was taken.
9. This represents a robust approach.
10. It is also noteworthy that HS2.37 forms part of a wider area that was safeguarded for future residential development in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy 2012. This decision was taken cognisant of the current highway situation, and it has been consistently supported as a future site for residential development.

B.

11. HS2.37 is not an allocation that has site specific policy requirements placed upon it.
12. The general policy requirements in relation to residential development including HS5, HS6, HS7, and HS11 provide a clear, justified, and effective position, as do the other design and environmental policies, in terms of this allocation.

C.

13. The indicative yield of the draft allocation HS2.37 is 75 homes. This mirrors the number applied for in the current planning application.
14. The illustrative masterplan submitted as part of the planning application, and informed by a full suite of technical information, shows that circa 75 homes can be comfortably delivered alongside open space, retention of important existing vegetation, extensive new landscaping, and surface level flood mitigation measures.
15. The outline application proposes 30% affordable housing, which is in line with emerging Policy HS7 thus demonstrating its ability to deliver the requisite level of affordable housing as well as other requirements. The outline application is not supported by an assessment of viability as there are no concerns from the Applicant in this regard who is a Chorley based a long-established land promoter with a track record of delivering developable sites to the market.

D.

16. In regard to HS2.37 very robust evidence is available in relation to the infrastructure required to facilitate the development, as the outline planning application has been reviewed by all relevant consultees.
17. The requirements set out by those consultees are reasonable and the Applicant is content that the scheme remains deliverable in light of these.

E.

18. In the case of HS2.37 there is clear evidence that the development of the allocation is viable and deliverable, and it is subject to a pending planning application that has been supported by a full suite of technical assessments, as well as design work.
19. As previously stated, the outline application provides 30% affordable housing and is not supported by a viability assessment, such is the confidence of the Applicant in its ability to meet policy requirements and remain deliverable.
20. Evidence shows that there is no significant infrastructure requirement for this Site that would not be expected with a development of this scale. As such, there is no reason why it cannot be delivered early in the plan period. Particularly as it has an outline planning application already pending determination.

F.

21. There are no omissions to the policy in relation to HS2.37 and it is sufficiently flexible.

5.3 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?

22. In relation to HS2.37, the Policy does not set out site specific constraints and requirements. This is because, general policies such as EN2, EN4, EN10, EN13, CC3, ST3, and ID2 provide a very clear and robust set of requirements that ensure that the delivery of this allocation would need to be done in such a way that it would respect the constraints present, both in terms of physical and social infrastructure, and mitigate these adequately.
23. There are no constraints present that would necessitate additions to the policy in relation to HS2.37. Doing so would simply repeat the general requirements and thus run contrary to paragraph 16 (f) of the NPPF.