

Tranche 2 Site, proposed possible future part of 20% buffer zone to ensure five year land supply:-

Site 6 – Memorial Field, Mellor Lane

At the recent Special Public meeting of Mellor Parish Council regarding the above, held on 16th August 2018, comment was made from the floor that the inclusion of Site 6 as a possible future Tranche 2 Site for inclusion in the Plan was problematical because of the sloping profile and contour of the land as well as access amongst other things.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) sheets from Arcadis merely record the obvious – for example “1. Crime – site is currently greenfield and new development may attract crime.” The site is not properly greenfield because it is currently used by a farmer who periodically rents it for his own use; at other times it is unused except by local children as a play area and by walkers.

Mellor residents asked whether or not Site 6 has been formally withdrawn, or simply not proceeded with at this time but nevertheless is in the system? It was also asked whether Ribble Valley officers had visited the Site and made observations rather than relying on the Consultants who produced the report. This attracted comment at the meeting. Subsequently, I have found out that the Planning and Development Committee on 17th July 2018 (a meeting at which I declared an interest and left the room) confirmed that Site 6 is included as part of the future Plan Review. This was only confirmed to me when I received the Minutes of the meeting on 29th August extant – six weeks later.

In regard to Site 6 Memorial Field there are a number of factors to be considered:

Access

The Memorial Field Site is totally landlocked – access is very difficult and contoured. The surrounding area is privately owned. One route follows the line of a narrow unmetalled private lane, Stoops Fold, a public right of way and effectively a footpath. Also adjacent is the village War Memorial which is owned by Mellor Parish Council since its construction in 1921 and is a highly valued site. Any attempt to modify or curtail this site would quite rightly meet with uproar in the village.

Drainage

Mellor lies on a hill: water flows downhill and finds the route of least resistance. In the absence of adequate drainage, which is painfully clear to the people of Mellor, Site 6 would require a wholesale redesign and installation of a new drainage system, indeed one which may prove impracticable. It is a sloping site and I have personal knowledge of the limitations of the system in this area of the village – public, private and field drains. The drains in this part of the village simply cannot cope already.

Public Rights of Way

Several rights of way criss cross the Site. For instance, there is an ancient cobbled path which is sunken into the ground. Also, in former times an old windmill, which many local people

remember, once stood on the land and its footprint can still be seen. Have these 'monuments' been properly recorded?

Traffic

Traffic passes through the village round the clock. When combined with the growth of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) to the north and the construction of 270+ houses in Whinney Lane less than a mile away in Blackburn, it will result in increased traffic on Mellor's roads with the associated traffic pollution and can only mean maintaining the public realm will be more difficult in future. The SA sheet for the site does not make this clear.

Other Possible Sites

The former Quarry in Mellor, just off Mellor Lane, is currently derelict and a village eyesore. It is located in the centre of Mellor and enjoys ready access. This could be used for housing provision.

The EZ lies on the boundary of Balderstone and Samlesbury. Recently a new spine road was opened linking Samlesbury with the A59 at Balderstone. Along the line of the new road there is vacant land – could not some of this be utilised for housing?

Land off Whitecroft / Nickey Lanes would have no terrain or access issues.

Neighbouring Planning Authorities

Neighbouring Planning Authorities now have a statutory duty to consult each other on planning issues. Ribble Valley should liaise with South Ribble about residential development of the EZ and also talk to Blackburn with Darwen regarding the Whinney Lane Development on Mellor's boundaries.

There is some anecdotal evidence that Barratt's house builders considered Site 6 for development some years ago but judged that it was not a viable option.

The cumulative impact of developing Site 6 Memorial Field and increasing the Settlement Boundary of Mellor – the village envelope – will have an adverse impact on the village and place a greater burden on local infrastructure. Mellor cannot take new building, which I believe will damage its character and the friendly village atmosphere will begin to disappear. Over time this may lead to Mellor merging with adjoining areas to form one large conurbation. The 'green' area between Blackburn and Preston should be safeguarded, especially when the scale of proposed development elsewhere in the Borough is taken into account.

Development of Site 6 is not sustainable or practicable and irrespective of the number of units provided, would fill the area with houses, cars and assorted paraphernalia. I do not believe that this should happen, just to provide a buffer of 20% to ensure Ribble Valley has a five-year land supply. The Borough already meets the 5% target. Additional housing is neither wanted nor needed.



PMODS22
Forward Planning
Council Offices
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA