

Land West of Barrowford Development Framework

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TURLEYASSOCIATES

RANDALLTHORP



TA Ref: PEEM2075
Office: 1 New York Street
Manchester
M1 4HD
Tel: 0161 233 7676
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Appendix 1 - Riverside Business Park - Market context

RiverSide BUSINESS PARK



01

Introduction

01 Introduction

Overview

1.1 This report is prepared on behalf of Peel Holdings (Land and Property) Ltd (“Peel”) and proposes the introduction of a policy within the Pendle Core Strategy (PCS) identifying land west of Barrowford as a Strategic Site for a sustainable, mixed use development. The proposal seeks to address two of the most significant issues affecting Pendle: the need to attract further high quality employment development and the need to broaden the supply of new housing particularly by delivering more family and aspirational housing.

1.2 These two themes are intrinsically linked. The availability of good quality housing is key to Pendle being able to retain and attract economically active and high value households and address a long term trend of population decline. The availability of good quality and accessible employment land is key to being able to attract businesses involved in high value sectors which are the focus of the Borough’s economic strategy.

1.3 The land which is the subject of this Development Framework offers a unique opportunity within the borough to address these issues through a sustainable mixed-use development. In addition to helping to meet identified housing needs and providing an important contribution to improving the quality, quantity and choice of housing within the borough, the Strategic

Site has the potential to facilitate delivery of future phases of the Riverside Business Park, which is of strategic economic importance to Pendle, thereby securing important economic, social and community benefits.

1.4 As Peel’s representations on the PCS make clear, the PCS does make adequate provision for housing and does not demonstrate the required level of certainty that its housing and economic objectives will be delivered over the plan period. In particular, the evidence base does not demonstrate specific and deliverable sites to meet the needs of the borough over the early years of the Plan when an increase in development rates is critical to the sustainability of the borough.

1.5 This report provides a Development Framework for the land west of Barrowford and includes proposals for a mixed use development comprising up to 500 high quality family homes as well as the reconfiguration of consented floorspace at Riverside Business Park to enable the delivery of the remaining phases within an attractive landscaped setting, including provision for accessible open space, recreation areas and footpath links to the wider area.

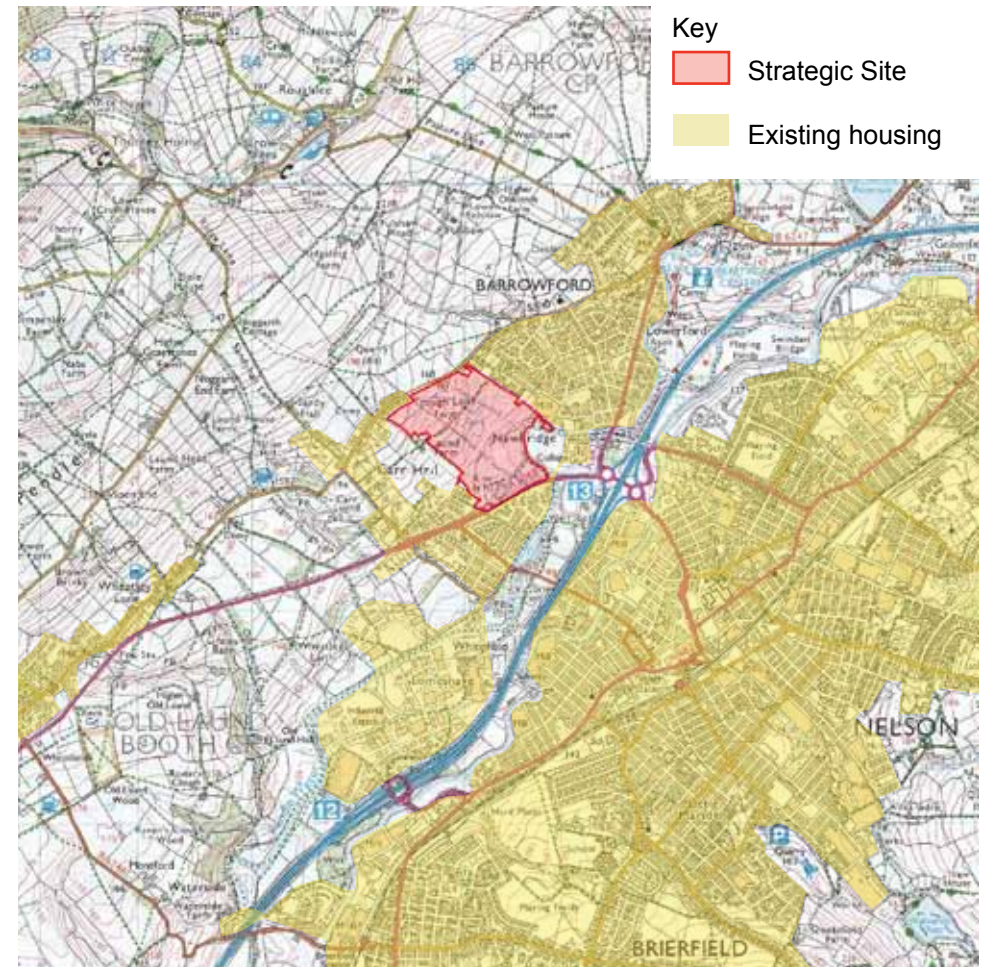


Fig 1.1 | Location Plan

The Strategic Site

1.6 The site comprises land to the west of Barrowford and is bounded on three sides by existing housing (see Figure 1.1). The site includes the approved Riverside Business Park, which fronts Barrowford Road and the land located to the north of this, known as Trough Laithe Farm which occupies sloping land that rises towards Wheatley Lane Road.

1.7 Riverside Business Park is a private employment site in Pendle and has been identified as part of a strategy to attract inward investment. A first phase of development was successfully delivered. However, since the recession, demand for office accommodation has been limited. This has been compounded by prohibitive development costs on further plots due to significant geo-technical issues. Despite rigorous marketing and extensive investigation of engineering solutions further development at Riverside Business Park is unlikely to be viable without gap funding.

1.8 The land at Trough Laithe Farm is a large, sustainable site which is already identified within the Pendle Replacement Local Plan as a Protected Area outside the Green Belt and, as such, is currently safeguarded for future development to meet the long term requirements of the borough. The delivery of housing on this site would facilitate the confirmed delivery of Riverside Business Park as it would enable the geo-technical issues to be resolved as part of a holistic development.

1.9 For the purpose of this report the two areas of land are together referred to as “land west of Barrowford”. The site is shown edged red on Figure 1.2.

1.10 This report demonstrates that as a whole the site is suitable, achievable and available to meet Pendle’s development needs. It seeks to inform the next stage of Core Strategy preparation and supports Peel’s request that the site be identified as a Strategic Site for mixed use development.

1.11 The Plan Making Manual, published by DCLG, provides a set of guidelines for strategic site allocations within core strategies. In accordance with these guidelines, it is considered that the proposed Strategic Site can make a significant contribution to meeting and delivering the identified needs of Pendle over the course of the Core Strategy plan period, in particular:

- The site is critical to the delivery of the spatial strategy in terms of the delivery of the borough’s identified housing and employment requirements over the plan period. It will help to broaden the supply of new housing particularly by delivering more family and aspirational homes and deliver high quality employment land which is otherwise unlikely to come forward;
- The identification of a Strategic Site is necessary to facilitate early release of the land to ensure that the Council can demonstrate specific and deliverable sites to meet development needs;
- The definition of clear site boundaries within the Core Strategy will ensure the necessary certainty with regard to the borough’s identified housing requirement on a site which is already safeguarded for the purposes of meeting the future development needs of the borough within the existing adopted local plan;
- Without the site’s allocation as a Strategic Site, it is considered that

the Borough will be unable to meet the borough’s identified housing requirement and that the plan would therefore fail to meet the spatial vision within the plan period;

- The proposed Strategic Site would help to meet a number of core strategy spatial objectives (see paragraph 3.8); and
- The proposed Strategic Site would help to meet a number of key national policy objectives (see paragraph 3.9).

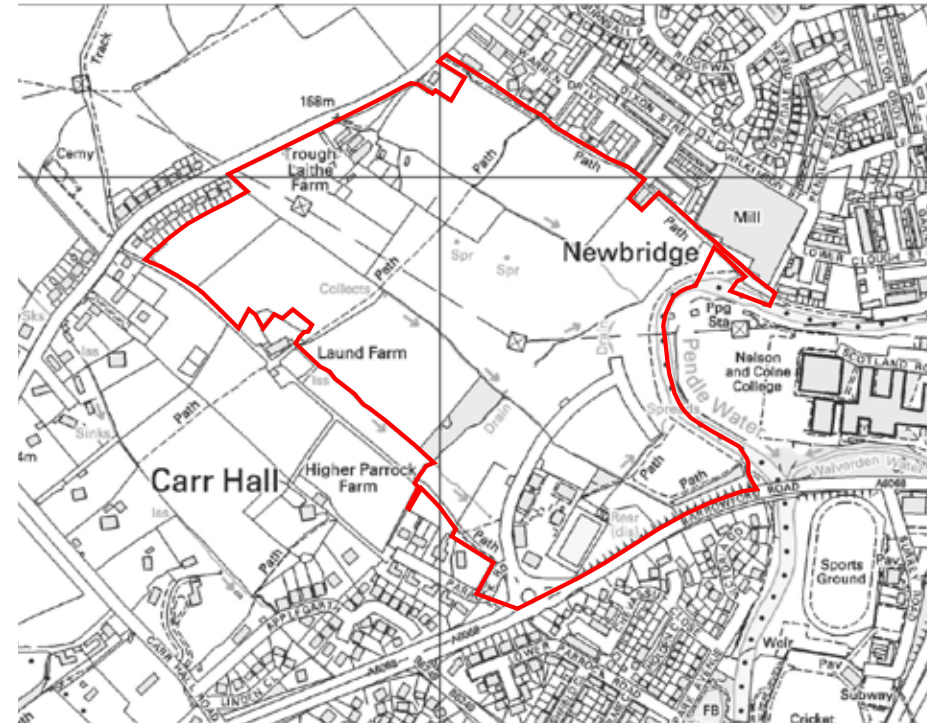


Fig 1.2 | Site boundary

Report structure

1.12 The remainder of this report is set out as follows:

- Chapter 2 explains the background to this proposal;
- Chapter 3 summaries the planning context;
- Chapter 4 provides an assessment of the site and its surroundings;
- Chapter 5 identifies the site's development constraints and opportunities and sets out the principles guiding the masterplan;
- Chapter 6 sets out the development potential of the site and details the Development Framework proposed;
- Chapters 7 and 8 examine the suitability of the proposals and their deliverability; and
- Chapter 9 summarises the benefits the development will bring to Barrowford and Pendle as a whole.



Fig 1.3 | Aerial photo

02 Background

02 Background

Overview

2.1 This report sets out a Development Framework for the mixed-use development of a proposed Strategic Site on land west of Barrowford. The land which is the subject of this Framework has been identified as suitable for development for many years.

Riverside Business Park

2.2 Riverside Business Park was originally conceived in 1993 to provide a type of employment site that would enable Pendle to capture footloose demand and inward investment requirements. The site was recognised at the time to have the potential to provide a High Quality Business Park environment. This was originally envisaged as providing a distinct commercial offer within the Pendle area – a business environment which would be distinguished from the predominantly manufacturing based business environments in the borough.

2.3 The site has planning permission for around 27,000 sq m (300,000 sq ft) of office accommodation, a hotel, pub/restaurant and day nursery.

Trough Laithe Farm

2.4 The land at Trough Laithe Farm, which lies immediately to the north of Riverside Business Park and between housing areas on Warren Drive, Barrowford Road and Parrock Road, has been safeguarded for future development since the late 1990s. It is well related to the urban area of Barrowford, being surrounded by development on three sides, is accessible on foot, by cycle and public transport and is not subject to any particular environmental designations that would prevent its development. These attributes led to the safeguarding of the land and were accepted by two independent Inspectors who conducted public inquiries into previous local plans.

2.5 Peel has marketed Riverside Business Park rigorously over a number of years. This has secured interest from a number of parties and delivered the first phase of the business park, Vantage Court, which comprises 3,710 sq m of B1 office buildings.

Mixed use proposals

2.6 In addition to the floorspace already constructed, Riverside Business Park benefits from planning consents for a further 23,508 sq m of office floorspace as well as a hotel, crèche and pub/restaurant.



Riverside Business Park

2.7 Recent difficult economic circumstances have made ongoing progress extremely difficult. There has been little demand for B1 accommodation in this location. Peel has worked with interested parties to secure delivery of further phases of the development but so far, without success. Two principal factors have prevented the delivery of additional development. Firstly, whilst there has been a degree of interest from potential occupiers including local businesses which are seeking to expand and businesses looking to move into the area, interest from B1 users has been limited. The report at Appendix 1 presents an overview of the Business Park and its position within the local and sub-regional market. It also summarises the marketing strategy and interest in the site.

2.8 The second principal constraint has been the viability of development due to the challenging geo-technical condition of the land which has come to light since the construction of the first phase of buildings. In summary, the delivery of further phases of Riverside Business Park requires cut and fill operations to create development platforms. It has been discovered that the land above (to the north) of Riverside Business Park has been subject to solifluxion. As such, to intervene at the base of this slope presents a significant likelihood of destabilising the land higher up the slope. Whilst this can be resolved through engineered retaining structures, the cost of such works would be prohibitive for business park development alone.

2.9 Peel has investigated a number of potential solutions but due to the extent of issues of ground stability, none of these would enable viable development of employment land. This matter is explained in more detail later in this report but in summary, the cost of retaining structures and engineering works required to create level development platforms on much of the site is prohibitive and is unlikely to be financially viable in the foreseeable future.

2.10 Peel remains committed to working to deliver the Council's aspiration to see Riverside Business Park fully developed for high quality employment uses. It has therefore considered the potential for a mixed-use development to help meet housing needs, generate capital which could cross-fund the geo-technical works and therefore deliver a sustainable mixed-use development over the course of the Core Strategy Plan Period. This proposal seeks to deliver high quality family housing and reconfigure the Business Park to facilitate this whilst minimising any loss of developable business space and increasing the scope for a broad range of employment uses.

2.11 The Development Framework sets out this proposal in more detail and proposes the identification of the land west of Barrowford as a Strategic Site in the Pendle Core Strategy to facilitate its delivery.



Top: Barrowford village centre

Bottom left: Pendle Water

Bottom right: Public footpaths

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03 Planning context summary

03 Planning context summary

Policy themes

3.1 Pendle has benefitted from a rich industrial heritage, with many of its towns and villages having developed rapidly around the textile industry throughout the latter part of the 19th Century. During this time, textile mills and the terraced housing required to house their workers, sprang up across the borough, rapidly changing small villages into industrial towns.

3.2 However, this level of rapid growth (and the subsequent decline of the textile industry) has left a lasting legacy within Pendle's housing market, which is dominated by older, smaller, terraced properties which make up 58% of the total housing stock¹ within the borough, compared with the national average of 29% within England² as a whole. Pendle also has the highest proportion of its housing stock (63%) within the lowest Council Tax band (Category A)³ and for a number of years has recorded average house prices well below the county and national averages⁴.

3.3 Linked to this, Pendle also has an employment market which remains heavily dependent on manufacturing for local job opportunities, with lower than average wage levels. Diversifying Pendle's employment sector to provide a more sustainable mix of employment uses is a key objective of the Pennine Lancashire Economic Strategy and the Pendle Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) as well as the Draft Core Strategy Preferred Options Report. Riverside Business Park has played an important role in moving towards this aspiration.

3.4 The state of the housing market in Pendle is linked intrinsically to the state of the economy. This is a particularly important consideration if the Borough is to retain and attract high value businesses in the sectors which the economic strategy focuses on such the aerospace, chemical, biomedical and professional services sectors. Providing the right sort of high quality housing is a critical consideration in attracting the high skilled workforce these key economic sectors rely on.

Housing land supply

3.5 The PCS rightly acknowledges the importance of housing to the economy of Pendle and the role it can play in the regeneration of the borough. It seeks to deliver an annual rate of new housing which is slightly above that set out in RSS (partly to address historic under provision). Achieving this increased rate of development will require positive planning and a choice of good quality, deliverable land.

3.6 The evidence base of the PCS shows that the Council is not able to demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing sites sufficient to meet the five year housing land requirement with a 20% buffer,

required in lieu of historic under provision. Many of the sites the Council regard as likely to come forward in the early part of the PCS period are constrained and their viability is not assured. As such they are not deliverable and should not be included within the five year supply calculation.

3.7 In order to address this matter the PCS needs to identify and release in the short term, good quality housing land in strong market areas. The PCS does not do this and in fact imposes a number of restraints on land coming forward which will constrain future supply. The need for action to boost significantly the supply of new housing is urgent and the PCS must make appropriate provision.



Terraced housing, Colne

¹ Pendle Council (2009) House Condition Survey. Nelson, Pendle Council.

² Communities and Local Government (2005) English House. Condition Survey. London, TSO.

³ Valuation Office (2006) Dwelling Stock by Council Tax Band. [online]. London, TSO.

⁴ Communities and Local Government (2008) Housing Statistics. [online]. London, TSO.

Alignment with National Policy

3.8 The Strategic Site to the west of Barrowford would meet the key objectives of National Policy, in particular:

- The proposal would boost significantly the supply of housing within the borough in accordance with paragraph 47;
- The proposed development will help to unlock future phases of the Riverside Business Park, which is of strategic economic importance to Pendle but which has stalled due to significant market and viability challenges. It would therefore secure economic growth and jobs in accordance with paragraphs 17, 19 and 21;
- Through a comprehensive approach, the site is deliverable (i.e suitable, available and achievable), will support the objective of providing a more diverse housing stock within Pendle and particularly address the identified need for a wide choice of high quality homes which increase opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, in accordance with paragraph 50;

- The proposals will utilise a site which is currently safeguarded outside the Green Belt, therefore the site will not undermine the purposes of the Green Belt;
- The proposed development will protect and enhance the existing rights of way and extend public access to different types of open space in accordance with paragraph 75;
- Development of the site would preserve the setting and significance of the adjacent grade II listed Laund Farmhouse and the Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area in accordance with paragraphs 134 and 137; and
- Importantly, mixed housing and employment development will help to get the economy growing; this was cited in a statement by the Secretary of State on 6th September 2012⁵ as the Coalition Government's number one priority.

⁵ Housing and Growth. Statement by Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government 6 September 2012.

Alignment with Core Strategy Preferred Option Vision and Objectives

3.9 The proposals will also contribute to the Spatial Vision, Spatial Objectives and the Spatial Strategy of the Preferred Core Strategy, in particular:

- The delivery of up to 500 high quality family homes will support the growing business sector by helping to retain and attract skilled and high income households to the Borough, helping to create accessible sustainable communities and a better balanced housing market in accordance with the Spatial Vision;
- The proposal and indicative Development Framework for the development of the site are based upon sustainable design and development principles in accordance with Strategic Objective 3;
- The proposed development could incorporate an element of affordable housing and provide a valuable contribution to delivering sufficient, high quality housing within the borough and the creation of a better balanced housing market in accordance with Strategic Objective 5;
- The Strategic Site will have the potential to unlock future phases of the Riverside Business Park, which is of strategic economic importance to Pendle, thereby securing important economic and community benefits, strengthening the local economy by facilitating economic growth and economic diversification in accordance with Strategic Objective 6;
- The indicative Development Framework provided for the Strategic Site demonstrates how the development will protect, enhance and improve access to green open spaces in accordance with Strategic Objective 9;
- Important consideration has been given to how the proposed development will respect the adjacent heritage asset of Carr Hall, which will be protected, maintained and enhanced through the proposal in accordance with Strategic Objective 10; and
- The proposed development will provide new housing and employment opportunities which will help to support the economic growth of the M65 corridor and further improve the employment opportunities provided by the Riverside Business Park, identified as key to the growth in the M65 Corridor within the Spatial Strategy.

04 Site and surroundings assessment

04 Site and surroundings assessment

4.1 The proposed Strategic Site comprises c. 25.7 hectares (63.5 acres) of land situated to the west of Barrowford to the north of Barrowford Road (A6068) and west of junction 13 of the M65.

4.2 It is surrounded by built development on three sides. Riverside Business Park and Pendle Water forms the southern edge of the site. The west of the site is edged by residential development at Applegarth and Parrock Road, Laund Farmhouse and the open fields within the Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area. To the east the site is bounded by residential development at Warren Drive, Lower Laithe Drive and Wilkinson Street. To the north the site is bounded by Wheatley Lane Road to the north of which open fields rise to Pendle Hill beyond. A significant part of the proposed Strategic Site c. 23.9 hectares (59.3 acres), falls within Peel's single ownership .

4.3 The proposed Strategic Site is located on the lower section of hillside rising from Pendle Water to Pendle Hill. The southern part of the site comprises Riverside Business Park. Following the granting of planning permission for the business park in 1993, a new access to the site in the form of roundabout along Barrowford Road was constructed. The construction of the roundabout safeguarded the 1993 consent.

4.4 Subsequent to the grant of the further hybrid consent in 2006, the access road running from the roundabout,

into the business park site was also constructed together with the first phase of development. To the south west of this lies a disused reservoir, previously associated with the Dye Works located to the south of Barrowford Road.

4.5 The remaining part of the site, Trough Laithe Farm, appears to have been undeveloped and used as agricultural land through the 20th century until the present day with the cluster of former farm buildings located to the north having

recently been converted to residential use.

4.6 The site does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets. It is located to the east of Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area and is adjacent to the grade II listed Laund Farmhouse and associated land.

4.7 Five definitive rights of way cross the site. Nos. 25 and 52 run along the east and west edges of the site. These are connected by footpath nos. 28, 29, and 33

running through the site.

4.8 The site is situated adjacent to Pendle Water which links, along a green corridor, a sport and leisure facilities which lie along its banks. These facilities include Victoria Park, Seedhill Athletics ground, and both Nelson football and cricket grounds.

4.9 Victoria Park is located approximately half a mile northwest from Nelson Town Centre. It is a designated district park and

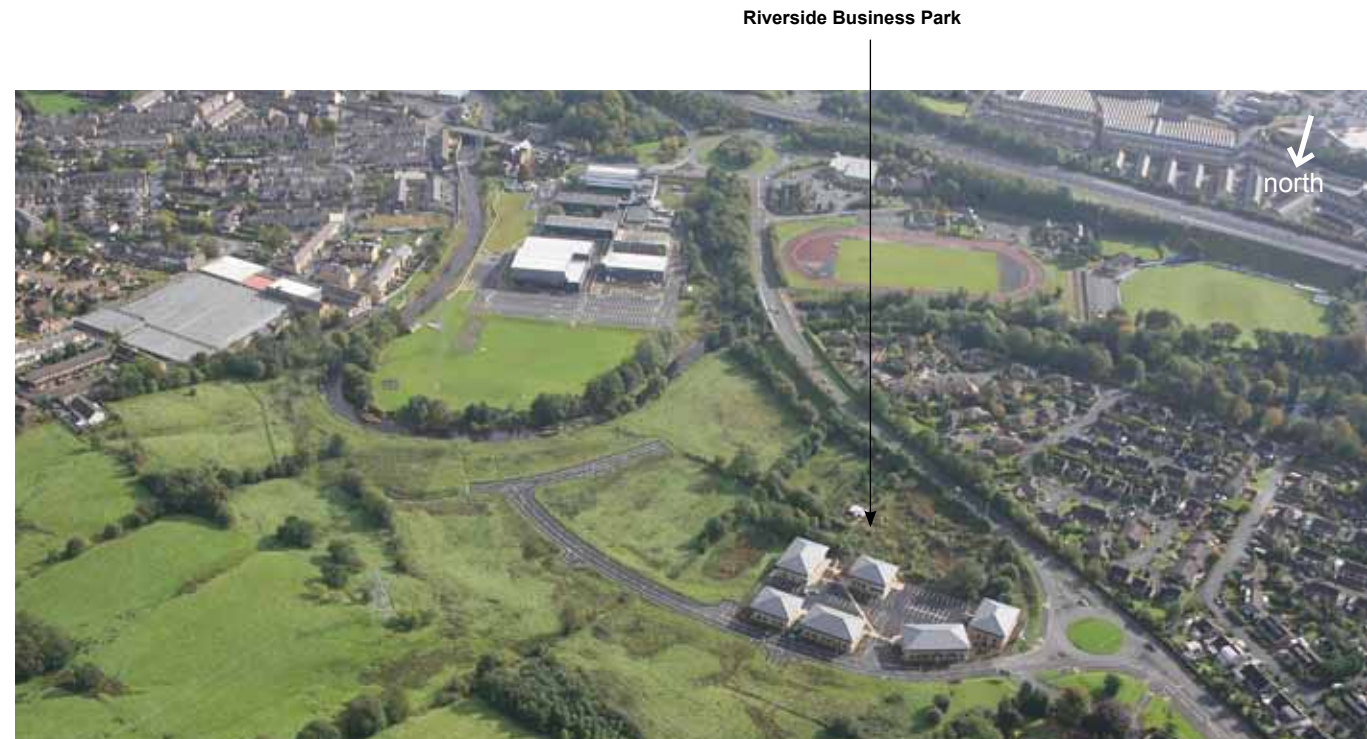


Figure 4.2 | The site is located on the lower section of hillside rising from Pendle Water to Pendle Hill

covers c. 8 ha of land. The park benefits from a from a large range of facilities including a large lake, bandstand, bowling green, health walk routes, MUGA and a children's play area which are all spread evenly throughout the park. The park is subdivided by Carr Road and Pendle Water which have created four separate sections of the park. These sections can be traversed by means of three bridges that cross Pendle Water and a gateway or subway that crosses Carr Road.

4.10 The site is well related to the strategic road network and provides a frontage to one of the major arterial roads running through Pendle providing a link to surrounding service centres including Nelson, Brierfield and Barrowford Town Centres. The application site is also well located in relation to the wider highway network, including junction 13 of the M65 located approximately 0.5 km to the east of the site.

4.11 The site already benefits from an existing high quality roundabout link to the A6068 Barrowford Road located to the south, providing the main access for vehicles to the site.

4.12 In addition to the highway network, the accessibility of the site has also been assessed in relation to walking, cycling and public transport. In terms of pedestrian accessibility, the site is located within easy walking distance of Barrowford to the east. There are a number of public footpaths that pass around and through the site. These

footpath links can be retained and, where possible, enhanced by the development of the site. The site can easily be made to be accessible from a number of locations on foot and could be permeable not just for prospective residents, but also for pedestrians passing through the wider area. Enhancements to Footpath 28 and Footpath 34 have already been secured through the approval of Riverside Business Park which will further improve these existing pedestrian links to Barrowford in due course.



Figure 4.3 | The site entrance is formed off the existing Riverside Business Park access road.

4.13 The footway infrastructure alongside the roads in the area is generally considered to be of a good standard. There are pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities available across all arms of the site access roundabout on Barrowford Road. In addition, there are good standard, lit pedestrian footways linking the site to the east and west along Barrowford Road and Wheatley Lane Road.

4.14 In relation to cycling, the site is within an easy distance of Barrowford, Nelson, Colne, Higham, Fence, Brierfield and parts of Burnley. There is a national cycle route between Brierfield / Burnley to the south-west and Barrowford and beyond to the north-east. The national cycle route is accessible via either Carr Hill Road or Barrowford Road.

4.15 Locally, there is also an off-road route to the south (Barrowford - Lomeshaye link) that passes from Nelson and Colne College, past Seedhill and then through Victoria Park and along Park Avenue into the Lomeshaye Industrial Estate. The planned improvements to footpaths 28 and 34 highlighted above could also cater for cyclists. The site is therefore considered well placed to encourage walk and cycle trips.

4.16 In terms of access via public transport, there are two existing bus services that route near to the site; the number 65 service and the 'Starship Bus' 16. The number 65 service routes between Burnley and Nelson every hour, six days per week, and stops on Carr Hall Road to the west of the site. The Starship Bus 16 routes between Nelson, Barrowford and Colne on a 2-hourly basis, four days of the week, and stops on Wheatley Lane Road to the north of the site. There are bus stops on Barrowford Road immediately to the south the site, although these have been unused by any bus service for some time.

4.17 Nelson train station is located approximately 1.5 km walking distance from the application site. The station is situated on the Central Lancashire railway line, along which an hourly train service towards Blackpool to the west and an hourly train service towards Colne to the east are available, Mondays to Saturdays. On Sundays, services operate on a two-hourly basis. There are reasonable links between the station and the site for pedestrian and cycle users and both bus services referred to also stop at the station.



Figure 4.4 | The urban edge of Barrowford forms the north eastern boundary of the site

05 Creating a framework for development

05 Creating a framework for development

Masterplan vision

5.1 The approach to the Development Framework for the land west of Barrowford Road is to create a sustainable mixed use expansion of Barrowford. This will ensure the delivery of good quality office floorspace which is capable of attracting employers to the area alongside good quality, aspirational family housing set within a landscape framework which complements the character of the area. This requires a holistic approach to the Strategic Site including some reconfiguration of the approved Riverside Business Park.

Development constraints

5.2 Following the site assessment and taking into account the findings of the technical reports which have been undertaken to support the development proposals, a number of constraints have been identified that will inform the future layout of the site. These are also illustrated in the constraints plan at Figure 5.1.



Fig 5.1 | Site opportunities and constraints

Heritage

5.3 The site is located to the north of Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area and is adjacent to the grade II listed Laund Farmhouse and associated land.

5.4 The conservation area's most important associations are with the land directly to the south, which also formed part of the original Carr Hall estate. Any historic association between the estate and proposed Strategic Site is unlikely and any visual interaction or relationship that currently exists is limited.

5.5 However, the proposed development must ensure that there is no detrimental impact upon the setting of the conservation area and the listed building.

Existing woodland and trees

5.6 In order to support the preparation of the Development Framework a tree survey has been undertaken in order to identify the trees within the site that are of high



Laund Farmhouse

and moderate quality and which make a significant contribution. The proposed development will seek to retain these trees and their protected tree root-zones for the benefit of future residents.

Public Rights of Way

5.7 As identified within the site assessment, five definitive rights of way run across the site. Footpaths 25 and 52 run along the east and west edges of the site. These are in turn, connected to footpaths 28, 29, and 33. Each of these footpaths will be maintained and enhanced.

Services

5.8 A number of services are present within the site and provide constraints to the proposed development layout.

5.9 A high voltage electricity power line crosses the site, with two pylons associated with this located within the site. A smaller, voltage electricity line also crosses the north of the site with poles situated within the site boundary.

5.10 A 450mm diameter combined public sewer located 2m below the ground, runs to the west of Pendle Water in a southerly direction. Erosion of the river embankment has caused parts of this sewer to become visible. Recent sheet piling works have been completed to protect these areas.

5.11 A 600mm diameter surface water sewer runs through the site from the north east, parallel to a 450mm diameter combined public sewer. It outfalls into Pendle Water via a reinforced concrete headwall.

5.12 Each of these services requires an easement to be kept clear of development and these are clearly marked on the constraints plan.

Flood risk

5.13 As identified, Pendle Water is located to the south of the proposed Strategic Site. There is an associated floodplain that crosses the east boundary of the development defining a typical flood meadow footprint. Within 50m of the river bank the topography rises sufficiently to lift the rest of the site out of Flood Zone 2. The majority of the site therefore falls outside of the fluvial flood influence of Pendle Water. Flood water storage is already consented to mitigate the small loss of floodplain associated with the development at Riverside Business Park.



Public footpaths and cycleways

Ground levels and conditions

5.14 Ground levels rise irregularly across the site, therefore, to accommodate development there will be a need for substantial earthworks to create appropriate gradients for new infrastructure and suitable, level development platforms. In order to accommodate the development platforms, engineered slopes will be required. The hillside streams, power line easements and protected tree root-zones have been defined as key constraints to any proposed changes to the topography and define zones of land that cannot be changed significantly in level. The modified topographical proposals respect these zones of constraint.

5.15 The design strategy for the site infrastructure works is to balance the amount of cut and fill across the site so as to minimise movement of surplus and shortfall material on and off the site.

5.16 The drift geology across the development is complex but may be summarised from data presented in the 2005 site investigation data. The key drift sequence is formed from topsoil, made ground, alluvium, fluvial glacial deposits and glacial till over sandstone.

5.17 The development of Trough Laithe Farm for housing would itself help to stabilise the site. This in turn would facilitate viable development of Riverside Business Park.

Development opportunities

5.18 The proposed masterplan seeks to introduce housing close to the entrance to Riverside Business Park. This would create an appropriate sense of arrival into a high quality and distinctive residential area.

5.19 This would require some reconfiguration of Riverside Business Park to minimise any loss of developable business space. It is therefore proposed to create new development parcels on elevated land overlooking Pendle Water where the location and aspect of the site provides a prestigious setting for new office buildings.

5.20 In parallel with this and in order to stimulate further economic development it is proposed to broaden the scope of commercial development on parts of the remaining consented areas of the Business Park. This approach optimises the use of the site to deliver the amount, type and quality of housing the borough needs and unlocking future phases of Riverside Business Park which would otherwise be unlikely to come forward.

5.21 The site layout will seek to retain, protect and enhance key features of the landscape where practicable and incorporate them into the development for the benefit of the community. The layout and design of buildings will seek to complement the existing development in the local area and to create a development in line with the local character.

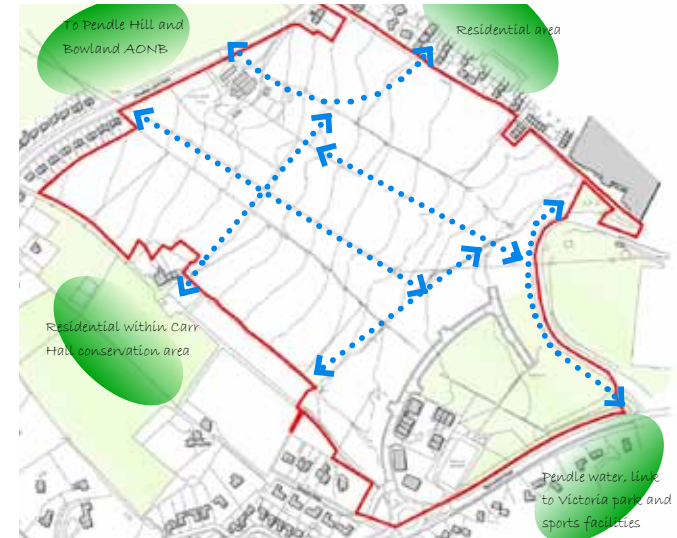
5.22 In particular the development seeks to:

- Provide high quality, aspirational family homes to help broaden the housing market within Pendle and meet the identified local need;
- Reconfigure the consented floorspace within Riverside Business Park to enable delivery of further phases and minimise net loss of floorspace;
- Create a safe and legible development layout which capitalises on the existing landscape features of the site;
- Provide areas of safe and attractive public greenspace which will provide for non-vehicular movement, sustainable drainage (SUDs), recreational greenspace and ecology;
- Protect the existing residential amenity of surrounding residents;
- Protect, maintain and enhance the adjacent grade II listed Laund Farmhouse; and
- Improve pedestrian permeability through the site.

Key concepts for the Masterplan

5.23 The masterplan responds directly to the character of the landscape and local context. It will create a distinctive residential area which optimises the open southerly aspect of the site and deliver prestigious plots for office and commercial development overlooking Pendle Water.

5.24 Four key concepts have shaped the masterplan and are illustrated on the adjacent diagrams:



Concept 1: Pedestrian movement

The site can provide direct links between Barrowford centre and the wider countryside. These links will complement and enhance the existing movement network by providing off road linkages where they do not currently exist. Development of the site provides the opportunity to create publically accessible green corridors between the existing village, the park and sports facilities and the wider countryside to the north of the site.



Concept 2: Site character

The proposed scheme will seek to retain the existing site character through the preservation and integration of existing, attractive site features into the design within view corridors. In addition, landscape features will also be used in order to effectively screen less attractive views where necessary.



Concept 3: Green infrastructure network

The proposed development will integrate existing features, routes and view lines to create a safe, multifunctional green space network within the site. The green spaces will be designed to ensure that opportunities for informal recreation and ecological enhancement are both maximised.



Concept 4: Creation of local distinctiveness

The framework will provide safe highway access into the site and create an interesting internal journey which will create a 'sense of place' by passing through key nodes in the site which contain existing landscape features. The alignment of the vehicular route will be oriented to minimise severance of the main pedestrian movement routes and to cut across the steep slopes to minimise steep climbs.

The illustrative masterplan



Fig 5.2 Illustrative Masterplan

06

Development
potential

06 Development potential

Overview

6.1 The proposed Strategic Site is capable of accommodating up to 18,210 sq m (gross external floor area) of reconfigured commercial floorspace at Riverside Business Park. The business park will continue to provide high quality office accommodation set within an attractive and green landscaped environment. The layout and design of the accommodation will be similar to that already approved for the site. This reconfiguration of permitted floorspace is required in order to facilitate an appropriate access to the housing development. As such, 8,087 sq m of commercial floorspace will be removed and up to 2,800 sqm will be reconfigured to form a new plot on the eastern side of the site adjacent to and overlooking Pendle Water.

6.2 In addition to Riverside Business Park, the Strategic Site would be capable of accommodating new residential development of up to 500 dwellings (at a gross density of approximately 40 dwellings per hectare). These high quality, family homes would range in size from 2 to 5 bedrooms and would incorporate a proportion of affordable units.

6.3 The proposed housing development would be predominantly 2 storeys in height, designed to complement the existing built form in Barrowford, reflecting the local character and distinctiveness of Pendle.

6.4 Barrowford Road runs south of the site boundary which connects to the M65 at junction 13. A roundabout gives access to the existing Riverside Business Park and a safe highway access point into the site can be provided from here. A second access, for emergency vehicles and bus services only, is proposed to the north from Wheatley Carr Lane.

6.5 Within the site, the road pattern will be designed to pass through key nodes containing existing landscape features to provide a strong 'sense of place'. Roads will be angled across the steepest contours to achieve useable gradients. Careful attention will be paid to the visual journey through the site by both vehicles and pedestrians and to the design and placement of buildings in order to frame views, create vistas and ensure interfaces with greenspaces are treated appropriately.

6.6 Where the development area is adjacent to existing properties the proposed scheme will satisfy normal residential interface distances to seek to reduce any adverse effects from potential overlooking and to ensure that private boundaries remain secure.

6.7 The proposed development will incorporate a multi-functional green infrastructure network providing for non-vehicular movement, sustainable drainage, useable green space and ecological enhancement.

6.8 Pylon easement areas have been used positively in the layout to link through to existing hedgerows, streams and woodland creating a wide greenspace corridor from the north to the south of the site linking through to Pendle Water. Strategic open space is created along hedgerows, footpaths, electricity easements, around mature trees and along the steepest slopes of the site. This design will ensure that existing streams, trees and majority of hedges across the site can be retained and enhanced to improve their ecological and landscape value.

6.9 The relationship of built form to the green space network and the landscape treatments employed will seek to preserve the site's rural character and to maximise wildlife value.

Development areas



Fig 6.1 | Development areas

The character of the development

6.10 Development character is a function of layout, building style and landscape treatments, which contribute to a sense of place. Four distinct character areas will result from the masterplan as illustrated on the adjacent plan in Figure 6.1 opposite:

- **Pendle Water** – Large detached and semi-detached properties will be set within generous grounds on the slopes overlooking Pendle Water and the flatter green floodplain. Garden boundary treatments in this area will be carefully designed to create a soft rural character and close connection to the green space.
- **Historic Farmland** - The western edge of the site will have a character that is sensitive to the adjacent conservation area and Laund Farm. The site layout incorporates expanses of open space in this location, which together with low density housing will create an open, green character. Houses will exhibit a more traditional appearance based on the local vernacular.
- **The Middle Slopes** - This character area will be denser in character, with properties fronting onto the access road through the site. A key focal building and urban square will be located at the end of the main route into the site.
- **Wheatley Lane Road** - The northern part of the site will be developed at a lower density to respect the undeveloped rural character to the north. Properties will front onto Wheatley Lane Road where possible and will be arranged in irregular and informal groupings reminiscent of the massing of farm buildings.



Fig 6.2 | Character Areas

07 Suitability assessment

07 Suitability assessment

Overview

7.1 The Riverside Business Park already has extant planning permission for B1 development, a hotel, pub/restaurant and day nursery. It is established as a suitable location for commercial development which is of strategic economic importance to Pendle.

7.2 Recent difficult economic circumstances have made ongoing progress with the site extremely difficult. There has been little demand for out of town B1 office accommodation and the park is further compromised by very difficult geo-technical conditions, which mean that in order to build out the remaining phases of approved development (equivalent to 23,500 sq m) a large retaining structure is required to stabilise the slope to the north. The costs associated with this piece of infrastructure are prohibitive to building the business park in isolation at the current time and therefore the release of housing at Trough Laithe Farm will be a key enabler for any future development on the business park within the foreseeable future.



Riverside Business Park

7.3 In addition to helping unlock the next phases of Riverside Business Park, the proposed Strategic Site is suitable to deliver a range of high value, aspirational family housing within an attractive and strong landscaped setting. The site provides a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to broadening the housing market, by providing high quality family housing of a type and quality needed to support the identified housing need within the borough and the Core Strategy's economic growth aspirations. It can make a valuable contribution to the objective of attracting and retaining talented individuals and households.

7.4 The Strategic Site will help deliver the Council's objective of a plentiful supply of family housing and will support the objectives of delivering high levels of economic growth. Without this provision the PCS would not be able to deliver the development needed to meet the identified needs of Pendle.

Technically acceptable and deliverable

Accessibility and transport

7.5 The proposed location has excellent links to the strategic road network and the additional development proposed for the site, above that already consented, is capable of being easily connected to the local and strategic transport network without detrimental impact on its performance. An assessment of traffic distribution has been undertaken which has identified that there will be no major highway improvements required to accommodate the proposed development, above those already agreed in connection with the planning consents for Riverside Business Park. The agreed mitigation works associated with the consented scheme for Riverside Business Park involve improvements to the M65 northbound off slip arm of the J13 roundabout in the form of part-time signalisation. The agreed scheme is shown opposite in Figure 7.1.



Nelson and Colne College

7.6 The area benefits from public transport services which provide connections with Barrowford, Burnley, Nelson and Colne. The proposed development presents the opportunity to enhance public transport accessibility in the area. The proposed development has been designed to enable the option of a bus service routing through the site between Barrowford Road and Wheatley Lane Road through a bus gate type arrangement. Should this option be carried forward, the entire site would be within 300m walking distance of a bus route thereby encouraging the use of public transport.

7.7 Overall, from an accessibility and transport perspective, the site is considered to be technically acceptable and deliverable. Whilst some mitigation will be required it is considered that the measures that have been identified at this stage are of a level which might ordinarily be associated with a scheme of this scale and nature.

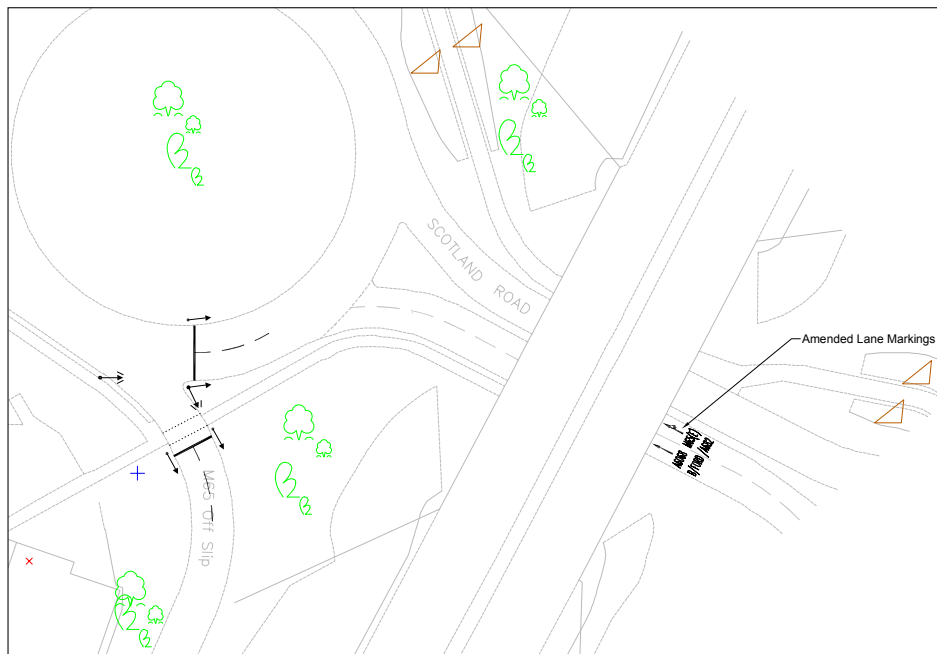


Fig 7.1 | Proposed part-time partial signalisation of the M66 J13 north western roundabout



Public footpath access

Flood risk and drainage

7.8 The predominant hydraulic feature is Pendle Water. The watercourse is a 'main river' as defined by the Environment Agency which forms the south east boundary to the development.

7.9 The approved Riverside Business Park consent includes a flood water storage facility adjacent to the river channel as mitigation for any loss to the Zone 2 floodplain. This flood storage already has the agreement of the Environment Agency and the Local Planning Authority.

7.10 However, a site specific flood risk assessment will need to be undertaken to determine the precise layout and any necessary mitigation, in accordance with national policy.

7.11 The wider hillside to the north of the proposed Strategic Site is broken by 'springs' and 'issues' located to the immediate south of the southern boundary of the existing former farm buildings. These feed the two primary streams which run across the site in a southerly/ south-easterly direction towards the Pendle Water.

7.12 The surface water drainage scheme will ensure that the risk of surface flooding is not increased through on-site control and attenuation. Whenever possible and consistent with nature conservation objectives existing water courses on the site will be incorporated into and managed as part of the drainage strategy for the development.



Pendle Water

Landscape and townscape character

7.13 No parts of the development sites have a formal community, recreation or leisure designation. Whilst the site is designated as part of the open countryside within the adopted Local Plan, the site does not fall within the designated Green Belt. The development presents the opportunity to enhance and add to the network of footpaths through the area, improving access and recreational opportunities in Barrowford.

7.14 Existing hedgerows, footpaths, electricity easements and mature trees provide an opportunity to create a strong landscape structure and setting for the development which in turn would enhance the sense of place and character of new development. These features will be retained wherever possible and can be enhanced through additional planting and green infrastructure.



Heritage

7.15 The site does not contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets. It is located to the north of Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area and is adjacent to the grade II listed Laund Farmhouse. As a result, any development that may come forward on the site would have no direct impact upon designated heritage assets and the principal heritage consideration would be the impact of any future development upon the setting of the conservation area and the listed building.

Listed buildings

7.16 Laund Farmhouse and Cottage is a grade II listed building first added to the statutory list of buildings of architectural and historic interest on 6th June 1952. The building is a traditional rubble stone farmhouse with mullion windows. It dates from the 17th century and is principally of significance as an early example of the building typology.

7.17 The farmhouse is now a private dwelling and it no longer has a functional association with the surrounding former agricultural land. It has a relatively well defined immediate setting, including a private lawn. Any future development on the site could preserve those elements of its setting that make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset in accordance with Paragraph 137 of the NPPF by retaining the private and more intimate immediate setting of the farmhouse, together with its more rural setting to the east. A logical and generous setting can be created around the building by ensuring that any future built development is appropriately distanced from the asset and a gradual approach to the introduction of built development to the east of the farmhouse could be pursued. There is an opportunity to introduce housing of a more rural character adjacent to the farmhouse.

Conservation Area

7.18 The Carr Hall and Wheatley Road Conservation Area was designated in February 1984 and much of the area comprises the former estate lands of Carr Hall which were dissolved in the late 19th century and sold for the development of private houses. Carr Hall itself was demolished in the 1950s.

7.19 The character and appearance of the area is still influenced to a large extent by its origins as farming and parkland and it features numerous open spaces that are contrasted with the housing plots around

Carr Hall Road and Wheatley Lane which are enclosed to varying degrees by trees, shrubs and boundary walls.

7.20 It is noted within The Carr Hall and Wheatley Lane Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal published by the Council in 2010 that the open fields to the north, east, west and south west provide an attractive green setting for the conservation area and create a buffer between it and other development.

7.21 The conservation area's most important associations are with the land directly to the south, which also formed part of the original Carr Hall estate. Any historic association between the estate and land at Trough Laithe Farm is unlikely and any visual interaction or relationship that currently exists between the conservation area and land at Trough Laithe Farm is limited.

7.22 The English Heritage guidance entitled 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' confirms that the protection of setting need not prevent change and a development that follows the principles established by the PPS5 Practice Guide in relation to scale, height, massing, alignment and materials could come forward on this site with no harm to the setting or overall significance of Laund Farmhouse or Carr Hall and Wheatley Lane Road Conservation Area.

Carr Hall and Wheatley Conservation Area

Agricultural land

7.23 A large proportion of the proposed Strategic Site is currently managed as pasture. In order to inform the preparation of the Development Framework a preliminary assessment of the quality of agricultural land within the site has been undertaken. The Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) identifies the site to be of Grade 4 (poor) quality. The surrounding land is predominantly mapped as being of Grades 4 (poor) and 5 (very poor), with the proportion of Grade 3 (good to moderate) land increasing to the west. However, it is important to note that Natural England has indicated (in its Technical Information Note 49) that these maps are for strategic planning purposes only and should not be used for assessing individual sites.

7.24 Whilst there is no existing detailed ALC data for the site or for any land in the vicinity, the likely ALC of the site can be predicted by interpreting available soils and agro-climatic information. The combination of very high rainfall and cold temperatures identified at this site restrict the ALC grade to no better than Subgrade 3b.

7.25 In conclusion, best and most versatile agricultural land is not expected to occur at this site.

Ecology

7.26 A baseline ecological assessment of the site has been undertaken to record habitat types and to identify any ecological constraints to development. The findings show that all of the habitats on site are common and widespread within a local and national context. The majority of the northern half of the site is semi-improved grassland with marshy patches, being heavily grazed by sheep and cattle, and the southern half is generally rough grassland. Much of the grassland is poorly drained and is very wet in nature.

7.27 A number of hedgerows, trees and small watercourses are present on the site. Pendle Water bounds the site to south. Rivers and Streams are a priority habitat under the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). It is likely that the boundary features have a value for invertebrates and foraging bats and there are 22 mature trees on site that have features suitable for roosting bats. Due to the variety of habitats present it is likely that a range of breeding birds use the site.

7.28 To date no plant species of conservation concern have been recorded on site. There are no statutorily protected sites within 5km the closest being the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is approximately 6km south-east. Data provided by the Lancashire Environmental Records Network LERN showed that they do not have any records for great crested newt, reptiles, badgers, water voles and otters within 2km of the site.



Carr Hall and Wheatley Conservation Area

7.29 Following initial surveys there appear to be no ecological constraints to development but further more detailed ecological surveys will be undertaken to assess the ecological resource of the site and its immediate environs and to inform any mitigation strategy. These surveys will focus on recording of invertebrates, bats, water vole, otter, breeding birds and botany and the data will be used to ensure that development design encompasses good mitigation measures and ecological protection where appropriate.

7.30 There is scope as part of the development to incorporate significant new green infrastructure which would be capable of providing mitigation for any adverse impacts on the nature conservation value of the site.

Utilities

7.30 It has been confirmed that grey infrastructure (i.e. water, drainage and utilities) can be readily extended into the site from the surrounding area.



08 Deliverability



08 Deliverability

Available

8.1 The land west of Barrowford is available for development over the plan period. The majority of the site is owned by a willing and experienced developer, able to bring forward the development in a co-ordinated manner. Remaining parcels of land could be incorporated and their development would not be compromised by the proposed development. The proposed scheme has taken account of site constraints and the viability of the development.

8.2 It is anticipated that the housing would be delivered in a phased manner from 2014. The housing would be delivered at an average rate of around 50 dwellings per annum and would therefore be complete over the plan period. This represents a significant boost to the housing trajectory in the early years of the PCS when other sites are acknowledged to be unlikely to deliver enough housing.

8.3 The remaining development plots at Riverside Business Park would be made available in parallel with the housing. They would be able to meet the needs of expanding local businesses and those looking to move in to the area.

Achievable

8.4 As is explained above, the site of Riverside Business Park has physical and technical constraints that have prevented further development. The incorporation of the land to the north, as part of a Strategic Site will enable a holistic solution to be delivered. The development of the housing would both stabilise the slope above Riverside Business Park and generate the capital necessary to invest in the creation of development plots. This would address one of the principle constraints that has prevented development up to now.

8.5 Through the planning and design process appropriate mitigation measures will be employed where necessary in respect of flood risk, drainage, heritage and ecology.

8.6 It is therefore concluded that there is every prospect of the proposed development coming forward over the plan period.

Viable

8.7 The incorporation of housing in to a mixed- use development ensures that the development would be commercially viable. It is anticipated that it would be delivered through private investment.

8.8 The proposal could deliver affordable housing through on site provision or arrangements for suitable provision elsewhere in the borough.

8.9 The developments are not reliant on third party or public sector investment and the resources are available to deliver the development now. The development therefore presents a viable mixed use development opportunity.



09 Benefits

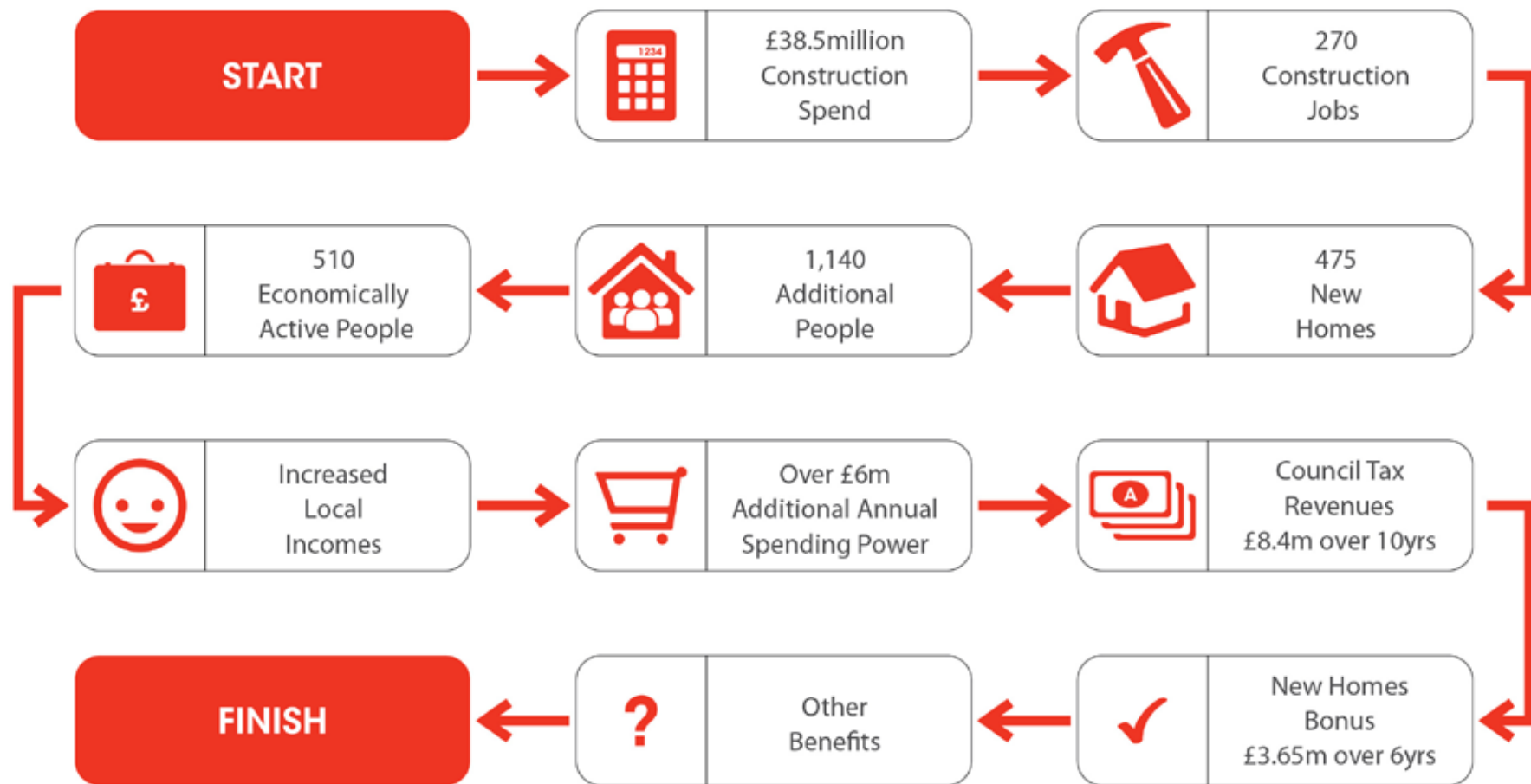


Figure 9.1 Summary of Benefits arising from the Development Framework

09 Benefits

Delivering lasting local economic benefits

Context – Why Housing Matters

9.1 Housing makes a significant contribution to the national, regional and local economy. The construction of new homes generates initial benefits through employment, materials and professional spending associated with the construction process. In addition to this, its positive impacts are experienced for long afterwards and can provide an important source of local economic and social benefits for communities. As new homes are occupied a range of local benefits are generated, from the spending power that households have to Council Tax revenues, both of which help to sustain local shops and services. Where a range of family housing is provided this can help to maintain and grow local populations, providing an essential foundation for key services such as local schools, health care and childcare facilities.

9.2 There is increasing awareness at a national level of the important contribution that the construction industry (including house building) makes to the economy. Recent studies by the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) have demonstrated that for every £1 spent on construction projects a total of £2.84 expenditure is generated in the wider economy. It is clear that constructing new homes can make an important contribution to the health of local economies, as well as the economic regeneration agenda.

9.3 The Coalition Government has fully endorsed the important role that house building can play in “kick starting” the national economy, with a series of funding initiatives (such as the Get Britain Building initiative) and Ministerial statements highlighting the importance of house building

9.4 They would be able to meet the needs of expanding local businesses and those looking to move in to the area.

What will the Strategic Site deliver?

9.5 The proposed Strategic Site includes a significant residential development that will provide a choice of homes which will be accessible to newly forming and incoming households. It will be delivered as part of a mixed-use development which includes further phases of Riverside Business Park.

9.6 Since the employment element of this mixed-use scheme already benefits from planning permission the benefits of employment creation and economic activity might be regarded as “committed”. Whilst this is the case, for the reasons explained elsewhere in this Development Framework, the delivery of further phases of Riverside Business Park is unlikely without significant intervention. The proposed housing development can provide the capital to unlock future phases of employment development and therefore realise these “committed” benefits. Nevertheless, in order to adopt a conservative approach to the assessment of the benefits that would accrue from the proposed development this assessment focuses on the benefits that would arise directly from the additional housing development.

9.7 The Trough Laithe Farm site has potential to accommodate up to 500 new homes. Again in order to be robust, this assessment is based on an assumed yield of 475 homes.

9.8 The scale and scope of the development can make a significant contribution to Pendle’s economy, including the continuing regeneration of the town centres across the area, as well as generating substantial financial benefits associated with Council Tax and New Homes Bonus revenue as properties are delivered and occupied. An independent assessment undertaken by GVA has highlighted the following headline benefits associated with the provision of new homes as envisaged in the Development Framework:

- Construction Related Benefits – investment of an estimated £38.5 million in the construction of the homes – a high proportion of which would be expended in the local economy through procurement of materials and services. This has capacity to help sustain over 437 jobs (gross) associated with the construction sector and approximately 270 jobs (net), taking into account multiplier, displacement and leakage effects. Potential job creation benefits include specific opportunities for construction related employment and skilled trades. Associated potential to reduce levels of unemployment and increase economic activity locally, alongside diversifying the local population profile to include greater proportions of younger working age people in skilled occupations;

- Population Benefits – potential to increase the population by circa 1,140 people in 475 dwellings. Given the potential appeal of the site and the housing mix, including good quality family and aspirational homes, there is an opportunity to attract and retain younger, family households which will help to sustain/ enhance essential services within the locality;
- Housing Stock Benefits – the range and type of housing which this site is capable of delivering would help to diversify Pendle's housing stock and increase the amount and quality of family housing which is available. This in turn would help to retain and attract key groups of people who have historically tended to move outside the borough to access this type of housing
- Replenishing the Workforce – potential to retain and/or attract approximately 715 additional working age people (likely to include 510 economically active people) contributing to the supply of labour locally with linked benefits for the attraction of employers to the area;
- Spending Power – potential to capture approximately £6 million of household expenditure every year within the locality on comparison / convenience retailing, which will help to sustain local shops and businesses that are essential to the vitality of the local retail offer as well as that of the wider Pendle economy, including the town centre economy of Pendle; and
- Financial Benefits to the Local Authority – potential to generate additional Council Tax revenues of £8.4 million over 10 years associated with the new homes to be constructed. Further potential to generate a £3.65 million New Homes Bonus payment over a six year period.

9.9 The benefits associated with the Development Framework are clearly significant and will contribute not only to meeting housing need and demand, but will also make a valuable contribution to the economy of Pendle. As highlighted above, new households attracted to the area will enhance local spending power, which could be a significant benefit for the economic regeneration of key shopping and service centres in Pendle, including the town centres of Nelson, Colne and Barnoldswick, and the local centres of Barrowford, Brierfield, Earby. The attraction of economically active, skilled and working age residents will also help to enhance Pendle's attractiveness as a location for business.

9.10 Due to the commercial attractiveness of the site, Peel is confident that housing could be delivered despite challenging market conditions, during the early part of the Plan Period. This would help to address historic rates of under provision and kick start housebuilding and regeneration in the borough.

9.11 A summary of the benefits associated the Development Framework is provided on p.42 at Figure 9.1.



Barrowford
Nelson



Appendix 1

Appendix 1: Riverside Business Park - market context

Background to the Riverside Business Park

Riverside Business Park was originally conceived in 1993 to provide a type of employment site that would enable Pendle to capture footloose demand and inward investment requirements. The site was recognised at the time to have the potential to provide a High Quality Business Park environment. This was originally envisaged as providing a distinct commercial offer within the Pendle area – a business environment which would be distinguished from the predominantly manufacturing based business environments in the borough.

The aspiration, through development of the Riverside Business Park, was therefore to attract inward investment into the Pendle economy, with a specific focus on attracting occupiers with requirements for high quality B1a (office) accommodation.

Context to the UK inward investment market in 2012

The nature of inward investment has changed in recent years, with fewer larger requirements generally within the market place. This is a reflection of tighter global economic conditions and fierce competition within/ outwith the UK's regions in relation to landing inward investment opportunities. Research published by UK Trade and Industry (UKTI) demonstrates that inward investment for 2012 is at a 5 year historic low point. This suggests that there are fewer requirements in the market place relative to the available supply of sites and potential premises in the UK. The majority of inward investment projects involve the following commercial operation types: Services; Head Quarters facilities and Manufacturing. Other significant categories of inward investment operation include R&D activity, Distribution and Contact Centres. From these UKTI findings it is clear that UK inward investment is diverse in its range of business operations, and its property requirements will be equally diverse.

It is also apparent that Local Enterprise Partnerships are competing hard to secure scarce inward investment requirements. Larger urban LEP areas, such as Greater Manchester and Leeds, have been relatively successful in terms of securing inward investment. By way of illustration the Lancashire LEP area secured 89 jobs via inward 5 investment projects over the last year compared to 9,291 jobs in 53 projects (Greater Manchester LEP) and 1,107 jobs in 23 projects (Leeds City Region LEP).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects attracted to the North West region in 2012 have on average yielded 134 jobs. The land requirements associated with this scale of investment/employment creation could be accommodated with ease in a high quality business setting on the development land available at Riverside Business Park.

Summary

In summary, the Riverside Business Park was originally conceived as a site which could help to attract inward investment to Pendle. At a global and UK specific level, the market for inward investment is limited and is now at a 5 year low. The latest UKTI annual results highlight the diversity of inward investment requirements and business operations which will manifest in a diverse range of property requirements from office space, to laboratory facilities, to manufacturing and distribution space. Given the average scale of requirements associated with inward investment in the North West, the land capacity at Riverside Business Park is sufficiently scaled to accommodate potential occupier requirements arising from inward investment enquiries should these be forthcoming.

The remainder of this section considers the more local M65 market context and the commercial factors shaping and influencing demand, along with specific consideration of the market demand and interest expressed in relation to the Riverside Business Park.

M65 market demand context

In the early 2000s market demand for offices in the M65 corridor was enhanced by a favourable public sector funding climate and resultant office requirements. The benign economic conditions of the mid 2000s led to further demand for office space, with new development focused at the western end of the M65 corridor capitalising on proximity to Blackburn, Preston and the M6 motorway.

With the onset of recession in late 2007, the office market in East Lancashire was severely affected with limited occupier requirements in evidence thereafter. Take up rates have remained suppressed throughout the recession.

Views obtained from local commercial agents marketing property in the M65 Corridor demonstrate that take-up levels have been muted since 2007, with the majority of requirements being small in scale and emanating from indigenous, locally based companies.

Where office schemes have come forward, they have been slow to let, and medium size floorplates have been sub-divided in order to meet small scale occupier requirements. A large stock of available

office stock is currently marketed within the M65 corridor relative to demand levels.

Agent sentiment is that the prevailing economic structure of the area, with a significant manufacturing base, is reflected in occupier requirements for B2 and B8 space and relatively limited requirements for B1 space. Enquiries data for property reflect the prevailing economic structure of the area and the dominance of manufacturing in the industrial mix.

Market demand for Riverside Business Park

The Riverside Business Park has been actively marketed by local and national agents since 1997. Since this time there have been concerted efforts to market the site to regional and national office occupiers to no avail. In 2006 Barnfield acquired 1.76ha of the site and brought forward an initial speculative phase of 3,710 sq m B1a accommodation in late 2007. Since this time around 80% of this has been sold or let. This equates to an average take up of 570 sq m per annum. Over the longer period since which the site has been marketed, this equates to 190 sq m per annum across the entire site.

Larger scale and inward investment has

not been secured in the 15 years that the site has been marketed.

Under prevailing economic and commercial conditions, further phases of B1a development will not be brought forward on a speculative basis. The viability gap associated with speculative development means that without pre-lets or cross subsidy from other forms of development, new office space will not come forward. The experience associated with the initial phase of development at Riverside Business Park demonstrates the slow pace of take-up and relatively long void periods that characterise speculative commercial office space in this part of the M65 corridor.

Across the M65 corridor and proximate to Riverside Business Park, there is a significant supply of sites and premises including Shuttleworth Mead and Network 65 Business Park. This highlights that further phases of development at Riverside Business Park are likely to compete for occupiers which equivalent supply elsewhere in the M65 corridor.

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