

## Matter 2 – the Council’s Response to the Inspector’s Questions

### Chapter C - Major Sites Allocations

**Are the Major Sites justified by the available evidence with due regard to reasonable alternatives and are they capable of effective and timely implementation?**

#### ***Policy C1 – Pickering’s Farm Links with policies A2, D1 & D2***

**1. What is the likelihood that this site will achieve the contribution to the Borough’s housing land supply (set out in D1) in the short, medium and long terms, given the infrastructure requirements set out in the justification to policy C1?**

1.1. With reference to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Guidance 2007 (CD4.6) and paragraph 47 of the NPPF (CD4.7), and the ‘indicators’ of deliverability set out therein, the site is:

1.1.1. Available

The consortium of landowners including Taylor Wimpey UK, the HCA and others have confirmed that the site is available for development now. The comprehensive masterplanning across the whole site will bring all parties together and create the conditions for all land to become available, in the immediate to short term

1.1.2. Suitable

The site is in a sustainable location within the South of Penwortham and north of Farington Strategic Location. As stated in paragraph 5.49 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (SRE002), the strategic location will result in the rounding off of the Preston and South Ribble Urban area a defined in Core Strategy Policy 1. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Cuerden Regional Investment Site (policy C4) and the existing business parks in Farington and Moss Side. The site is Greenfield with no significant environmental constraints and is highly accessible. The size of the allocation in the DPD creates the opportunity to develop a sustainable mixed community.

1.1.3. Achievable

The indication from landowners , in particular the major landowners of HCA and Taylor Wimpey UK, is that housing development can be achievable in the short term. A comprehensive approach through a masterplan will help achieve development through the formulation of a flexible framework, guiding a clear course of action but with the ability for proposals to evolve over time.

- 1.2. A Development Statement has been prepared by Taylor Wimpey UK and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and has been submitted to the Examination on their behalf by HOW Planning. The Development Statement assesses the suitability and deliverability of the Pickering's Farm site for large scale residential led development.
- 1.3. The Development Statement promotes a housing led development comprising 2,000 houses on a 90 hectare site which includes land proposed for allocation under Policy C1 (79 hectares) and land to the south proposed as Safeguarded Land under Policy G3. The overall site is sub-divided into 7 Indicative Phases of which Phases 1-5 correlate to the land proposed for allocation under Policy C1 of the Site Allocations DPD.
- 1.4. The Indicative Phasing Strategy in the document outlines the level of housing which can be delivered within Phases 1-5 during the plan period (2011 – 2026) as well as the timing of the delivery of the proposed infrastructure.
- 1.5. In light of the above it is the Council's view that the Pickering's Farm site can contribute to the Borough's housing land supply (as set out in Policy D1) in the short, medium and long terms, taking into account the infrastructure requirements set out in the justification to Policy C1.

**2. Are the infrastructure requirements sufficiently clear and is it clear how they will be met, when and by whom?**

- 2.1. The Council considers that the infrastructure requirements for this allocation are clear. This Statement will consider off site infrastructure such as highways and education and also onsite infrastructure.

**Transport Infrastructure**

- 2.2. The Central Lancashire Transport and Highways Draft Masterplan (CD4.3) proposes the South Ribble Western Distributor to provide the highway infrastructure needed to support the Pickering's Farm

allocation and other allocations to the west of Leyland, such as land between Heatherleigh and Moss Lane. Farington. This proposal includes capacity improvements to the A582 and completion of the Penwortham Bypass. The Masterplan indicates that the South Ribble Western Distributor will be completed in 2023/24 and funded from a number of sources including Developer Contributions and the LCC's own funds. The completion of the Penwortham Bypass is indicated to be 2022/23 and funded through Major Transport Schemes funding and LCC funds.

- 2.3. The draft Masterplan also proposes a number of bus priority corridors, one of which is proposed along Leyland Road leading into Preston City Centre which is timetabled for 2017/18 to be funded through CIL contributions. These measures will enable public realm improvements to be carried out in particular in Tardy Gate District Centre. It is envisaged in Policy C1 that these works would be funded by the developer of the Pickering's Farm site.
- 2.4. A further piece of transport infrastructure required is the extension of the Cross Borough Link Road detailed in policy A2 of the DPD. This is discussed in more detail in the Council's response to Matter 5 Question 3.

### **Education**

- 2.5. Policy C1 identifies the need for the Pickering's Farm allocation to provide for nursery and primary education. The Development Statement makes provision within the allocation for a new primary school.

### **On site infrastructure requirements**

- 2.6. As part of the preparation of Development Statement, initial investigations with regards to technical issues and constraints have been undertaken.

### **Health Care**

- 2.7. Policy C1 makes it clear that the site will be expected to make provision for health facilities. The exact requirements would be the subject of further investigation with the PCT through the masterplanning of the site.

### **Local Community Facilities**

- 2.8. The site, due to its scale would be expected to include a small local centre to provide basic convenience shopping for residents.

## **Green Infrastructure**

- 2.9. The Pickering's Farm site is not situated in a sensitive landscape area. A landscape strategy will be prepared as part of the masterplanning process. Opportunities for developing a strong landscape character, retaining existing ponds, important hedgerow boundaries and trees, enhancing the existing features of the area and integrating green infrastructure within the network of movement routes can be achieved. This in turn would enhance pedestrian and cycle links, promoting walking and cycling as a viable alternative, and linking to bus routes and wider networks.

## **Flood Risk and Drainage**

- 2.10. The Pickering's Farm site is within Flood Zone 1. The key flood risk considerations for the site relate to surface water management and foul water discharges. Surface water run-off is facilitated by land drains which flow from the adjacent impermeable areas. Culverted land drains at the northern end of Moss Lane cross the site in an east west direction and could be used to provide surface water drainage. The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems are intended to be incorporated where possible. In terms of foul drainage United Utilities have confirmed that there is limited capacity at Leyland Wastewater Treatment works. Options to increase capacity are being considered with the statutory provider. Further detail of surface water and foul water drainage strategies will be required in the through the masterplanning process.

## **Contamination**

- 2.11. There is no known contamination or ground constraints which will prevent the site coming forward.

## **Services**

- 2.12. The Development Statement confirms that water, gas, electricity and telecommunications can be provided to the site. An existing 400kV overhead power line crosses the site from south east to North West and it is envisaged that it will be integrated in to the development through appropriate design and landscaping.
- 2.13. The Council considers that the justification to Policy C1 is sufficiently clear in setting out the infrastructure requirements needed, how they will be funded and by whom.
- 2.14. The Development Statement for the site outlines the likely delivery timescales of the infrastructure described above.

**3. How does the information set out in policy D1, relating to the number of dwellings to be provided within the 5, 10 and 15 year periods, correlate to the information in the Housing Land Position Statement and the Council's letter dated 14.12.12?**

- 3.1. The Housing Land Position Statement September 2012 (SRE014b) provides data on housing completions in South Ribble in relation to strategic requirement, future supply of housing from outstanding permissions and allocations and monitoring of the impact of planning policies on density, brownfield site and affordable housing.
- 3.2. Table 4.1 of the Position Statement includes sites allocated for housing and mixed use under Adopted South Ribble Local Plan Policies HP1 and EMP6. Pickering's Farm is not listed within this table as it does not form an allocation in this document.
- 3.3. The Council's letter of 14.12.12 (CD2.6) sets out the likely delivery and phasing for Pickering's Farm which correlates with Policy D1 Table 2 of the Site Allocations DPD.
- 3.4. It is agreed by all parties that the allocation in the DPD can provide 1350 dwellings in the plan period to 2026. Following recent discussions with the Taylor Wimpey UK the proposed phasing has been re assessed by the Council. As a result of delays in plan preparation, the requirements for a masterplan to be prepared and planning permission to be achieved, the projected housing delivery of 300 units between 2010- 2016 is not considered to be achievable. This figure has been revised down to 150 houses which are considered to be more realistic.
- 3.5. The phasing now proposed is as follows:

2011-2016	150 houses
2017-2021	600 houses
2022-2026	600 houses

- 3.6. Due to the size of the allocation, it is entirely feasible that more than one developer will be working the site from 2016 onwards. As such a delivery rate of 600 units (at an average of 120 per annum) could be delivered between 2017-2026.
- 3.7. A revised Policy D1 Table 2 is included in the Minor Modifications Document Ref SRSD007a.

**4. Where is the evidence that the HCA and the developer have produced a development statement and indicative phasing strategy and initial**

**assessment of viability (as set out in the Council's letter dated 14.12.12)?  
Is there evidence of viability?**

- 4.1. A Development Statement for the site has been prepared by the HCA and Taylor Wimpey UK and has been submitted on their behalf by HOW Planning. The document includes an indicative phasing strategy in Chapter 9.
- 4.2. Chapter 6 of the Development Statement considers the deliverability of the Pickering's Farm proposals against the requirements of the NPPF.
- 4.3. Taylor Wimpey UK and the HCA have to date spent considerable time and funds preparing the Development Statement and have assessed the issues raised by the development of the site. They have reviewed the economic viability of the development, market demand and projected rate of sales. In addition costs associated with the development including site preparation costs, site constraints, possible s106 contributions, phased delivery of required infrastructure and land ownership negotiations have all been considered. The demonstration that this work has been undertaken is provided in the Development Statement which concludes that the development is viable and deliverable.

**5. Is the range of uses within the policy appropriate?**

- 5.1. The Council considers that the range of uses proposed in Policy C1 is appropriate. The Core Strategy identifies the importance of allocating residential land within the South of Penwortham and North of Farington Strategic Location.
- 5.2. The other proposed uses including employment and commercial uses, education, health facilities, green infrastructure and community facilities are also considered to be appropriate to serve an allocation of this scale. The Core Strategy states at paragraph 5.28 that on Strategic Sites and Locations with a high proportion of residential development, local services such as small shops, community centre and on site open/play space will be expected to be provided by developers.
- 5.3. The range of uses proposed within Policy C1 corresponds with the range of uses described within the Development Statement.

**6. Is this site justified having regard to alternatives?**

- 6.1. The Pickering's Farm site has been sub divided into two sites with issues and options site ref SR001 being allocated for development

during the Site Allocations Plan period. Issues and options site ref SR085 is Safeguarded for future development after the Plan period.

- 6.2. This site was put forward as a site suggestion by a landowner and a developer. It is allocated as safeguarded land in the South Ribble Local Plan and was also identified in the 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as suitable for housing development.
- 6.3. Land to the South of Penwortham and North of Farington is classified as a broad strategic location (of which the Pickering's Farm site is a large part) within Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.
- 6.4. This site would make a major contribution to growth and investment through the provision of sustainable homes and jobs in a high quality environment. As an urban extension it is well located in relation to the main spatial focus of the Core Strategy to the Preston and South Ribble Urban Area as identified within Core Strategy Policy 1 and scores well in terms of the planning and sustainability indicators. Existing infrastructure could be capitalised, with additional required through the delivery of this site.
- 6.5. The Council has assessed the concept of the strategic location as referred to in Policy 1 of the Core Strategy, against housing and employment land requirements and the need to protect existing green infrastructure within the borough. It has identified part of the strategic location for a major residential led development. The site chosen is referred to as Pickering's Farm and the Council has identified around 65 ha of the site to be allocated to provide for the development of up to 1350 dwellings and deliver the necessary infrastructure for the area. The remaining land within the strategic broad location - South of Penwortham and North of Farington Strategic Location will be safeguarded for future development needs after the plan period.
- 6.6. The comprehensive development of this site is crucial due to its size and strategic importance as well as to ensure delivery of essential infrastructure and local services in with Policy 1 and 2 of the Core Strategy. The HCA owns a large proportion of the land and a developers' consortium has also been created to represent the other landowners. A draft development statement has been produced by the developer, Taylor Wimpey, which outlines proposals for a mixed use scheme comprising residential, employment, and community uses. The overall site could accommodate between 1500 to 2000 homes depending on the split between employment and residential uses. However in terms of the Site Allocations 1350 dwellings has been identified and is seen as realistic in terms of effective delivery over the plan period.

- 6.7. The sites inclusion as a broad Strategic Location in the Core Strategy will help to speed up its delivery and foster agreement between landowners to develop the site comprehensively. It will also help secure funding for infrastructure, in particular the extension to the Cross Borough Link Road. The phasing and delivery timescale for the development of the site proposes a lesser amount of development within the first five years of the plan, increasing into the middle and late phases and extending beyond the plan period when the rest of the site can be brought forward.
- 6.8. For the reasons set out above specifically its designation within Core Strategy 1 as a strategic location this site is seen more appropriate, viable and deliverable compared to the alternatives.

## **7. How will regard be had to biodiversity in the site's development?**

- 7.1. Each of the Major Sites for Development identified within the Plan requires 'an agreed Masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site'. Included within the Masterplan will be the need to produce an environmental statement (such as an Environmental Impact Assessment) which will assess the biodiversity value on and adjacent to the site assessing both habitats and species. Where necessary mitigation or avoidance will be expected as part of the environmental statement process, which will need to be consulted on with relevant stakeholders such as County ecologists.
- 7.2. Alongside the requirement for an agreed Masterplan, any planning application received on a Major Site will also need to accord with policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, specifically Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy 18: Green Infrastructure. A planning application would also need to comply with policies in the Plan, currently Policy G7 Green Infrastructure – Existing Provision and Policy G8 Green Infrastructure – Future Provision. Any agreed biodiversity policy in the Plan would also need to be given material consideration.
- 7.3. As such given the extensive procedural and policy requirements adequate consideration will be given to biodiversity when a Major Site is developed.
- 7.4. Specifically related to Pickering's Farm the Development Statement at Section 5 assesses the suitability of the site for development and includes an analysis of all technical areas, including an ecology appraisal. The ecology appraisal confirms that there are no known ecological constraints preventing this site coming forward for development. Further ecology assessment of the site, the identification

of the opportunities to enhance excising biodiversity on the site will be undertaken as part of the masterplanning process for the site as mentioned above.

**8. Are the requirements for a masterplan clearly set out; is it apparent who is to develop the masterplan and what process this should follow?**

- 8.1. The Council has had a number of preliminary discussions about this allocation with the landowner and developer consortium. This has resulted in the preparation of the Development Statement that these parties will develop further into a masterplan for the site. It has been agreed that the masterplan will not only include the current allocation but will also include proposals for (albeit in less detail) the southern safeguarded part of the strategic location to be safeguarded for development beyond the plan period. This will ensure that a coordinated and complementary proposal will come forward for the whole of the Strategic location.
- 8.2. The Council proposes to provide further guidance in the DPD on the purpose, scope and preparation of masterplans for the major sites in the interest of clarity. This addition is included in the proposed minor modifications schedule, (CD4.5). It is the Council's intention that masterplans shall be the subject of consultation, shall be agreed by the Council and thereafter used for the purposes of Development Management in the determination of subsequent planning applications.

***Policy C2 – Moss Side Test Track***  
***Links with policies D1 & D2***

**9. What is the likelihood that this site will achieve the contribution to the Borough's housing land supply (set out in D1) in the short, medium and long terms, given the infrastructure requirements set out in the justification to policy C2 and the physical constraints on the site (set out in the Council's letter dated 14.12.12)?**

- 9.1. The Leyland Test Track Development Brief (CD4.1) was approved for development control purposes on 2nd June 2010. The Brief was a mixed use development on the former Leyland Test Track in Leyland and incorporates 23.4 hectares of new residential development, 6.08 hectares of new employment land and a neighbourhood centre of 0.97 hectares. The remainder of the site is retained and new landscaping and open space.

- 9.2. With reference to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Guidance 2007 (CD4.6) and paragraph 47 of the NPPF (CD4.7), and the 'indicators' of deliverability set out therein, the site is:

*Available*

The landowners, Pilgrim Technology and the Borough Council, are working together to bring the site forward and have confirmed that the site is available for development and will be put on the market within the next 2/3 months.

*Suitable*

The site is located to the north west of Leyland and adjoins existing residential and employment development. The site is brownfield and in a sustainable location. Development would not cause harm to environmental interests and would be accessible via appropriate routes and junctions. The size of the site and its potential capacity would provide development with sufficient critical mass to help create a sustainable, mixed community and the site would be able to deliver the suggested allocation of 750 dwellings and up to 6 hectares of employment land.

*Achievable*

The indication from landowners suggests that the prospect of housing starting to be delivered on the site in the short term is achievable. A comprehensive approach through a masterplan, will help achieve development through formulation of a broad framework; guiding a clear approach and design concept. The physical constraints on the site such as existing buildings, hardstanding area, existing perimeter bund are not of such a scale that they would create significant abnormal cost to development. An infrastructure delivery schedule will be required and an agreed programme of implementation. The approved Development Brief considers the required infrastructure including to highway improvements, education and health provision in the area. These requirements, discussed in the response to Question 10, are not considered to impact on the viability or deliverability of the development.

- 9.3. Policy D2 Table 2 of the Site Allocations DPD provides an indicative phasing for the site with 80 dwellings between 2010-2016, 325 dwellings in 2016-2021 and 345 dwellings in 2021-2026. The Council considers this is appropriate. It is anticipated that the site will be put on the market in the next 3 months and there has to date been substantial interest by prospective developers. A planning application will be likely to be submitted by the end of 2013 /early 2014 and therefore the Council has confidence that the short, medium and long term goals of the Borough's housing land supply will be met by this site.

**10. Are the infrastructure requirements sufficiently clear and is it clear how they will be met, when and by whom?**

- 10.1. The Council considers that the infrastructure requirements for this allocation are clear. The draft Development Brief provides information on both off site and on site infrastructure requirements. This will need to be re visited and updated as part of the masterplanning exercise.

**Highways and Transport Infrastructure**

- 10.2. The draft Central Lancashire Transport and Highways Masterplan proposes the South Ribble Western Distributor to provide the highway infrastructure needed to support this allocation and other allocations to the west of Leyland, in particular Pickering's Farm. This proposal includes capacity improvements to the A582 and completion of the Penwortham Bypass. The Masterplan indicates that the South Ribble Western Distributor will be completed in 2023/24 and funded from a number of sources including developer contributions, which would likely include a contribution from this scheme and the LCC's own funds. The completion of the Penwortham Bypass is indicated to be 2022/23 and funded through Major Transport Schemes funding and LCC funds.
- 10.3. The draft Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan makes reference to the exploration of the re-opening of Midge Hall Railway Station and also proposes a potential extension to the bus network around the Test Track site. The approved Development Brief includes a site access strategy which includes vehicular access to the site from Aston to serve the employment area and from Titan Way to serve the residential development. This predominantly uses the existing road network though alterations and improvements to that network are envisaged. These would be funded either directly as part of the development or through CIL contribution. The proposed development provides the opportunity to improve access to bus services. The Brief suggests that the current road closure between Paradise Lane and Titan Way should be re-opened as a bus only link. This proposal would clearly need further investigation as part of the masterplanning exercise.

**Education**

- 10.4. A further assessment of educational provision would be required as part of the masterplanning and planning application preparation.

**Health Provision**

- 10.5. A further assessment of health provision would be required as part of the masterplanning and planning application preparation.

### **Services**

- 10.6. Public utilities capacity issues in the vicinity of the site have been identified by United Utilities, in particular at the Leyland Wastewater Treatment Works. The adopted development brief also points out that a need for an additional electricity substation may arise depending upon the size of the new development. This would require further investigation at the masterplanning stage.

### **Green Infrastructure**

- 10.7. The Development Brief identifies the retention of 2.37 hectares of existing on site planting, the retention of 7.92 hectares of existing landscaped areas and 1.77 hectares of proposed landscape structure. The Test Track is surrounded on its perimeter by deciduous woodland which screens the site but is also a valuable wildlife corridor. The retention and enhancement of existing landscaping, the addition of further green infrastructure, the retention of existing water features on the site provides the opportunity to create an integrated network of footpath and cycleways surrounded by green infrastructure through the site and to the adjoining Paradise Park and beyond.

### **Drainage**

- 10.8. The draft Development Brief requires that the principles of sustainable urban drainage systems be applied to the surface water strategy for the site.

### **Contamination**

- 10.9. There is likely to be some contamination on the site due to the previous uses, but this is unlikely to be significant.
- 10.10. Policy C2 of the Site Allocations DPD requires the submission of an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule to be submitted and agreed to ensure that the required infrastructure is provide at the right time to facilitate the development.

## **11. What progress has been made on site assembly and obtaining developer interest?**

- 11.1. The site is in two ownerships, Pilgrim Properties(Pilgrim) and South Ribble Borough Council. The Council and Pilgrim have agreed terms

for the amalgamation of their freehold interests to ensure proper access to and provision of community facilities for the development. These terms are embodied in a formal legal agreement between the parties in the form of a joint venture agreement which sets out a framework for securing a development partner, planning permission and development of the site.

- 11.2. The first stage in bringing the site forward is the marketing campaign, to be jointly undertaken on behalf of the owners by Mathews Goodman and CBRE who are preparing particulars and discussing terms with prospective developers.
- 11.3. The anticipated timescale is that offers will be invited for the development of the site within the next 2/3 months which will then be documented through a development agreement providing for the submission of a planning application, infrastructure works, phased development etc. to allow a start on site in 2014/15.

## **12. Is this site justified having regard to alternatives?**

- 12.1. This issue is also discussed in relation to Matter 3 – Housing.
- 12.2. This site was allocated in the South Ribble Local Plan (CD4.9) in Policy EM6 for a mixed use scheme with a predominant element of employment uses. A development brief for the site was approved for development control purposes in June 2010, following an extensive 6 week consultation exercise. The site is no longer in active use for vehicle testing and is classified as a brownfield site.
- 12.3. The site was identified in the 2010 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SRE015b) as suitable for housing development and also considered in the 2009 Employment Land Review.
- 12.4. The site has the potential to provide a comprehensive development comprising predominantly residential with some employment uses and also providing a local neighbourhood centre.
- 12.5. The development of the site is dependent on the provision of relevant infrastructure to ensure the delivery of a sustainable development. An infrastructure delivery schedule linked to the phases of development on the site will be required and secured through a legal agreement between the developer and the Council to ensure that the development proceeds only when the necessary infrastructure is in place.

- 12.6. The comprehensive development of this site is crucial due to its size and importance as well as to ensure delivery of the essential infrastructure and a neighbourhood centre. A Masterplan is required by Policy C2 to take the principles of the approved development brief forward to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable development of high quality.
- 12.7. Development will involve the demolition of existing structures. There is likely to be ground contamination, but there are no other known environmental constraints.
- 12.8. The redevelopment of this site to provide a residential led scheme is likely to require additional access to be provided to the site. There are also long term future aspirations for a new railway station at Midge Hall which could help serve the development. Investment in local public transport services would also be required. The draft Central Lancashire Strategic Highways and Transport Masterplan makes reference to the exploration of the re-opening of Midge Hall Railway Station and also proposes a potential extension to the bus network around the Test Track site. This infrastructure is considered to be realistic based on the size of the site and is not seen to hinder development.
- 12.9. In conclusion this brownfield site has been allocated for a mixed use development in the South Ribble Local Plan and this allocation is taken forward in the Site Allocations DPD. There is an agreed Development brief for the site and the landowners are working together to bring the site forward to the market. It is the Council's view that this site is justified having regard to alternatives.

### **13. How will regard be had to biodiversity in the site's development?**

- 13.1. Each of the Major Sites for Development identified within the Plan requires 'an agreed Masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site'. Included within the Masterplan will be the need to produce an environmental statement (such as an Environmental Impact Assessment) which will assess the biodiversity value on and adjacent to the site assessing both habitats and species. Where necessary mitigation or avoidance will be expected as part of the environmental statement process, which will need to be consulted on with relevant stakeholders such as County ecologists.
- 13.2. Alongside the requirement for an agreed Masterplan, any planning application received on a Major Site will also need to accord with policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, specifically Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy 18: Green Infrastructure. A planning application would also need to comply with policies in the

Plan, currently Policy G7 Green Infrastructure – Existing Provision and Policy G8 Green Infrastructure – Future Provision. Any agreed biodiversity policy in the Plan would also need to be given material consideration.

13.3. As such given the extensive procedural and policy requirements adequate consideration will be given to biodiversity when a Major Site is developed.

13.4. With specific reference to Moss Side Test Track an ecological survey was undertaken in 2005 as part of the draft Development Brief preparation process. No sensitive issues were apparent at that time. Clearly due to the passage of time, this survey will need to be refreshed and the findings used to inform the development layout and identify opportunities and constraints. The site includes substantial provision of open space and landscaping which can be successfully enhanced and managed in a future development. The Development Brief for the site states that development should include measures to enhance existing biodiversity and to create new varied habitats and a rich diversity of trees and planting throughout the development. The Brief makes reference to a comprehensive ecological strategy for the site, enhancing existing habitats and developing new ones within the development. The Masterplan discussed above will be expected to build on the requirements of the Brief.

**14. Are the requirements for a masterplan clearly set out; is it apparent who is to develop the masterplan and what process this should follow?**

14.1. As stated in the response to Question 11, the two landowners are working together to bring the site to the market. It is the intention that once developer interest has been achieved following the marketing exercise, the developer agreement shall include requirements for the submission of a planning application, which must clearly follow the preparation and agreement of a masterplan.

14.2. The Council proposes to provide further guidance in the DPD on the purpose, scope and preparation of masterplans for the major sites in the interest of clarity. This addition is included in the proposed minor modifications schedule, (CD4.5) It is the Councils intention that masterplans shall be prepared by the landowner/developer and be the subject of consultation with the local community. The document shall be agreed by the Council and thereafter used for the purposes of Development Management in the determination of subsequent planning applications.

**15. Is there evidence of viability?**

- 15.1. This is a mixed use development including housing, employment land and the neighbourhood centre. The adjoining Moss Side Employment area is thriving and employment land at the Test Track site would be an extension of that employment area. The Moss Side Test Track has not been offered for sale in the past however there has been substantial interest from major house builders over the years. The site is to be placed on the open market this year and a developer partner sought. There are no ground condition issues or significant infrastructure requirements which would impinge on the success of the site being developed and the viability of this site will be confirmed when it is put on the market in the next 2/3 months.

### ***Policy C3 – Land between Heatherleigh & Moss Lane Links with policies D1 and D2***

#### **16. Are the infrastructure requirements sufficiently clear and is it clear how they will be met, when and by whom?**

- 16.1. The Council considers that the infrastructure requirements for this allocation are clear. This statement will consider off site infrastructure such as highways and education and also on site infrastructure.

#### **Highways and Transport Infrastructure**

- 16.2. The Central Lancashire Transport and Highways Draft Masterplan proposes the South Ribble Western Distributor to provide the highway infrastructure needed to support his allocation and other allocations to the west of Leyland, in particular Pickering's Farm. This proposal includes capacity improvements to the A582 and completion of the Penwortham Bypass. The Masterplan indicates that the South Ribble Western Distributor will be completed in 2023/24 and funded from a number of sources including developer contributions and the LCC's own funds. The completion of the Penwortham Bypass is indicated to be 2022/23 and funded through Major Transport Schemes funding and LCC funds.

#### **Education**

- 16.3. The Education Authority have indicated that current projections suggest there is likely to be a shortfall in primary school places in 5 years' time. This is without this development taking place. This deficit will therefore increase with this development and a contribution will be required to fund additional primary places in the locality. In terms of secondary school places there is considered to be adequate capacity.

### **On site infrastructure requirements**

- 16.4. As part of the preparation of Development Statements and the draft initial masterplanning work undertaken by the landowners, initial investigations with regards to technical issues and constraints have been undertaken. These confirm that development is technically feasible without need for abnormal levels of investment in infrastructure, engineering and/or mitigation activities. This indicates a good prospect of viable development.
- 16.5. The information available, submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement to the current planning application on the southern part of the site and the Development Statement prepared for the northern part of the site provides more detail on the following:

### **Vehicular access/junction feasibility**

- 16.6. Access off Flensburg Way roundabout to the northern part of the allocation could feasibly be implemented. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) hold ownership over land adjacent to this roundabout between it and Moss Lane.
- 16.7. Access onto Croston Road is also considered feasible. Either a priority junction or mini-roundabout solution could be implemented, and this could have the benefit of traffic calming this section of Croston Road – this could, for example, entail reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
- 16.8. Access to the southern section of the site can be achieved from Heatherleigh and Croston Road as indicated in the submitted planning application.

### **Green Infrastructure**

- 16.9. There is a particular opportunity here to integrate a green infrastructure network within the network of movement routes – one could have green corridors responding to site features (picking up on existing field boundaries, trees, hedge rows and ditches). This in turn would enhance pedestrian and cycle links, promoting walking and cycling as a viable alternative, and linking to bus routes.

### **Drainage**

- 16.10. Potential details of such drainage systems are yet to be understood in detail; however in principle an extensive sustainable drainage system incorporating a network of drainage channels and attenuation ponds could be delivered.

### **Contamination**

- 16.11. Information sources confirm no ground contamination that would constrain development.

### **Geology, hydrogeology and hydrology**

- 16.12. The site is not in an area known to be at risk from flooding from the river. The site contains numerous drains that cross the site. The River Lostock flows between 150m to 200m beyond the eastern site boundary. It is possible that site land drains could discharge into the river, both upstream and downstream of the site but this remains to be verified.

### **Services**

- 16.13. Based on the information received from initial investigations there would appear to be very limited impact / disruption on existing infrastructure, and there are no identified strategic capacity constraints. Further detailed consideration will be given to impacts on water distribution mains, surface water sewers, and telecoms chambers / ducts / trenches along Croston Road, Bannister Lane, Moss Lane and Flensburg Way. The main consideration in terms of development layout is the foul sewer and associated easement that runs to the east of Flensburg Way, which traverses the site diagonally towards Croston Road. This can be accommodated in a proposed site layout.

**17. What is the likelihood that this site will achieve the contribution to the Borough's housing land supply (set out in D1) in the short, medium and long terms, given the infrastructure requirements? Is the number of dwellings sought justified?**

- 17.1. With reference to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Guidance 2007 and paragraph 47 of the NPPF, and the 'indicators' of deliverability set out therein, the site is:

*Available*

The HCA (the major land owner with control over access) have confirmed that the site is available for development with immediate effect, and can offer land holdings with ready access from Flensburg Way and Moss Lane (see below). The consortium of landowners have indicated that they wish to bring the site forward for development. The comprehensive masterplanning across the whole site will bring all parties together and create the conditions for all land to become available, in the immediate to short term.

#### *Suitable*

The locational attributes of the site and its position within a wider growth area makes that the land is suitable for development as we speak. Development would not cause harm to environmental interests and would be accessible via appropriate routes and junctions. The size of the site and its potential capacity would provide development with sufficient critical mass to help create sustainable, mixed communities and would be able to amply deliver the suggested allocation of 600 units.

#### *Achievable*

The indication from landowners including the HCA, together with the submission of the outline planning application for the southern part of the site, all confirm the prospect of housing development commencing within the short term. A comprehensive approach through a masterplan, will help achieve development through formulation of a flexible framework; guiding a clear course of action but with the ability for proposals to evolve over time.

- 17.2. Illustrative masterplanning has provided a vision of a complete development, but with acknowledgement that this will come forward incrementally. One of the key benefits of the site is the opportunity to deal with phasing in a very flexible way, as multiple access points (albeit each with their inherent characteristics and constraints) could see development commence and progress from Flensburg Way and/or Croston Road and/or Heatherleigh.
- 17.3. It is therefore the Council's view that the site can contribute to the housing requirements in the short, medium and long term. This view is strengthened by the fact that there is a current planning application for the southern half of the allocation (350 dwellings) which is currently under consideration.
- 17.4. The DPD allocates the site for 600 dwellings. It is clear from the masterplanning work undertaken by the landowners that the site could accommodate more than this, possibly up to 800 dwellings. Policy C3 references the opportunity for the site to provide leisure/community uses. This opportunity would be progressed as part of the further masterplanning work for the northern part of the site. This work would

define the scale of this use and the necessary land take. In recognition of this possibility, the number of houses allocated on the site had been set at 600. This could be considered to be a minimum for this allocation, as clearly should the leisure/community uses not be forthcoming the site could provide a greater number of dwellings.

## **18. Is this site justified having regard to alternatives?**

This issue is also discussed in relation to Matter 3 – Housing.

- 18.1. There were several site suggestions made for the whole site, and several smaller parcels within it. The smaller parcels should be treated as part of the larger site and include issues and options refs: SR005, SR091, SR093, SR108 and SR110.
- 18.2. The Site is currently allocated as Safeguarded Land in Policy D8 of the South Ribble Local Plan and has been used for agricultural purposes. No particular environmental constraints have been identified. Access to public transport is satisfactory, with good access to local services and education facilities albeit school places capacity is limited.
- 18.3. The land is suitable for housing and scores well in the sustainability appraisal and has also been included in the SHLAA as a site suitable for residential development.
- 18.4. This site has long been considered to be suitable for residential development. It was not allocated for development previously in the Local Plan as it was not required at that stage however the site has now been reviewed through the Site Allocations DPD process and its safeguarded land allocation is no longer appropriate due to housing land needs. On this basis the Council has identified this land to help deliver its housing requirements within the Site Allocations Plan period.
- 18.5. There has been on-going discussions throughout the Site Allocations process with the consortium of land owners on this site, one of which is the Homes and Community's Agency (HCA) who are helping to make progress on the site. These discussions and preparatory works convey the sites deliverability and the interest from landowners in bringing this site forward as soon as possible.
- 18.6. As has already been stated, outline planning application for 350 dwellings was submitted in September 2012 which focuses on the southern end of the site (South of Bannister Lane) and a smaller scale residential application for 14 units has also been submitted for a self-contained site at the northern point of the site with access off Moss

Lane (Murray Avenue). The submission of these applications is a good reflection of deliverability and the sites general viability.

- 18.7. In conclusion, the Council considers that this site is now required to help the Borough meet its housing requirements throughout the plan period. It is considered to be appropriate to be brought forward due to its central location, in line with the spatial strategy outlined in Core Strategy Policy 1 and due to its previous allocation in the South Ribble Local Plan (as safeguarded land for future development needs.) On this basis the site has been allocated as a major site for residential development with other uses (such as leisure) if required within the plan period.
- 18.8. The sites status as a major site for development in the Site Allocations DPD has helped bring this site forward to date and will continue to do so over the plan period. Its designation as a major site and the requirement in Policy C3 for a masterplan to achieve a comprehensive development, and infrastructure delivery schedule, will ensure the relevant infrastructure required will be provided at the appropriate time to facilitate the development.
- 18.9. On the basis of current information the Council considers that this site is more appropriate, viable and deliverable compared to the alternatives.

## **19. How will regard be had to biodiversity in the site's development?**

- 19.1. Each of the Major Sites for Development identified within the Plan requires 'an agreed Masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site'. Included within the Masterplan will be the need to produce an environmental statement (such as an Environmental Impact Assessment) which will assess the biodiversity value on and adjacent to the site assessing both habitats and species. Where necessary mitigation or avoidance will be expected as part of the environmental statement process, which will need to be consulted on with relevant stakeholders such as County ecologists.
- 19.2. Alongside the requirement for an agreed Masterplan, any planning application received on a Major Site will also need to accord with policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, specifically Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy 18: Green Infrastructure. A planning application would also need to comply with policies in the Plan, currently Policy G7 Green Infrastructure – Existing Provision and Policy G8 Green Infrastructure – Future Provision. Any agreed biodiversity policy in the Plan would also need to be given material consideration.

- 19.3. As such given the extensive procedural and policy requirements adequate consideration will be given to biodiversity when a Major Site is developed.
- 19.4. The Development Statement prepared in relation to this allocation considers ecology and biodiversity issues. These issues will also be addressed through the on-going masterplanning for the northern part of the site and are considered in detail in the technical documents submitted to accompany the planning application for the southern portion of the site.
- 19.5. Specific to Heatherleigh and Moss Lane the existing site characteristics provide the foundation of a strong Green Infrastructure network whilst stimulating the opportunity to create a bespoke drainage solution. The scale of the site opens up opportunities for generous green space provision, delivering open spaces and play areas on site that help to sustain a family friendly place whilst enhancing biodiversity.
- 19.6. A particular opportunity arises for distinctive 'strategic' green corridors which can provide a range of functions – land drainage / flood water storage, wildlife habitats and passive recreation (eg walking and cycling routes). This could open up involvement from local interest groups and partners in the design, delivery and management of open space, e.g. the South Ribble Partnership.
- 19.7. Further habitat/ecological/environmental survey and reporting will be undertaken to inform masterplanning and planning application(s). Wherever possible trees, hedges and ditches will be retained. If it can be achieved any habitat lost will be replaced. This could include for example planting of native hedges e.g. where hedges are not currently present in line with relevant policies such as Policy G13 Trees, Woodlands and Development.
- 19.8. The provision of a landscape buffer (in addition to the current hedgerow) along the western edge of the site will help strengthen north south wildlife corridors – this could include native tree and shrub planting and planting of lowland meadow grassland mixes. The opportunity exists to retain many of the existing hedgerows and trees to ensure existing habitat corridors are retained. The majority of the hedges on site qualify as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) priority habitat and as such the indicative framework illustrates how these can be enhanced by incorporating green corridors at the centre of the design concept.

**20. Are the requirements for a masterplan clearly set out; is it apparent who is to develop the masterplan and what process this should follow? How**

**does this link with the masterplan prepared by the developer of the current housing proposal?**

- 20.1. In terms of land to the north of Heatherleigh and south of Bannister Lane, an outline planning application for 350 dwellings was submitted in September 2012. The application was accompanied with a Design and Access Statement including a masterplan for this section of the allocation. This document is attached at Appendix 1 (CD5.2.1).
- 20.2. The HCA are the main landowner north of Bannister Lane and have commissioned a Development Statement (DS) for this part of the allocation. The DS includes a wider masterplan showing the linkages across Bannister Lane as well as text supporting the principles of connectivity within the allocation between land north and south of Bannister Lane. This document is attached at Appendix 2.
- 20.3. Using the masterplan included within the DS as a framework Wainhomes (representing other landowner interests within the allocation) have developed it in greater detail to support future planning applications on the site. This work accords in principle with the HCA masterplan and provides additional evidence of the commitment of all parties to progress the development of the site.
- 20.4. The consortium of landowners are working together to bring the site forward. Further work will be required to develop both the Development Statement prepared by the HCA in relation to the northern section of the site and the Wainhomes work into a single agreed masterplan for the northern part of the allocation.
- 20.5. The Council proposes to provide further guidance in the DPD on the purpose, scope and preparation of masterplans for the major sites in the interest of clarity. This addition is included in the proposed minor modifications schedule, (CD4.5) It is the Council's intention that masterplans shall be the subject of consultation, shall be agreed by the Council and thereafter used for the purposes of Development Management in the determination of subsequent planning applications.

**21. Is there evidence of viability?**

- 21.1. The response to Question 16 Infrastructure and Question 17 the contribution of the site to the housing supply provide evidence of the site's viability.
- 21.2. Whilst a detailed assessment of financial viability has not been undertaken at this stage, initial investigations have been undertaken with regards to technical issues and constraints which confirm that

development is technically feasible without need for abnormal levels of investment in infrastructure, engineering and/or mitigation activities. This indicates a good prospect of viable development, especially with the site being in a location which is highly likely to present an attractive proposition to the developer/housebuilder market.

- 21.3. In addition, the fact that an outline planning application has been submitted for the southern section of the allocation indicates the viability and deliverability of the site.

## ***Policy C4 – Cuerden***

### **22. Are the requirements for a masterplan clearly set out; is it apparent who is to develop the masterplan and what process this should follow?**

AND

### **23. Is a masterplan necessary?**

- 23.1. A generic statement that applies to all the Chapter C Major Sites Allocations regarding a Masterplan and the process envisaged for its preparation has been included within the minor amendments schedule update (CD4.5).
- 23.2. There is a relatively long history to this site. It was allocated as a Major Inward Investment Site (EMP2) in the adopted South Ribble Local Plan (2000) (CD4.9). Whilst the policy wording and justification have moved on it was clear that at that time the Council was concerned to ensure that planning permission would not be granted “for development that is likely to result in a piecemeal development of the site or prejudice the comprehensive development of the site” (5.43).
- 23.3. The current Policy C4 reaffirms this previous position. To secure the proper planning of the area for what is a substantial area of land at some 65 hectares, it is essential to see an overall Masterplan developed against which subsequent planning applications can be judged. It is also essential to understand the full infrastructure requirements of the whole site and to plan for their delivery.
- 23.4. The current majority landowner is the Lancashire County Council (LCC) who acquired the land from the Homes and Communities Agency in the summer of 2012. Since that time LCC has been assembling base line information on a number of issues relevant to the preparation of a Masterplan as well as beginning the process of

selecting a developer partner. Once selected the developer partner will be obliged to produce a Masterplan for the whole site.

- 23.5. It should be noted that a third party (Brookhouse) with an interest in land within the allocation has commenced a similar process and has undertaken a public consultation process on the visioning for a Masterplan for the whole site, and is currently preparing to produce such a Masterplan.

**24. Are the infrastructure requirements sufficiently clear and is it clear how they will be met, when and by whom?**

- 24.1. One of the reasons for the site not coming forward since it was allocated in the South Ribble Local Plan, is the substantial costs for the provision of infrastructure to and within the site. The assessment of the necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure remains a clear exercise for the masterplanning work. The Policy Wording of C4 recognises that alternative uses may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that they may help the strategic employment aspirations for this site on the basis of the substantial infrastructure costs. The Masterplan will need to not only assess these infrastructure requirements but also to address their programming and delivery mechanisms.

**25. How will regard be had to biodiversity in the site's development?**

- 25.1. Each of the Major Sites for Development identified within the Plan requires 'an agreed Masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site'. Included within the Masterplan will be the need to produce an environmental statement (such as an Environmental Impact Assessment) which will assess the biodiversity value on and adjacent to the site assessing both habitats and species. Where necessary mitigation or avoidance will be expected as part of the environmental statement process, which will need to be consulted on with relevant stakeholders such as County ecologists.
- 25.2. Alongside the requirement for an agreed Masterplan, any planning application received on a Major Site will also need to accord with policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, specifically Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy 18: Green Infrastructure. A planning application would also need to comply with policies in the Plan, currently Policy G7 Green Infrastructure – Existing Provision and Policy G8 Green Infrastructure – Future Provision. Any agreed biodiversity policy in the Plan would also need to be given material consideration.

- 25.3. As such given the extensive procedural and policy requirements adequate consideration will be given to biodiversity when a Major Site is developed.
- 25.4. It is recognised at Cuerden that this allocation covers a large greenfield area and as such work will be required to assess the environmental characteristics of the site and to present both protection and mitigation/enhancement measures. The initial visioning presented for public consultation by Brookhouse has begun to explore and seek views on these issues. The Masterplan will need to deal with all environmental matters balanced against an agenda for development as outlined above.

**26. Is this site justified having regard to alternatives?**

- 26.1. As has been outlined above the Site was allocated in the South Ribble Local Plan (Policy EMP2) for what at that time was described as a Major Inward Investment Site. The allocation arose from Policy 53 of the Structure Plan 1991-2006 which proposed a Regional Business Location in the Farington/Cuerden/Lostock Hall area. The requirement was for a greenfield site of not less than 50 hectares near to the junction of the M6 and M65 motorways to accommodate a major inward flagship development.
- 26.2. In the Local Plan the justification for the policy sets conditions for there to be a single or at most two investors. This was based at the time on the premise that Lancashire needed an available site for inward investment to be able to compete with sites elsewhere in the Country in attracting foreign footloose companies (ie Nissan etc).
- 26.3. Whilst this reasoning has disappeared over time, the locational advantages of the site in terms of its relationship to the national road network and its general location in the urban fabric make it an unrivalled site in not only Central Lancashire but also in the North West. In terms of the NPPF the allocation of this site fully accords with Policy 1 Building a Strong Competitive Economy. The fact that the majority of the site is in public ownership also provides confidence that it will come forward and will make a significant contribution to the growth agenda in Central Lancashire, Lancashire and the Region.

***Policy C5 – BAE Systems, Samlesbury***

- 27. Are the requirements for a masterplan clearly set out; is it apparent who is to develop the masterplan and what process this should follow?**

AND

**28. Is a masterplan necessary?**

- 28.1. A generic statement that applies to all the Chapter C Major Sites Allocations regarding a Masterplan and the process envisaged for its preparation has been included within the minor amendments schedule update (CD4.5).
- 28.2. In terms of BAE Systems, Samlesbury the requirement for a Masterplan is set out in both the policy and the explanatory information that accompanied the Local Development Order (LDO).
- 28.3. The need is elaborated in the Justification in 6.36 as being required to secure the delivery of necessary infrastructure. In association with the LDO a Masterplan was also required to assess potential impacts and mitigation on Green Belt, environmental matters and residential amenities.
- 28.4. The Enterprise Zone is promoted by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) through Lancashire County Council (LCC) and is working directly with the single landowner BAE Systems. A Governing Body has been established to oversee the development of the EZ.
- 28.5. A requirement of the confirmation of the EZ by the Government was for there to be a LDO in place by 1 April 2012. The 2 Planning Authorities Ribble Valley and South Ribble worked jointly with LCC and BAE Systems to prepare a LDO on an initial parcel on part of the EZ. The LDO specified a range of uses and some parameters for development but in particular agreed that for that parcel concerned access would be through the main BAE Systems site itself. It was clear that for further LDO's there would be a need for further exploration of access arrangements, as well as considerations relating to Green Belt roll back, environmental issues and residential amenity. It should also be noted that in response to the public consultation on the proposed LDO a number of concerns were expressed regarding these issues by Parish Councils and local residents. Both Planning Authorities gave an undertaking that any further LDO proposals would only be considered in the light of a Masterplan that provided an overall context for the EZ development. The Masterplan was to set out the infrastructure requirements along with an indicative phasing schedule as well as mitigation proposals for the Green Belt and any environmental loss.

**29. Are the infrastructure requirements sufficiently clear and is it clear how they will be met, when and by whom?**

- 29.1. As might be expected the joint working agenda with LCC (Acting for the LEP) and BAE Systems and the 2 Planning Authorities has continued since the confirmation of the LDO in April 2012. BAE Systems has taken the lead and has retained consultants to prepare a Masterplan. Work on a Masterplan is currently underway with a draft for consideration by the Planning Authorities expected imminently. In liaising with the consultants the need to assess the infrastructure requirements both on and off site with a time frame for delivery has been stressed.

**30. How will regard be had to biodiversity in the site's development? Has regard been had to the Local Wildlife Site?**

- 30.1. Each of the Major Sites for Development identified within the Plan requires 'an agreed Masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site'. Included within the Masterplan will be the need to produce an environmental statement (such as an Environmental Impact Assessment) which will assess the biodiversity value on and adjacent to the site assessing both habitats and species. Where necessary mitigation or avoidance will be expected as part of the environmental statement process, which will need to be consulted on with relevant stakeholders such as County ecologists.
- 30.2. Alongside the requirement for an agreed Masterplan, any planning application received on a Major Site will also need to accord with policies in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, specifically Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy 18: Green Infrastructure. A planning application would also need to comply with policies in the Plan, currently Policy G7 Green Infrastructure – Existing Provision and Policy G8 Green Infrastructure – Future Provision. Any agreed biodiversity policy in the Plan would also need to be given material consideration.
- 30.3. As such given the extensive procedural and policy requirements adequate consideration will be given to biodiversity when a Major Site is developed.
- 30.4. As part of the development at Samlesbury the Masterplan of the site has been assessed by the LCC Ecologist. This assessment has not yet been put into the public domain - it being utilised to support the preparation of the Masterplan. However, initial findings show that:

- Development of this site would not affect any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.
- The ecological value of the fields is low.
- The habitats of greatest ecological value were:
  - The mature hedgerows with scattered trees on the field boundaries.
  - Ponds
  - Marshy grassland
  - The water course
  - Plantation woodland
- Few protected species were present. These included:
  - Foraging bats
  - Common breeding bird species within hedgerows, trees and woodlands including some 'Red list' species. (no ground nesting species).
- The surveys indicate that the following species are absent:
  - Great Crested Newts
  - Badgers
  - Otter
  - Water vole
- No roosting bats were found.
- Some of the mature trees on the site have features that could potentially be colonised by roosting bats in the future.
- Himalayan Balsam occurs on the site (Invasive alien plant).

30.5. These initial findings suggest that the site is of limited biodiversity value and there are no apparent environmental constraints applicable to the proposed development. However, irrespective of the biodiversity value of the land in question, as is noted above the C5 Policy 6.39 intends that the Masterplan should address the issue of the impacts on the landscape and wider environment.

### **31. Is the proposed amendment to the Green Belt justified and consistent with the NPPF and the CS?**

31.1. The inclusion of land currently in the Green Belt within the EZ required the Council to re-consider the purpose and function of Green Belt in this area balanced against a national Government initiative that is focussed on promoting economic growth and jobs. It should be noted that the intention of Green Belt in this general area was to prevent coalescence between Preston and Blackburn. The boundary of the Green Belt merely followed the Borough boundary in Samlesbury and chose the then undeveloped and unused runway area as the boundary. There is no contiguous Green Belt on the other side of the borough boundary in Ribble Valley. The area has remained open but has not been used. In terms of the impact on Green Belt and

openness of the area the proposed roll back is somewhat limited. Whilst there is a loss in area, the remaining Green Belt and the principle of keeping separation between Preston and Blackburn cannot be considered as compromised. The EZ initial phase up to 2015, alone is looking to create over 1,000 new jobs. The EZ is intended to last for 25 years and there is no doubt that a significant number of new jobs will be created running into several thousands. On the basis that such significant economic benefits outweigh the Green Belt principles the Council is supporting the EZ by proposing through the LDF a selective roll back of the Green Belt boundary.

- 31.2. The presumption for economic growth is proving to be realistic, as there is considerable interest in the site from investors. BAE Systems have confirmed that there are some 15 interested parties of which the majority have signed Non-Disclosure Agreements and 2-3 are likely to sign a MOU following further conversations. From the interest shown to date it is clear that some companies have operational and footprint requirements may not be suitable for Parcel A as the development plot sizes are constricted due to underground services which cannot be moved. Therefore it is highly likely that at least 2-3 prospects would have to be accommodated on Parcel B which is currently Green Belt and does not have development plot constraints to the same level as Parcel A. It is clear that the preferred location for these companies is Samlesbury due to the supporting transport infrastructure, co-location to a strong industrial base and access to a skilled workforce.
- 31.3. The proposed Green Belt roll back at Samlesbury is in line with the NPPF in that such a review should be considered as part of a review of a Local Plan (Para 83 of the NPPF). The proposal has been highlighted in the consultation process with local communities. In terms of the definition of exceptional circumstances to warrant a review of the boundary in this area, it is clear that the economic circumstances and the need to promote growth and attract inward investment with substantial benefits for the local, regional and national economies through the Government approved EZ outweighs the openness arguments of the Green Belt. Whilst some land remains in the ownership of BAE Systems in the Green Belt this land will be required to help mitigate the loss of Green Belt and the impacts on landscape and wider environment, and as such the revised boundary to the Green Belt can be viewed as permanent beyond the plan period, which is in accordance with Para 85 of the NPPF.
- 31.4. With regard to the Core Strategy the proposed EZ emerged as the Core Strategy was being finalised and as such the document merely notes in 5.32 the confirmation of the EZ. However in the previous paragraphs (5.29-5.31) the importance of the Samlesbury site to the economy and for growth is highlighted. Indeed in Policy 1 BAE Systems at Samlesbury is identified as a Strategic Site for continued

development. In terms of Green Belt the Core Strategy states that no change is anticipated in the strategic extent of the Green Belt, the changes outlined to support the EZ are not considered to be in conflict with this strategic aim and are of more local significance.

### **32. Is the policy sufficiently clear as to what uses would be acceptable?**

32.1. The EZ is entitled the Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone (Samlesbury), and the Government accepted in its confirmation of the EZ that the concept of advanced engineering and manufacturing on the site was a realistic ambition in achieving genuine additional growth.

32.2. The 2 Planning Authorities recognise that the uses as described do not directly equate to the Use Classes Order, but have agreed that control on the uses will be through both the LDO process and the Masterplan. The Standard Industrial Codes (SIC) have been utilised to specify more clearly the range of acceptable uses.

32.3. For the initial LDO the uses were described as follows:

- Class B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (CD4.12) as amended in so far as it relates to advanced engineering and manufacturing.
  - Advanced engineering and manufacturing typical uses may include:
  - Aerospace (30.3,28.4)
  - General Aviation Services (52.23)
  - High-end automotive including motorsport,electric/alternative energy vehicles (29.1,29.3)
  - Computing, systems engineering and autonomous systems (62.01,72.1)
  - Nuclear (35.1)\* (Excluding production,enrichment,storage,or disposal of nuclear fuels)
  - Advanced flexible materials (13.96, 20.6)
  - Renewable energy (27.1)

AND

- Class D1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended for a non-residential education and training centre. The non-residential education and training centre will be used for the purposes of a Regional Skills Academy.

32.4. It is also intended for the development of the EZ to be restricted to prevent the displacement of in particular existing Lancashire based companies. This restriction and control of uses will be the in the hands of the LEP and the EZ Governing Body.