

Re: HED-DPD Regulation 19 Potential employment allocation: Land at Higher College Farm, Hothersall

I am a resident of Hothersall and would like first, to point out that the abovementioned land is in Hothersall and not in Longridge as detailed. There is no mention of any employment land required for Hothersall and as such the question of a change of use from a Greenfield site to industrial should be a non-starter since it has not been presented in the adopted Core Strategy.

People seem to bent on carrying out aspects of the core strategy, which is a flawed document since it does not involve any evaluation of any of the proposals. I have seen no empirical evidence to suggest Longridge is in need of industrial sites (real terminology and not 'employment opportunity'). To date all existing Brownfield sites in Longridge have been turned over to housing development, which suggests there is no commercial appetite for any industrial use. If the planners/planning committee feel there is such a desperate need to supply 'employment' land for the HED-DPD why didn't they earmark these Brownfield sites? You already have an over allocation of land in other parts of the Ribble Valley and without the justification of facts and figures I cannot see why land in Hothersall is necessary. Longridge town centre already has innumerable premises to let or for sale which surely shows there is not a market for new development.

The site of this proposal is flawed. It is in the middle of open countryside, at the 'gateway to the Ribble Valley'. Longridge is a thriving community benefiting from many visitors to the town – many of whom have come to walk around our beautiful country side. They do not want to visit an extension of Preston and its haphazard urban sprawl. The public footpath that runs through the proposed site is part of 'Walks around Longridge' – that isn't a good advertisement. The site is surrounded by heritage sites, as identified in the Longridge neighbourhood plan and is overlooked by an AONB. I cannot see where these factors have been taken into account in the proposal.

The additional traffic that will be generated by the site can only have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area. I understand the LCC traffic report on the neighbouring planning application has recommended refusal and I can see all the same arguments at play here. Additionally

the entrance is closer to the Tootle Green development and to the already dangerous Lower Lane junction. This area regularly floods with the water runoff onto the site. HGV's leaving the site will have to have cross over onto the opposite carriageway to turn which will create additional hazards. Traffic will have to pass three schools on the way to the motorway passing what is usually only a single track road past St Cecelia's (and the St Lawrence Church conservation area) due to parked cars on both sides of the road. We have seen recently the chaos caused when an HGV crashed into parked cars and then blocked the road at the Old Oak pub roundabout. 'Pinch points' for traffic already exist at Skew bridge in Grimsargh, Stonebridge (conservation area) and Ribchester (length restriction) and the De Tabley bridge. Lorries will pass three schools on their way to the M6 with the resultant effects of pollution.

Longridge is in the unfortunate position of being penalised by its geography. It borders with Preston and suffers from decisions made by Preston planners in the form of hundreds of new homes being built on its borders and yet cannot take into account the huge numbers of empty space available on Preston's industrial estates. Indeed, this point was raised by our MP in the House of Commons. There does not appear to be any communication between authorities and it seems that our Greenfield sites are under pressure as a result.

It is a pleasure to live in the Ribble Valley and to welcome visitors so they can enjoy it too – this cannot be spoiled by short-term thinking and under prepared planning decisions. Even our local councillor, when being interviewed on radio admitted he 'would not like an industrial site outside my front door'.

I would urge the planning committee not to take the 'easy' decision and pass this proposal but to take a long-term view and understand the Hothersall/Longridge boundary must be respected. If not our hamlet and distinctiveness will be lost in the Longridge sprawl.