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**By email and post**  
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12 June 2017

Dear Mr Blackburn

**FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN: INSPECTOR'S MATTERS,  
ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

We write in relation to the above, in response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the Stage 2 Hearing Sessions. These representations are submitted on behalf of Britmax Developments Ltd with regards to land at Great Birchwood, Warton.

We understand that these representations will be passed to the Inspector and will carry the same weight as any verbal presentations made at the hearing sessions. On this basis, we no longer request to attend the hearing sessions.

We set out below our response to the relevant questions raised by the Inspector.

**Policies H6 and H7 – Homes in the Countryside**

Question 20: Do these policies apply to the countryside, areas of separation and the green belt? Is this clear within the policies?

No, it is not explicitly clear as to whether or not these policies apply to areas of separation and the green belt; clarification on this point is required.

Question 21: Is policy H6 consistent with paragraph 55 of the Framework?

The third point of policy H6 should be sub-divided into two separate points to make it clear that the provision to re-use redundant or disused buildings does not have to be related to a heritage asset. This would better reflect paragraph 55 of the Framework.

Question 22: Is the increase in size of a replacement or extended home by no more than 33% of the ground floor area of the original home justified and based on robust evidence?

The provision to extend a replacement or existing dwelling should not be solely

based on the ground floor area; there should be flexibility to extend homes based on existing volume also.

There should be flexibility to determine the extent that existing buildings within the open countryside and green belt locations are extended. In some locations, which are well screened for example, it might be appropriate to go above the 33% suggested without causing any adverse impact to neighbours or the environment.

Adopting a policy which allows sites and cases to be assessed on an individual basis would provide this flexibility.

### **Policy GD2 – Green Belt**

Question 31: The policy states that national guidance for development in the green belt will be applied. Should this refer to national policy rather than guidance and include reference to other policies in the Plan including GD4, GD5, H6 and H7? Does the plan clearly set out how development in the green belt will be assessed?

The policy should refer to national policy and likewise to other relevant policies in the plan which are important when assessing proposals within the green belt.

Question 33: Paragraph 89 of the Framework states that the construction of new buildings in the green belt is inappropriate except for the development types listed. Other forms of development are also inappropriate and these are listed in paragraph 90. Paragraph 88 clearly states that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Does paragraph 8.7 of the Plan accurately reflect the Framework in relation to very special circumstances?

No, paragraph 8.7 of the Plan does not accurately reflect the Framework. Paragraph 8.7 incorrectly sets out that paragraph 89 of the Framework lists the very special circumstances for allowing development in the green belt; but this is incorrect. Paragraph 89 of the Framework actually lists the types of development that is permitted in green belt locations; i.e. appropriate development.

Paragraph 8.7 should be amended to refer to the provisions of paragraph 88 of the Framework, which allows development in the green belt where very special circumstances can be demonstrated and also to paragraph 89 which lists the types of development that is appropriate in green belt locations.

### **Policies GD4 and GD5 – Development in the countryside**

Question 35: Do policies GD4 and GD5 apply to the countryside, areas of separation and the green belt? Is this clear within the policy? Are these policies justified and consistent with national policy?

Clarification is required as to whether these policies do indeed apply to areas of separation and the green belt along with the open countryside.

In particular, policy GD5 (large developed sites in the countryside) should apply to brownfield sites in the green belt, not just the open countryside. The policy as currently drafted just refers to countryside locations, however, the accompanying justification at paragraph 8.15 refers to green belt. Therefore, the policy wording needs to be amended so it is clear that it also applies to such sites located within the green belt.

In terms of consistency with national policy, whilst policy GD4 does allow for the re-use of existing buildings and policy GD5 the partial redevelopment of sites, this should be extended to allow the complete redevelopment of brownfield sites in the open countryside and green belt locations. The final exemption listed in paragraph 89 of the Framework, clearly sets out the provisions to completely redevelopment brownfield sites in the green belt (subject to ensuring no greater impact on openness).

Brownfield sites within the open countryside and green belt can make a contribution towards the delivery of development in an area. Amending the policy to include this provision would ensure it is consistent with the provisions of national policy.

Question 39: Is it clear in GD5 what is meant by 'large developed sites'?

No definition is provided as to what constitutes a 'large developed site', therefore, clarification is required on this point.

Furthermore, the policy should not just be restricted solely to 'large sites'. Paragraph 89 of the Framework, which allows the redevelopment of brownfield sites within the green belt, is not restricted to a specific site size. Therefore, to ensure consistency with national policy, GD5 should be amended to allow suitable brownfield sites, regardless of size, to come forward for development.

Question 40: Should reference be made to the NDA redundant facilities site at Springfield within Policy GD5? Can the Council clarify why redundant farms, holiday caravan parks and sites are excluded from the policy?

No justification is provided as to why redundant farms, holiday caravan parks and sites are excluded from this redevelopment policy.

This blanket exclusion of these uses from the redevelopment policy is not supported. Holiday caravan sites can become unviable and operations may cease, therefore, preventing the redevelopment of such sites runs the risk of vacant sites appearing in the countryside and green belt locations that are unable to be redeveloped due to the restrictions imposed by this policy (as currently drafted). These sites are then likely to fall into a state of disrepair and become an eyesore in the local landscape.

There needs to be flexibility within the policy which allows redundant holiday

caravan parks and sites to be assessed and considered for redevelopment opportunities. This will increase the chances of the site remaining in active use and could be utilised for alternative development that will meet the needs of the community and wider Borough.

### **Policies EC6 and EC7 – Leisure, Culture and Tourism Development**

Question 61: In relation to policy E7 (b) is the retention of holiday caravan pitches for holiday use justified? Should the policy include reference to alternative uses if the existing use was to become unviable? Would this be justified?

As set out above, the retention of holiday caravan pitches for holiday use is not justified and emerging policy should be amended to allow alternative uses to come forward on such sites. Placing onerous restrictions preventing the re-use of sites is not consistent with the thrust of the Framework, which seeks to encourage the re-use of existing sites and keep such sites in active use rather than see them become vacant.

There should be flexibility within the policy to allow sites to be redeveloped, in particular where the existing use is no longer functioning to its full potential and is becoming unviable to continue operating.

Offering brownfield sites an opportunity to continue operating and be in active use is a justified approach to assist in managing the future development needs of the Borough.

We trust these representations will be passed to the Inspector as part of the forthcoming Part 2 Examination.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Amy James