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**WALSINGHAM PLANNING**

SPECIALIST PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr M Hindle

**Ribble Valley Housing and Economic  
DPD Examination - Response to the  
Inspector's Main Issues and Questions**

December 2017

KN2064/17

**Walsingham Planning**

Brandon House

King Street

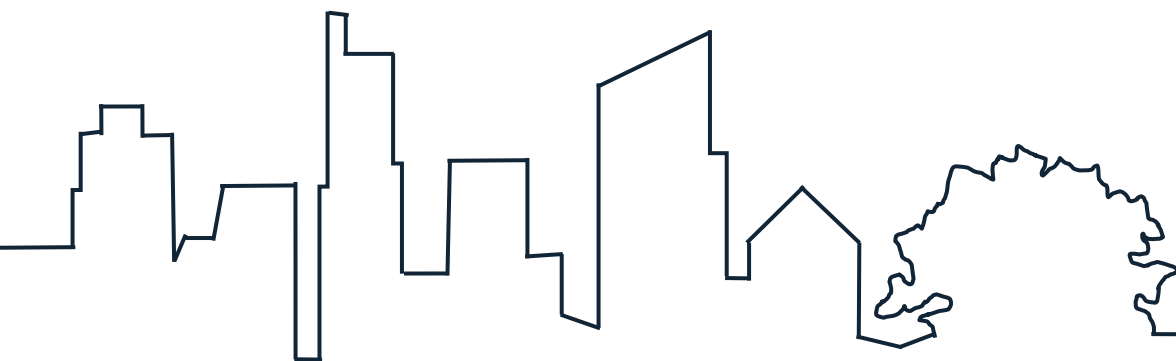
Knutsford

Cheshire

WA16 6DX

*Telephone*

01565 757500



knutsford@walsingplan.co.uk  
[www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk](http://www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk)

*To remove before issue:*

Issue	Date	Status	Issued by	Checked by
1	07/12/2017	First draft	HB	HB
3	08/12/2017	Final draft	HB	HB

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# I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Walsingham Planning are appointed to act on behalf of Mr M Hindle the owner of the Old Zoo, Brockhall Village, Old Langho.
- I.2 By way of context, Walsingham Planning submitted representations to the Council in respect of the Local Plan as follows:
- Publication Draft Housing and Economic Development – development Plan Document (April 2017) – representations submitted 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
- I.3 This Statement outlines responses to the Inspectors Main Issues and Questions relevant to our previous representations and my client’s land interests at the Old Zoo, Brockhall Village.
- I.4 **Queries have been raised with the Local Plan Inspector in relation to the issues that will be considered at the Examination, which have not yet been answered. As such, we reserve the right to amend and update this Hearing Statement following clarification on the points raised. A revised /updated Statement will be provided following receipt of a response from the Inspector as agreed by email with the Planning Inspectorate on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017.**

## 2 Issue 1 – Legal Compliance

### Question b)

**Is the Plan in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework?  
Does it reflect the NPPF’s presumption in favour of sustainable development?**

- 2.1 The Council’s approach is to not to allocate any land for new housing development in the Tier 2 settlements and to draw settlement boundaries as tightly as possible around these villages with the clear purpose of preventing any new housing development. The justification for this being that these settlements are less sustainable.
- 2.2 The policy does not state that the Tier 2 settlements are unsustainable just that they are less sustainable. In the case of Brockhall Village, it is in our view a sustainable rural settlement. Within Brockhall Village there are two restaurants, a post box, a nursery/ pre-school, a children’s play area and substantial areas of public open space, a hair dressers/ beauty salon, and a gym. The village is also served by a bus service which provides access to Clitheroe and other local destinations. Just outside Brockhall Village, within easy walking distance, there is a church and public house.
- 2.3 It is Walsingham Planning’s view that the approach adopted by the Council conflicts with and is not in conformity with paragraph 54 and 55 of the NPPF. This requires local Planning Authorities to be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs. In particular, the NPPF does not preclude new residential development in rural areas nor does it restrict new housing development to that which is affordable. Rather it supports new housing development where it is sustainably located, where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and where it will not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside.
- 2.4 Brockhall Village is a sustainable rural settlement and therefore there is no planning policy basis for drawing its settlement boundary excessively tight to prevent opportunities for small infill housing development. As is set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF, the provision of new residential development in rural areas need not be seen as negative and where it is appropriately located it can bring positive benefits by providing new housing to meet local need and assisting in sustaining village services and facilities.

- 2.5 In the case of land at the Old Zoo, it is Walsingham Planning's view that it should be within the defined settlement boundary of Brockhall Village and thus that the settlement boundary should be amended to include the land shown cross hatched black on the plan contained at **Appendix A**. The Old Zoo and its associated landholding can only be accessed from Brockhall Village and it is sited at a much higher level, alongside the remainder of the Village, than the countryside to the north. The land has no open countryside function and both physically and visually sits as part of the settlement of Brockhall Village rather than in the open countryside. Furthermore, it is very clearly separated from the open countryside by Blackburn Rovers Training Ground, which comprises a substantial area of built development and a public footpath, both of which provide a strong and clearly defined defensible boundary to the open countryside.
- 2.6 It is our view that a small amount of infill residential development on the site would not be inappropriate in principle in the context of national planning policy relating to new housing in rural areas. Furthermore, the amount of residential development that could be accommodated on the site is in any event severely restricted by the mature trees on the site and incorporating the site within the settlement boundary of Brockhall Village is not going to result in large scale comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a significant number of dwellings.
- 2.7 Planning permission has previously been sought for a single dwelling on the site. Permission was refused on the basis that the development constituted inappropriate development in the open countryside. It is Walsingham Planning's view that the settlement boundary of Brockhall Village has been deliberately drawn to exclude the land at the Old Zoo in order to prevent future housing development on the site. Such an approach is in our view wholly inappropriate and in direct conflict with government guidance contained in the NPPF.
- 2.8 Furthermore, such an approach conflicts with the government's agenda of significantly boosting the supply of new housing.

### 3 Issue 2 - Housing

#### a) Is the amount of land allocated for housing sufficient to meet the CS requirements?

- 3.1 It is considered that insufficient land has been allocated for housing to meet the Core Strategy requirement and that the housing allocations have been focused entirely in the main towns and Tier 1 settlements. It appears that the minimum amount of land required to meet the Core Strategy housing figure in numerical terms has been allocated. However, in doing so no flexibility has been incorporated to ensure sufficient land for housing if not all the allocated sites are brought forward.
- 3.2 Our research indicates that all the sites allocated for housing within the Housing and Economic Development DPD with the exception of a small site allocated for 17 dwellings in Mellor, a site for 34 dwellings in Wilpshire and a small part of a large allocation 'land south-west of Whalley Road, Barrow' have outline or detailed planning permission. Notwithstanding this fact, a large number of the allocated sites have not come forward despite having planning permission for a number of years. The reasons for this are unknown to us. However, it demonstrates a significant risk that the Core Strategy housing requirement will not ultimately be met if other sites are not allocated.
- 3.3 In urban areas where there is a large supply of previously developed land and the scope for windfall development is high, such an approach would seem reasonable. However, in rural areas like the Ribble Valley where there are limited opportunities for the redevelopment of previously developed land and windfall sites, such an approach would not appear appropriate. Particularly, when considered alongside a strategy of drawing settlement boundaries very tightly so as to prevent edge of settlement infill development and a strategy of restricting any new housing development in Tier 2 settlements to local needs housing which in practice is defined by the Council as affordable housing.
- 3.4 No housing allocations have also been made within any of the Tier 2 villages to ensure the delivery of some new housing in these areas over the plan period. Furthermore, due to the very restrictive nature of Core Strategy policies applicable to development in Tier 2 settlements, it is unlikely that any windfall housing other than perhaps a small amount of affordable housing, will come forward in these areas. Such a policy context is likely to further increase the risk of the Core Strategy housing requirement not being met.

3.5 In order to address this issue, we consider that additional sites should be allocated for housing, including modest sites within the Tier 2 settlements. We consider that two small areas of land at the Old Zoo be allocated for future housing development over the Plan period. The areas we propose be allocated are shown cross hatched blue on the Plan contained at **Appendix B.**

**b) is there a housing trajectory for the delivery of housing on the strategic site and the principal settlements? 1040 dwellings are identified for Standen over the plan period where will the remainder of the housing requirement be provided.**

3.6 The Council appear almost entirely dependent upon the Standen Strategic site and housing allocations to deliver the Core Strategy housing requirement. Almost all the housing allocations have planning permission but are not being brought forward and built out. Furthermore, whilst outline planning permission has been granted for 812 dwellings on the strategic site, only 228 dwellings have full planning permission.

3.7 The Core Strategy housing requirements is 5600 dwellings over 20 years. 9.5 years into the Plan period 2011 dwellings have constructed against a requirement of 2660 (based on 280 dwelling per year). The result is that there is currently a shortfall of 649 units against the Core Strategy requirement. This must also be viewed in the context of the very large number of units which have planning permission (circa 3950 dwellings). This suggests a particular issue with delivery and sites being built out.

3.8 As has previously stated given the limited availability of land within the Principal Settlements and Tier 1 Villages for housing windfall development, combined with extremely restrictive planning policy in relation to development in Tier 2 settlements, it is difficult to see where any additional housing development could come from to make up the current and any future shortfall. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in the Council's latest Housing Land Availability Assessment (October 2017), an allowance of only 115 dwellings (or 23 dwellings per year) is made for housing windfalls over the next 5 years. It is Walsingham Planning's view that this confirms our suggestion of a lack of windfall opportunities within the Borough.

3.9 It is for these reasons that we believe that it is essential that a more flexible approach is taken to settlement boundaries and that additional sites are allocated for housing, including within the Tier 2 settlements. Whilst Tier 2 settlements are smaller and less sustainable, some growth



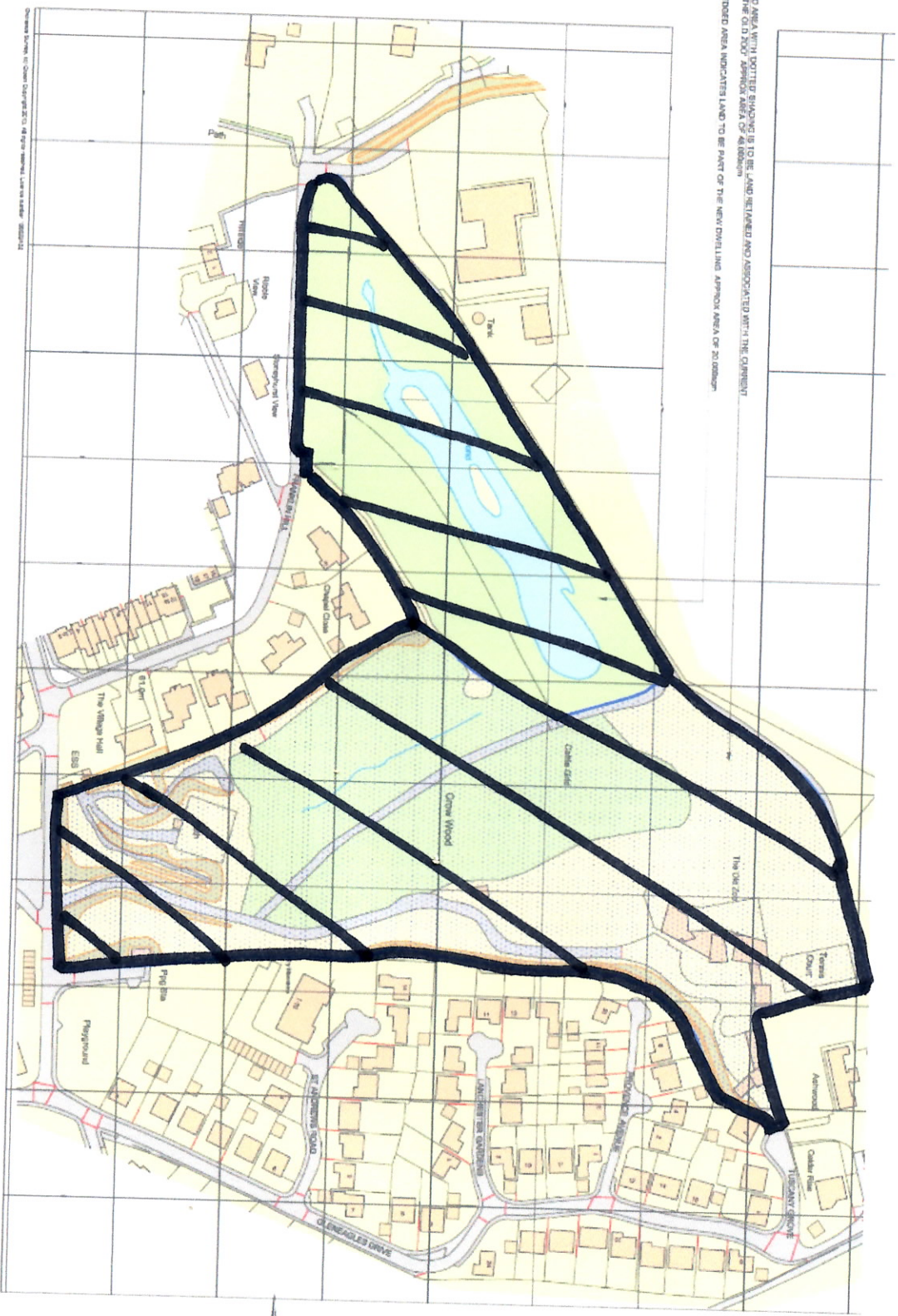
is important to meet housing need over the Plan period and to sustain village services and facilities. There will be many instances where small scale residential development can be provided in Tier 2 settlements in a sustainable way and without the development of land in the open countryside and unacceptable environmental impacts.

- 3.10 It is also our view that there should be an early review of Policy DMG2 and that the policy be revised to enable small scale residential development other than affordable housing within Tier 2 settlements. This would open up opportunities for small scale residential development on appropriate sites within the settlement boundaries of Tier 2 villages thereby increasing the potential for housing windfalls during the plan period.
- 3.11 The land suggested as appropriate for allocation for housing at the Old Zoo detailed on the Plan at **Appendix B** is in our view a good example of where small-scale windfall housing could be provided with no negative adverse impact on the open countryside, limited, if any, negative environmental impact, but substantial benefits in terms increased housing provision and assisting in supporting local services and facilities.

# APPENDIX A

# APPENDIX A

BLUE HATCHED AREA WITH DOTTED SHADING IS TO BE LAND RETAINED AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE CURRENT DWELLING THE OLD TOOL APPROX AREA OF 48,000sqm  
THIS BLUE HATCHED AREA INDICATES LAND TO BE PART OF THE NEW DWELLING APPROX AREA OF 20,000sqm



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## **APPENDIX B**

