

PRESTON CITY COUNCIL



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

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PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER

PRESTON CITY COUNCIL

Appeal Site: Land at Cardwell Farm, Garstang Road, Preston, Barton,
PR3 5DR

Appeal Proposal: Outline planning application for up to 151no.
dwellings and community building with associated works (access applied
for only)

Appeal By: Wainhomes (North West) Limited

Inspectorate Ref: APP/N2345/W/20/3258889

Preston City Council Ref: 06/2019/0752

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 I am Christopher Blackburn. I am employed as Planning Policy Team Leader for Preston City Council, and have been employed by the Council in that or other posts for 12 years. I have been a Chartered Town Planner (MRTPI) since 2014.

1.2 My evidence is concerned with;

- the Council's five year supply position and the relevant figure to use in assessing it, as set out in paragraphs 60, 73 and 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (subsequently referred to as the "Framework");
- the status of the most important Development Plan policies for determining this appeal and the weight to be attributed to the same;
- whether or not the presumption in favour of sustainable development (subsequently referred to as the "tilted balance") as set out in paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged for the purposes of this appeal;
- the weight to be attributed to the most important Development Plan policies in the alternative i.e. where the tilted balance is engaged for housing land supply reasons or otherwise.

2 THE HOUSING REQUIREMENT AND HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

- 2.1 CS Policy 4 contains the housing requirement for each of the Central Lancashire authorities for the plan period. CS Policy 4 provides for a minimum of 507 net additional homes per annum in Preston and 417 net additional homes per annum in both South Ribble and Chorley.
- 2.2 The Central Lancashire authorities commissioned GL Hearn in 2016 to undertake a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which subsequently led to a decision to retain the housing requirement figures and distribution in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU1) in October 2017.
- 2.3 The introduction of the standard methodology to calculate LHN in 2018 represents a significant change in circumstances. The process the Central Lancashire authorities undertook in entering into MOU1 could be considered a 'review' of CS Policy 4 as described in paragraph 73 and footnote 37 of the Framework.
- 2.4 The Central Lancashire authorities then undertook a review of MOU1. This review commenced in April 2019 when the Central Lancashire authorities commissioned Icen Projects Ltd to produce a Central Lancashire Housing Study.

2.5 Following publication of the Central Lancashire Housing Study the Central Lancashire authorities entered into a second MOU (MOU2) in April 2020. Upon approval of MOU2, MOU1 was superseded and became redundant.

2.6 During June and July 2020 MOU2 was subject to scrutiny at a public inquiry held in Chorley. In light of this appeal decision, this Council's Cabinet made a decision on 4 November 2020 to authorise the Council's immediate withdrawal from MOU2. From this point MOU2 was disregarded by the Council in the decision making process.

2.7 In conclusion:

- CS Policy 4 was adopted in 2012.
- The housing requirement contained within CS Policy 4 corresponds to that set out in the RS, based on household growth projections from 2003.
- The RS was adopted in 2008, prior to the economic downturn, and abolished in 2013.
- The revised Framework, published in July 2018, introduced the standard methodology into national policy, which represents a significant change in circumstance and is the means by which the Government seeks to boost the supply of housing across the country.
- MOU1 was reviewed and replaced by MOU2 in April 2020.

- The Council withdrew from MOU2 in November 2020 and from that time it was disregarded for the purposes of decision making.

2.8 At April 2020 the standard methodology local housing need figure for Preston is 250 net additional homes per annum. Against a local housing need over the period October 2020 to October 2025 of 1,313 net additional homes, the Council can currently demonstrate a 13.6 year supply of deliverable housing land. The Council and the appellants are in agreement on this point.

3. THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES AND THE WEIGHT TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THEM

- 3.1 The main purpose of CS Policy 4 is to establish the housing requirement for the Central Lancashire authorities. For this reason, I come to the conclusion that the policy, when read as a whole is out of date.
- 3.2 The “tilted balance” described in paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 7 of the Framework is not engaged for reasons related to housing land supply.
- 3.3 The most important policies for determining this appeal are not, collectively, out of date for reasons which are not connected to housing land supply.
- 3.4 CS Policy 1 deals with the spatial strategy for growth in Central Lancashire. CS Policy 1 does not give rise to conflict with any specific part of the Framework, or the Framework taken as a whole.
- 3.5 Policy EN1 restricts development which takes place within the open countryside and constrains the release of open countryside land for housing development.

Policy EN1 does not give rise to conflict with any specific part of the Framework, or the Framework taken as a whole.

3.6 Policy AD1(b) facilitates new small scale development (including housing development) within existing village settlement boundaries. Policy AD1(b) does not give rise to conflict with any specific part of the Framework, or the Framework taken as a whole.

3.7 The current standard methodology local housing need figure for Preston is 250 net additional homes a year. This is less than half of the level of housing growth a year planned for in the Local Plan. Against the standard methodology local housing need figure the Council can, at October 2020, demonstrate a 13.6 year supply of deliverable housing land.

3.8 The spatial strategy for growth, along with accompanying protective policies in Local Plan and the associated boundaries of settlements are not constraining the release of land for housing development to a point which is preventing the Council from achieving its standard methodology local housing need.

3.9 As such, to conclude, CS Policy 4 is out of date on the whole, and should not, insofar as establishing the housing requirement for Preston, attract any weight

in the determination of this appeal. CS Policy 1, Policy EN1 and Policy AD1(b) however are not out of date; do not give rise to any conflict with the Framework and consequently therefore significant weight in the determination of this appeal.

4. WHETHER THE “TILTED BALANCE” IS ENGAGED

- 4.1 For reasons which relate to housing land supply, the “tilted balance” is not engaged.
- 4.2 The “basket” of most important policies for the determination of this appeal is comprised of four Development Plan policies, namely; CS Policy 1, CS Policy 4 and Policies EN1 and AD1(b) of the Local Plan.
- 4.3 Considering the “basket” as a whole, only one of the four most important Development Plan policies for determining the appeal is out of date, and the policies which are not out of date go to the heart of the principle of the development proposed by the appeal. Accordingly, it is my firm opinion that the “tilted balance” is not engaged for the purposes of determining this appeal.
- 4.4 If the “tilted balance” applies for reasons not connected to five year supply, it is considered that CS Policy 1, Policy EN1 and Policy AD1(b) would continue to attract significant weight in the application of the “tilted balance”.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 In conclusion:

- CS Policy 4 is out of date, specifically in relation to the housing requirement it contains for Preston.
- CS Policy 4 has been subject to a 'review' for the purposes of paragraph 73 and footnote 37 of the Framework in 2017.
- A significant change in circumstances has occurred in 2018 and 2019 with the introduction and refinement of the standard methodology, which further compound the fate of the housing requirement contained in CS Policy 4 as carrying no weight in the decision making process.
- The Council therefore monitors its housing land supply against the standard methodology local housing need figure, against this figure the Council can, at October 2020, demonstrate a 13.6 year supply of deliverable housing land.
- Aside from CS Policy 4, the most important Development Plan policies for determining the appeal are not out of date, the "tilted balance" is not engaged for reasons not connected to five year supply, and they attract significant weight in the determination of this appeal.
- If the "tilted balance" were to be engaged for reasons not connected to five year supply, the most important Development Plan policies for

determining the appeal which are not out of date, would still attract significant weight in the application of the “tilted balance”.
