

<b>No.2</b>	<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	2017/0756/OUT
	<b>LOCATION</b>	Leisure Lakes The Gravel Mere Brow Tarleton Preston Lancashire PR4 6JX
	<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Outline - Relocation of golf driving range, construction of holiday homes, floating holiday homes, static caravan pitches, golf club house and all associated car parks, roadways, footpaths, and cycle trails, and formation of new woodland areas and sustainable drainage infrastructure, served by existing access from The Gravel (including details of access).
	<b>APPLICANT</b>	Leisure Lakes Limited
	<b>WARD</b>	Tarleton
	<b>PARISH</b>	Tarleton
	<b>TARGET DATE</b>	26th October 2017

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## **1.0** **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This application proposes a significant overhaul and expansion of the facilities at the Leisure Lakes tourism and leisure site to augment previously approved planning permissions for the provision of 49 chalets and service/amenity buildings on the site and an 18 hole golf course to the north. In essence, the application seeks permission for an additional area of caravan accommodation with the total caravan area being utilised for static caravans for holiday use and the construction of additional holiday homes/chalets sited on and about the East Mere to the south-eastern side of Mere Meanygate. Relocation of the existing driving range is proposed, also on the south-eastern side of Mere Meanygate, in addition to a club house to facilitate the driving range, the existing 9-hole and proposed 18 hole courses.
- 1.2 The application is made in outline and, due to its Green Belt location is found to be contrary to Green Belt policy and results in harm by virtue of inappropriateness, loss of openness and conflict with one of the reasons for including land in the Green Belt. Notwithstanding the identified harm to the Green Belt it is considered on the planning balance that very special circumstances exist sufficient to outweigh the resultant harm to the Green Belt. These circumstances are the cumulative benefits arising from the development in terms of job creation; the benefits to the local economy and enhancement of commercial opportunities; the long term improvement and management of the Biological Heritage Site within the application site and ecological enhancement of the surrounding areas; the benefits to local amenity through removal of activities regarded as local nuisances; the essential viability to support an existing local business; and, the unique site circumstances with respect to location, links and existing lawful use for the substantial area of the site for tourism and leisure.
- 1.3 For the reasons of securing long term mitigation, improvement and management of the Biological Heritage Site and surrounding land it is considered justification exists to outweigh the policy test in WLLP Policy EN2 requiring an 'overriding public need' justification. All other relevant planning considerations are considered to be consistent with the local development plan.

## **2.0** **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the decision to grant conditional outline planning permission be delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration subject to the confirmation of no objections by the Secretary of State under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) 2009 Direction.

### **3.0 THE SITE**

- 3.1 The application site of approx. 67 Ha. includes an established mixed use site providing a variety of leisure and tourism uses and two areas of ley agricultural land located to the south of the Rural Sustainable Village of Mere Brow. The main site currently accommodates a touring caravan site, golf driving range, a bike shop, play areas, camping, open field leisure activities, water sport facilities, informal moto-cross, office and amenity buildings. The site consists of established woodland areas, lakes arising from historic sand extraction operations, and open field areas. 'Main river' watercourses and drains lie adjacent and within the site.
- 3.2 The site is accessed from The Gravel at a junction lying about 130 metres from the A565 Southport New Road. Footpaths 18, 21 and 70 lie on the site peripheries; footpath 19 follows the line of Mere Meanygate - the main straight of the access road, and continues along the internal site road between the two lakes. The site forms part of a wider landholding of Leisure Lakes Ltd., the other land lying mainly to the north of the main complex area that includes a 9-hole golf course and land with planning permission for an 18-hole golf course. The surrounding land is primarily flat, open, low lying land in arable agricultural use, with woodland pockets.
- 3.3 The area lies within a mix of Flood Zones (1-3) and is partially designated as a Biological Heritage Site on account of its mix of dry and wetland habitats, woodlands and remnant heathland. The woodland within the site is protected by a Tree Preservation Order ref. 02/2008. The agricultural land areas included within the application site are primarily Grade 4 (poor) agricultural land, although an area of Grade 2 land lies at the northern extent of the site.

### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The application seeks outline planning permission to establish the principle of the following development of the site:
- 4.2 Relocation of the existing driving range from the land to the north-east of the touring caravan park to the unused agricultural field to the south-west of Tabby Nook (Zone 7); this would involve demolition of the existing range buildings, the construction of a new 21 bay range building; erection of boundary and ball-stop fencing; formation of bunkers and targets with associated car park and overspill; practice greens; landscaping and woodland planting. Within the same field and served by the same proposed parking areas it is proposed to construct a golf club house serving the approved 18-hole, existing 9-hole course and the relocated driving range. The indicative plan shows a building providing accommodation on two floors including changing/locker rooms, pro shop and driving range counter, admin offices & meeting room, members bar, kitchen and function room, & associated storage areas.
- 4.3 Construction of three additional zones of holiday homes/lodges (Zones 2, 3 & 4) to the areas north and south of the East Mere and floating lodges to the northern half of its shorelines. The area to the west of West Mere benefits from an extant planning permission – 2007/1512/ARM within existing woodland areas. A series of indicative lodge designs of 1 and 1.5 storey designs are included. Supporting infrastructure including vehicular access roads, drop off bays, pedestrian routes and new woodland planting are proposed. The majority of the lodges offer three bedroom accommodation on one or two floors with outside decking terraces. A small number of one bed units are also suggested. The indicative plans show a total of 140 new lodges (including 49 with extant planning permission).

- 4.4 Formation of a static caravan site in lieu of the existing touring caravan site and driving range areas to provide about 225 static caravan pitches and associated road and service infrastructure (Zone 5).
- 4.5 Installation of sustainable surface water drainage including mains foul connection and managed sustainable surface water systems.
- 4.6 New formalised footpaths and cycle trails within the existing and new woodland planting areas are proposed.
- 4.7 The application includes the detail of the proposed means of access to the development – being the unaltered existing access road from The Gravel.

## **5.0 PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS**

The Leisure Lakes site has an extensive planning history. Of most relevance are the following:-

- 5.1 2016/0936/SCR Not EIA Development (20.09.2016) Screening & Scoping Opinion - Proposed Leisure Development Masterplan.
- 5.2 2015/0098/FUL GRANTED (15.10.2015) Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 2013/0385/FUL to enable the substitution of (i) revised proposed site plan and (ii) revised proposed site section drawings. - Substitution of approved drawing APSL-LL-2013-2 Rev.4 (received by the LPA on 26 November 2013) with updated drawing APSL-LL-2013-6; Substitution of approved drawing APSL-LL-2013-XS (received by the LPA on 12 April 2013) with updated drawing APSL-LL-2013-XS-A.
- 5.3 2013/0385/FUL GRANTED (07.08.2014) - Change of use of land to form an 18 hole golf course, including engineering works to alter existing ground levels; formation of water features and buggy tracks; erection of storm shelters and landscape planting.
- 5.4 2007/1512/ARM – REFUSED (20.05.2013) Reserved Matters - Siting of 49 self-catering holiday chalets; erection of central amenity/interpretation centre building, office extension and bungalow for park warden with associated car parking and landscaping; and, retention of replacement toilet block and maintenance building. ALLOWED ON APPEAL
- 5.5 1992/0473 GRANTED (04.02.93) - Outline-18 hole golf course and pitch & putt course.
- 5.6 1991/0917 Outline Planning Permission GRANTED (09.10.1991) - Leisure and holiday park - comprising 50 self-catering holiday chalets; extension to existing touring caravan park (maximum 25 caravans); central amenity court and building; children's' farm; children's' play area; staff accommodation, provision for fishing for the disabled, extension to existing offices; maintenance buildings, car parking and servicing; access and ancillaries such as w.c.'s, waste disposal units and maintenance compound.
- 5.7 1990/0044 GRANTED (27.04.90) - Golf Driving Range
- 5.8 E/2008/0428/UAU – Enforcement Notice and Injunction against the mixed use of the land for recreational motor vehicle activities, including bikes and cycles, and for motor vehicle racing activities, including bikes and cycles.

## **6.0 OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES**

- 6.1 Natural England (05.02.18) – no objections
- 6.2 MEAS (04.09.17 and 14.05.18) – No significant likely effects under the Habitats Regulations. Subject to protection measures and securing the proposed mitigation and management measures for the lifespan of the development then no objections on biodiversity/ecological grounds are made. Recommendations including conditions with respect to protection and management of ecological / biodiversity interests are provided.
- 6.3 MOD Safeguarding (02.10.17) – no objections
- 6.4 LCC Highways (09.02.18) – no objections on grounds of traffic generation
- 6.5 Lead Local Flood Authority (29.08.17) – objected on grounds the submitted FRA does not comply with the requirements set out in para. 30 of the NPPG and Para 103 of the NPPF insofar as it relates to impacts of climate change, flood emergency planning and flood storage. The LLFA were re-notified on submission of further flood risk information, however, no further response was available at the time of writing.
- 6.6 Environment Agency (10.11.17 (incorrectly dated 10.10.17)) – objection withdrawn following proposed revision to connect to mains foul drainage.  
(10.10.17) – original objection on grounds of flood risk withdrawn; objection sustained on grounds of proposed non-mains foul treatment in serviced area.
- 6.7 United Utilities (01.12.17) – No objections subject to conditions.
- 6.8 Director of Leisure and Wellbeing (02.11.17) – no objections subject to conditions.  
Acknowledges that the cessation of the use of the site for moto-x will benefit local amenity.  
Request for conditions and details in respect of noise, lighting and times of opening at the proposed driving range and golf clubhouse.  
Recommends times of opening for the on-site pub to protect user amenity.  
Details of lighting and electric vehicle charging points to be provided.  
Construction environmental management plan details requested.

## **7.0 OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

- 7.1 One letter of support received:  
  
Would result in a great improvement to the locality
- 7.2 Two representations received stating the following concerns/objections:  
Tabby Nook remains a cul-de-sac with no access along this road  
Drainage capacity/problems in the locality  
Potential impact on future viability of existing facilities at Shaw Hall Caravan Park  
Detrimental impact on local highway safety  
Detrimental impact on local enterprises  
Loss of amenity to local residents  
Insufficient information provided – including matters of flood risk, energy use minimisation, highways impacts  
Development will increase and be susceptible to flood risk  
Possible site contamination arising from former uses  
Concern in relation to non EIA development determination  
Absence of viability justification  
Scale of development would adversely impact local character and visual amenity  
Inappropriate development in the Green Belt resulting in harm to openness  
Non-sustainable form of development

Insufficient parking provision  
Adverse impacts on biodiversity interests on the site

## **8.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

8.1 The following documents are submitted in support of the application:

Design and Access Statement  
Planning Statement  
Ecological Impact Assessment  
Habitat Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan  
Land title information  
Waterco Statement – Response to Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority Objections  
Maze Planning Supplementary Statement and Response to Consultee Responses and Third Party Objection  
Croft Transport Solutions Transport Statement  
Urban Green Supplementary Ecological Statement in response to Natural England concerns

## **9.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) DPD provide the policy framework against which the development will be assessed. The site lies within the Green Belt, a county Biological Heritage site, an Area of Landscape History Importance of County significance and minerals safeguarding area.

9.2 National Planning Policy Framework:

Building a strong, competitive economy  
Supporting a prosperous rural economy  
Promoting sustainable transport  
Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes  
Requiring good design  
Protecting the Green Belt  
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

9.3 Relevant Local Plan Policies:

SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire  
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries  
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development  
EC2 – Rural Economy  
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice  
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth  
IF4 – Developer Contributions  
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment

9.4 Additionally the following supplementary planning documents are relevant:

SPD – Design Guide (Jan 2008)

## **10.0 OBSERVATIONS OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**

*Demolition of existing buildings*

- 10.1 The proposals include the demolition of the existing golf driving range bays, associated pro shop and café building. None of these structures are of any significant historic or architectural note and there is no objection to the principle of their removal. The buildings have been assessed for their potential to accommodate bats and have not been identified as offering suitable opportunity for bat roosting potential.

*Principle of Development – Green Belt*

- 10.2 The NPPF confirms that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate development. There are a number of exceptions to this including the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation subject to the proviso that they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 10.3 Of the built development proposed, only the golf driving range building and parts of the accommodation within the golf club house can be regarded as 'appropriate facilities' for outdoor sport and recreation. Due to the additional facilities within the golf club house (kitchen, bar, function room) I would conclude that the building would fall outside of any of the defined *appropriate* forms of development in the Green Belt, although it is notable that the proposal will replace more limited facilities in terms of a kitchen / servery located adjacent to the existing driving range. With respect to the driving range building, its very presence, will have an impact on the openness of that part of the Green Belt on which it is proposed to stand; however, it is material to consider that this building will replace some of the volume of buildings referred to at para. 10.1. If those volumes are equal, or the new development is less, then no net harm to the openness of the Green Belt will arise from this element of the proposals. Similarly, its relocation from one part of the Green Belt to another will not have any greater impact when considered against the reasons for including land in the Green Belt. I would therefore conclude that, subject to a volume limit, the driving range building can be considered an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt; however, the club house would result in harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and loss of openness.
- 10.4 Notwithstanding the lawful use of the site for leisure and tourism uses, the proposed erection of the chalets/lodges do not fall within any of the listed appropriate forms of development of the Green Belt and, save for the 49 units approved under application 2007/1512/ARM (or their equivalent), will give rise to a significant adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, as they lie within the area of the original planning permission I do not conclude that they will conflict with the reasons for including land in the Green Belt.
- 10.5 The impacts on openness arising from the siting of some of the static caravans within the boundary of the 1991 outline permission where touring caravans are currently present will be partly offset by the removal of the touring units; however, by virtue of their greater number and degree of permanence I consider that, in total, they will result in a net loss of openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the extension of the static caravan site area into the area of the existing driving range will result in additional losses of openness and conflict with one of the reasons for including land within the Green Belt. This area and the new driving range will result in changes of use of the land from agriculture and the existing driving range respectively. By absence of mention, change of use of land within the Green Belt are identified as an inappropriate form of development. It is notable that a consultation draft revision to the NPPF reintroduces a commentary on changes of use of land in the Green Belt and suggests a return to a status that changes are acceptable subject to protection of the openness and without conflict for the purposes of including

land in the Green Belt. If this position is adopted then, for the above reasons (esp. loss of openness) the caravan site extension will still constitute inappropriate development.

- 10.6 The engineering operations to provide the supporting road infrastructure and new parking areas are also subject to the tests of preserving the openness of the Green Belt and not conflicting with its purposes. This impact will depend on the nature of the proposed surfaces but, for the majority of the proposed development this will be of a permanent hard-wearing construction capable of accommodating visitor and service traffic throughout the year. This will give rise to further losses of openness but, save for the extended area for use by caravans and the new golf facility parking area, will not conflict with the reasons for including land in the Green Belt due to the extant permissions.
- 10.7 Notwithstanding the current lawful use of the majority of the site for tourism and recreational uses, for the reasons set out above the majority of the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, will give rise to a loss of openness and, in parts, will conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt by virtue of encroachment. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF advises that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt should only be allowed in 'very special circumstances' that will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

#### Very Special Circumstances

- 10.8 Under the terms of the NPPF, the overarching approach of the planning function is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires consideration of the economic, social and environmental aspects of development. The NPPF requires that, being mutually dependent, these aspects of development should be looked at in the round in the context that economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards (para 9). Within that context the applicant has submitted the following circumstances in support of the application:
- 10.9 Economic benefits – the applicant has provided evidence of the current status of the Leisure Lakes business that demonstrates that without subsidy from the owners other business enterprises the viability of the business would most likely fail and would not be capable of drawing sufficient levels of investment to secure a long term future. The proposals are aimed at achieving a programme of development for the long established tourism and recreation facility that will provide an economic critical mass with secure such viability and investment.
- 10.10 The proposals are aimed a mid-market niche that seeks to achieve a high quality destination that relies on the environmental benefits of the site's semi-natural assets and builds on the prospects arising from both the existing and approved golfing facilities. The site offers a unique opportunity for the proposed business model as it is an established facility, has excellent transport linkages and, due to environmental and Green Belt constraints, could not be delivered anywhere else within the Borough.
- 10.11 It is conservatively suggested that the proposals will generate and secure 15 full time-equivalent jobs including management, customer-facing roles, maintenance etc. with the possibility of additional opportunities as the phases of delivery of accommodation increase.
- 10.12 The project will also give rise to other economic benefits including – construction related jobs over the anticipated 8 year delivery plan; support of existing local jobs and creation of

new jobs as visitor numbers and their associated leisure spend increase; potential for new spin-off business generation – cleaning, servicing etc.

- 10.13 Using the assessment from a recent comparable appeal case in Cheshire, the applicant quotes that the delivery of a site less than half that proposed here would generate 40-50 full time equivalent job years in the construction element and a pro rata tourism spend of circa £12m.
- 10.14 With respect to the LPAs concern relating to the inclusion of 'non-appropriate' elements within the golf club house, the applicant states that a function room is considered commercially essential for the golf business to function; socialising is considered very much part of the golf experience and without this to facilitate the new course would be at a significant commercial disadvantage to other golf locations. These spaces also facilitate business functions, golf open days/seminars, classroom teaching and are considered essential to contribute to the business viability of the golfing facilities.
- 10.15 Social benefits – the current use of the Leisure Lakes sites provides a low level tourism and recreational offer including informal events and activities. Some of these activities cause local nuisance, others have led to antisocial behaviour on occasions. The proposed uplift in the site facilities and environment will substantially remove existing concerns (use of moto-x and jet skis will cease) and increase opportunities for social enhancements including the improved golfing and associated facilities and accessibility to the outdoors. The proposals will provide an alternative type of accommodation and facilities to those found elsewhere in the Borough and wider area and address a need arising from the increasing 'staycation' market.
- 10.16 Environmental benefits – this issue is covered in more detail below; however, the package of proposals includes protection, enhancement and management of the poorly performing biological heritage site within the application site in addition to significant habitat creation through the introduction of large areas of new tree planting, particularly about the proposed driving range areas and site peripheries.
- 10.17 In considering these matters I am mindful that the NPPF gives weight to supporting a strong rural economy in supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. In West Lancashire, such facilities are inevitably going to be located within the Green Belt due to its unique geography. I consider that this adds weight to the above arguments and, taken a whole, consider that these circumstances describe an exclusive situation that must be attributed weight in the planning balance insofar as it relates to the Green Belt impacts.
- 10.18 The combined proposals are significant in scale and will require significant investment for delivery. The viability arguments both in respect of the necessity for a minimum standard of development relating to the golf club house, but also in terms of the critical-mass of development to successfully deliver the scheme as a whole, are accepted. In order to complement the golfing aspirations that build on the existing facility and planning approval for an 18-hole golf course, a suitable quantum and standard of facility will be necessary, as will the nature and quality of the accommodation to encourage players or holiday investors to attend, stay and/or invest in the locality. The proposed quality of the lodges and specialised nature of the floating homes indicate that the masterplan approach provides a suitably consolidated approach that is likely to drive its success.
- 10.19 The associated benefits arising from direct job creation, sustaining existing jobs and businesses, and providing opportunities for new business hold substantial weight. The proposals will assist in diversifying the local economy base and benefits both in the immediate vicinity and the wider area can be realistically anticipated.

- 10.20 At the same time investment in the biodiversity value of the site will be achieved and secured through a long term plan for protection, mitigation, enhancement and management of the existing and proposed ecological assets. In addition to the introduction of significant waterbodies under the terms of the golf course permission some 6.7 hectares of new woodland planting will take place in tandem with the development proposals providing a substantial uplift in biodiversity value within and about the allocated biological heritage site.
- 10.21 In combination, the benefits to the immediate and Borough-wide economy and local environment are highly likely to be significant and can be attributed substantial weight.
- 10.22 Additionally, the site benefits from being well located and serviced in terms of core infrastructure; has a long established lawful use for tourism and recreation; is situated where visual impacts can be suitably mitigated without significant harm to the character and quality of the landscape; will have limited scope for giving rise to amenity concerns; will provide an offer that is distinct from existing facilities within the Borough and could not be delivered elsewhere within West Lancashire; will complement existing consents; and, complement the nearby leisure and tourism attractions at Martin Mere, Mere Sands Wood, Hesketh Outmarsh and the offers in Southport.
- 10.23 The extent of new build and expansion of the built area of the site is cumulatively significant and the harm arising through inappropriateness, loss of openness and, in a limited part, conflict with the reasons for including land in the Green Belt is therefore also significant and, in accordance with the NPPF must be given substantial weight (para.88). However, the benefits described above are also substantial and are likely, in my view, to give rise to a sustainable form of economic development that is currently absent in West Lancashire but will substantially improve its tourism offer and achieve the over-riding aim of sustainable development in terms of economic, social and environmental benefits sufficient to outweigh the identified harm to the Green Belt. On that basis I consider the principle of development in this location acceptable in Green Belt terms.

#### Principle of Development – Flood Risk

- 10.24 The site includes areas within flood zones 1, 2 & 3. Under the terms of Policy GN3 and the NPPF certain forms of development require justification and demonstration that they are at limited flood risk and do not increase the likelihood of increased flood risk elsewhere. The majority of the proposed built development is located in flood zone areas that are compatible with their intended uses; however, that part of the site to the north-east of the existing touring caravan site - proposed as an extension to the caravan area constitutes a change of use of the land for the siting of static holiday caravans and is therefore subject to the Sequential Test requirement set out in Para. 100 of the NPPF to demonstrate that within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; and if that test is fulfilled, the Exceptions Test, to demonstrate development is appropriately flood resilient, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed.
- 10.25 A sequential test has been forwarded by the applicant and it is accepted that due to the calculated relative low risk in combination with the constraints of Green Belt and biodiversity policies there are no realistic and viable alternative locations within the development site that could be supported under the terms of the WLLP and the NPPF. For the floating homes, these are considered flood resilient by their design and sequentially inappropriate elsewhere (the premium arises from the fact that they are floating homes and designed to withstand flood risk incidents). The golf club house lies within Zone 2,

however, as a type of development defined as 'less vulnerable' this is not inconsistent with the flood allocation. Only the extension to the caravan area is considered at odds with its Flood Zone rating. However, the flood risk modelling, in combination with Green Belt and BHS restrictions substantially demonstrates that the proposed location would best serve the proposed facility. Furthermore, accounting for the necessary annual flooding probabilities and climate change projections, escape routes are shown to remain viable for the purpose of any necessary evacuation of the site during such extreme events. Given the submitted modelling and other policy constraints within the site I am satisfied that the development meets the necessary sequential and exceptions tests. The original objection by the Environment Agency has been removed.

#### Principle of Development – Ecology, Biodiversity and Biological Heritage Site

- 10.26 Policy EN2 in the WLLP states that - *Development that would directly or indirectly affect any sites of local importance [including County Biological Heritage sites] will be permitted only where it is necessary to meet an overriding public need or where it is in relation to the purpose of the nature conservation site.* It also seeks to prevent damage to recognised conservation sites, prevent the loss of their undeveloped nature and avoid degradation of their value through severance or loss of function and links. Policy EN2 requires that necessary proposals within these areas result in improvement of the site's biodiversity value.
- 10.27 In assessing this aspect of the proposals it is notable that the chalets proposed within the woodland area to the west of West Mere benefit from an extant planning permission. This was granted on the basis that biodiversity enhancements through the provision of new areas of habitat creation and the introduction of a management regime for these and the existing areas within the BHS would provide biodiversity and ecological enhancements.
- 10.28 The areas of proposed additional development that would lie within the BHS area are: the floating holiday lodges within East Mere and the lodges in the woodland to the south of East Mere (Zones 2 & 3). The latter has seen significant degradation as a result of use of parts of the land in association with moto-cross activity undertaken and continuing under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and former iterations).
- 10.29 There is no overriding public need for development and therefore the proposals fail to meet the initial requirement of Policy EN2. With respect to the remainder of Policy EN2, potential conflict would arise from the introduction of built form in the identified areas and subsequently result in the loss of their undeveloped nature. However, there are a number of material planning considerations relevant in relation to the long term aims of the policy. Firstly, the presence of development within a protected site need not be incompatible with the aim of protecting or enhancing its ecological value. Secondly, it is significant that the submission is made partly on the grounds of long term commercial viability of the site. The site has a legitimate use for tourism and recreation purposes many of which are capable of resulting in further deterioration of the biodiversity value of the site. Historically, a number of managed and unmanaged uses taking place here have resulted in ecology asset losses through damage and displacement. Some legitimate ongoing uses – the moto-x and, to a lesser degree, jet skiing and camping continue to prevent full conservation or enhancement of the BHS. The Council is not able to impose requirements on the landowner to maintain or improve the biodiversity value of the site other than through the planning process and in conjunction with development requiring planning permission. The removal of the detrimental uses, the proposed mitigation through habitat creation and enhancement and, significantly, the active management achieved through the long-term investment will see a reverse in the downward trend of the condition of the BHS and thereby secure its long-term health. Thirdly, there are clear mutual benefits as

the nature of the proposals rely on the natural/semi-natural assets of the site within in its rural character location to be commercially successful. This opportunity is unlikely to exist should the BHS decline further.

- 10.30 The supporting documentation provided by the applicant includes measures to achieve a level of mitigation and compensation that outweighs any losses and brings about active management and enhancement of the identified ecological interests on and about the site for the duration of the development. Securing those benefits by planning condition will secure protection and enhancement of the biodiversity value of the site (beyond that agreed under the approach taken by the Planning Inspectorate in consideration of the reserved matters appeal for the chalets benefitting from the extant permission).
- 10.31 It is worthy of note that some of the enhancement measures will be provided outside of the designated BHS, however, this has value in extending the areas of interest and supporting the value and integrity of the BHS. It is concluded that the identified impacts of the development within the BHS can be offset within the application site; however, some – particularly in relation to Water Vole, will be better secured under the enhancements arising on the adjacent golf course site. As a 'masterplan' approach, it will be necessary to impose phasing conditions to ensure no nett loss of habitat during the implementation of the differing phases of the development.

#### Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 10.32 The development site lies near to the following statutory designated sites:

Martin Mere SPA  
Martin Mere Ramsar  
Martin Mere SSSI  
Mere Sands Wood SSSI  
Ribble Estuary SPA  
Ribble Estuary SAC  
Ribble Estuary SSSI

- 10.33 The area is also within an area which over-wintering birds (qualifying features of the designated sites) could potentially utilise as feeding grounds. It is therefore incumbent on the Local Planning Authority to assess any likely significant effects of the proposed development. These have been considered under the Habitat Regulations using the source-pathway-receptor model and it is concluded that there is no pathway that could give rise to likely significant effects on European sites for the following reasons:-

The affected areas of the site are enclosed by woodland which would deter qualifying species from the site; and

The waterbodies present on the site are currently subject to high levels of human disturbance and are highly unlikely to support significant numbers of qualifying bird species.

- 10.34 Consultation with Natural England confirms no objection.

- 10.35 In summary, consistent with the previous pragmatic approach agreed in relation to the previous grant of reserved matters planning permission for 49 chalet units, I consider that the proposals offer a mechanism to deliver realistic protection, mitigation and potential for significant enhancement of ecological interests on the site. The long term management and maintenance of the BHS and proposed wider supporting biodiversity mitigation proposals will give rise to an overall enhancement of the nature and scale of ecological

assets in the locality sufficient to outweigh the Policy EN2 presumptions against the development.

#### Agricultural Land

- 10.36 The significant majority of the site is proposed on Grade 4 agricultural land. A smaller area of about 1.0 ha. to the northern extent of the site is Grade 2 agricultural land and about 3.0 ha. to the southern limit is Grade 1. Policy EN2 seeks to protect the best quality agricultural land requiring planning permission be refused unless the development is strategic infrastructure, or development associated with the agricultural use of the land. Neither of these exceptions is applicable here, however, no irreversible fixed development is proposed in the Grade 1 & 2 locations and therefore, subject to retention of the existing soils here, there is no permanent loss or harm arising to that resource. I therefore consider the development is acceptable in that respect.

#### Landscape Impacts

- 10.37 The proposed development lies within areas classified as landscapes of historic importance of local and county significance. This classification primarily relates to the area of land reclaimed from Martin Mere and subsequently introduced field pattern. Due to the clear zoning of areas within the existing field pattern the proposals will result in little interference with this aspect of the landscape. Whilst some losses of existing trees will result it is envisaged that the extent of proposed tree planting will generally provide a quality benefit to the locality and views of it from the surrounding countryside. Such planting will also visually contain the areas of most intensive use.

#### Access, Parking and Public Rights of Way

- 10.38 It is proposed to utilise the current Leisure Lakes access road from The Gravel to access the proposed facilities. The linkage to the local strategic road network is excellent and the closest junction capacities and geometries are suitable to accommodate anticipated levels of additional traffic. Projections for traffic generation associated with the proposed uses taken in conjunction with existing and previously approved site uses suggest that the local road network is fully capable of meeting the needs of the development. It is not anticipated that the traffic associated with the proposed development will give rise to any significant concerns with respect to highway capacity or highway safety in the locality.
- 10.39 Whilst there are no prescribed parking standards within the WLLP for the type of outdoor recreation and tourism proposals included I consider that sufficient parking provision demonstrated to provide for the scale of the individual elements is provided and to ensure no out-spill on to the public highway network will occur. Parking for individual caravan/holiday homes will be based on a one-per-unit basis with additional visitor parking available.
- 10.40 The straight element of the access road adjacent to the line of the Mere Meanygate watercourse coincides with Footpath 19. Due to the straightness of the roadway and incorporated speed restriction measures inter-visibility between pedestrians and vehicles is generally very good. However, due to anticipated increases in traffic I consider that some mechanism for separation or definition of a footway would be of benefit to protect user safety. Given the outline nature of the application such detail can be sought by planning condition for consideration under reserved matters submissions and it is my intention, therefore, to recommend such a condition. It is not anticipated that the wider public right of way network will be adversely affected.

#### Impacts on adjacent land uses

- 10.41 Given the distance of the main activity area from neighbouring sensitive premises the main impacts are anticipated as those arising from traffic entering and leaving the site and the noise/light associated with the use of the driving range.
- 10.42 The striking of range balls used in the existing driving range and ball-collection vehicles may give rise to some noise that, given the orientation of the range, may be audible on the southern part of Tabby Nook; however, subject to controlled hours of opening it is not considered that any significant noise nuisance would arise to the nearest residential occupiers.
- 10.43 Lighting on driving ranges tends to be from behind the participants and illuminating the range. As this directs towards the Tabby Nook area detail will be required with any reserved matters submission to demonstrate no light spillage outside the confines of the range area (including upwards) will result that could give rise to light nuisance.
- 10.44 The access road lies approx. 28 metres from the nearest residential property situated close to where the existing security cabin is located to control vehicular access to (and from) the site. Increases in traffic will arise from the proposals with potential for small queues of traffic to develop on the access road with potential to give rise to amenity concerns to the closest residential properties. During daytime hours this impact is not considered to be significant. However, during late evening hours there is scope to cause to some noise impacts; whilst these are not likely to be significantly worse than the traffic generated from the current unconstrained uses on the site at unsociable times, some potential for disturbance exists. Nevertheless, I consider that sufficient scope exists to provide a landscaped buffer (incorporating screened acoustic fence if necessary) to mitigate any likely impact arising from activity in this locality. No other direct adverse impacts on surrounding land uses are anticipated.

#### Drainage

- 10.45 The site lies in an area well served by existing watercourses and main river lines adjacent to the site. Initial submissions proposed an on-site treatment plant for foul water with treated outputs and surface water to be directed to adjacent watercourses. Following concerns expressed by the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority it is now proposed to direct foul to the local main sewer through a pumped system. Due to the outline nature of the site, surface water details are not provided at this stage, however, it is anticipated that sustainable surface water drainage is achievable on this site; full detail will be required at reserved matters stage should outline planning permission be granted.

#### Minerals

- 10.46 The site lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area as identified in LCC's Minerals and Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies DPD. Within these areas, planning permission will generally not be granted for any form of development that is incompatible by reason of scale, proximity and permanence with working the minerals found on the land unless the applicant can demonstrate that the mineral concerned is no longer of any value or has been fully extracted, or there is an overarching need for the incompatible development that outweighs the need to avoid the sterilisation of the mineral resource. The site has previously been worked for mineral extraction (forming the existing mere lakes) and is assumed that any remaining mineral resource is not a commercially viable deposit. Additionally, the majority of the site has an established use with existing fixed infrastructure and a degree of protection arising from its recognised ecological value. The proposed development that lies within the established use area will not result in any greater sterilisation of any remaining resource. The areas outside the 1991 permission site

are either substantially reversible forms of development or lie in close proximity to existing residential development that would prevent the working of the resource on a commercially viable scale (proximal sterilisation). On that basis, it is considered that the proposals will not result in any greater prejudice to future mineral extraction in the locality than exists at present and therefore there are no grounds to refuse the application on that basis.

#### Other matters

- 10.47 A point of objection concerns the validity of the Environmental Impact Screening Opinion issued by the Council in September 2016. This opinion has been reviewed against the recently updated Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 Screening Matrix (Sept 2017) and, as previously concluded, confirmed to be a development not requiring a full environmental impact assessment.

#### Summary

- 10.48 In summary, it is considered that the principle of development and the detail of the means of access are consistent with Local Plan Policies SP1, GN1, GN3, IF2, IF3, IF4, EC2 and EN2, and the NPPF, and therefore outline planning permission should be granted.
- 10.49 Due to the location of the development in the Green Belt and the scale of the proposed development, if Members are minded to support the recommendation then, under the terms of The Town and Country Planning (Consultation)(England) Direction 2009 the Secretary of State must be consulted before such a decision is issued.

### **11.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 11.1 That the decision to grant planning permission be **delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration** subject to the confirmation of no objections by the Secretary of State under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) 2009 Direction.
- 11.2 That any planning permission granted by the Director of Development and Regeneration pursuant to recommendation 11.1 above be subject to the following conditions:

#### **Condition(s)**

1. Application for approval of reserved matters must be made not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission and the development must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with details shown on the following plans:-  
Plan references:  
11302-L01c Rev. PO1 received by the Local Planning Authority on 27 July 2017  
11302-L02 Rev. PO3 received by the Local Planning Authority on 30 April 2018  
11302-L03 Rev. PO3 received by the Local Planning Authority on 30 April 2018  
11302-L04 Rev. PO1 received by the Local Planning Authority on 19 July 2017.
3. Before any part of the development hereby approved is commenced approval shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority for the reserved matters namely the layout; scale and appearance of the building(s) and landscaping of the site.
4. 1. For each phase of development / reserved matters application the following details shall be provided:  
Updated protected species surveys relating to species having been identified within the Urban Green Ecological Impact Assessment (updated October 2017) and the Habitat

Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan as being present or potentially present (badgers) within the proposed phase area.

Specific details of the location and timescale of delivery of ecological mitigation measures to be carried out in accordance with the Urban Green Habitat Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan Rev C (April 2018) alongside the development of that phase/s.

Detailed assessment and eradication proposals for invasive species within the phase area.

Specific protection measures to prevent the disturbance, displacement or other loss of protected species and their habitats.

All detailed measures shall be recorded and incorporated into the Habitat Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan (HCMMP) which shall be submitted and approved in writing in its updated form for each application for reserved matters approval.

2. For each phase of development / reserved matters application including siting and/or appearance and/or landscaping the following details shall be provided:

Details of the type and locations of any external source of lighting (including temporary lighting for construction purposes)

Details of the type and location of any means of enclosure

Details of the siting, construction and surfacing of roads, pathways, tracks and vehicle parking areas.

All lighting, means of enclosure and hard surfaces shall be provided in accordance with the approved details and be retained in that manner for the duration of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

5. Prior to any engineering operations to alter final levels within the site taking place, details of those works shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. Any works to alter the levels within the site shall be in accordance with the approved details.
6. The proposed static caravans / chalets / holiday homes shall be used for the purpose of holiday accommodation only and shall not be used as a main or principal residence of any owner, occupier, or tenant of the caravans / chalets / holiday homes.
7. Within one month of first use of the driving range building hereby approved, the existing driving range building shall be demolished.
8. No development of the golf club house shall take place until the construction of the 18 hole golf course approved under planning permission 2015/0098/FUL (or any variation to or replacement of that permission for an 18 hole golf course on the adjacent land) has been completed with finished tees, fairways and greens to a playable standard.
9. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.
10. No development shall take place until a site-wide strategy for foul and surface water drainage has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. No development shall take place on any individual phase of development identified on the approved plans until details of foul and surface water drainage schemes for that phase of development as required by conditions 11, 12 and 13 has been submitted and approved in writing with the local planning authority in accordance with the approved site-wide foul and surface water drainage strategy.  
The strategy shall identify where drainage infrastructure will connect between different phases of development. There shall be no connection of drainage infrastructure between phases other than in accordance with the agreed strategy. Any drainage infrastructure within earlier phases of development on the application site shall be sized to accommodate the drainage flows from any interconnecting later phases as identified by the site-wide drainage strategy. Unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority in liaison with the public sewerage undertaker, there shall be 1 foul water pumping station for the entire site and no surface water shall connect with the existing public sewerage system.  
The development shall be strictly implemented in accordance with the approved strategy.
11. No development shall take place to implement each or any phase of the development until the details of a foul water drainage scheme for that phase has been submitted to and

approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority in liaison with the public sewerage undertaker. The drainage details shall be in accordance with the details approved by condition 10 and include the following:

- a. the location of the point of connection for foul water to the existing public sewer;
- b. the timing arrangements for the pumped foul discharge;
- c. the storage requirements for the pumped foul discharge; and
- d. the rate of discharge for the pumped foul discharge.

There shall be no connection of foul water to the public sewer other than in accordance with the agreement reached with the local planning authority.

Prior to first use of each phase, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and be retained in accordance with the agreed details for the duration of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

12. No development shall take place to implement each or any phase of the development until the details of a surface water drainage scheme for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be in accordance with the strategy required by condition 10 and the principles set out in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Ref No. w10352-170714, Dated July 2017) which was prepared by Waterco Consultants. No surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer. The development shall be completed strictly in accordance with the approved details and be retained in that form for the duration of the development unless otherwise approved in writing with the local planning authority.
13. Prior to first use of any of the development hereby approved a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning authority and agreed in writing. The sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan shall include as a minimum:
  - a. The arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or, management and maintenance by a Site Management Company; and
  - b. Arrangements concerning appropriate funding mechanisms for its ongoing maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system (including mechanical components) and will include elements such as ongoing inspections relating to performance and asset condition assessments, operation costs, regular maintenance, remedial works and irregular maintenance caused by less sustainable limited life assets or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.The development shall subsequently be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan for its duration.
14. The golf driving range shall not be used other than between the hours of 09.00-20.00 Mondays to Saturdays (inclusive), and 09.00-18.00 hours on Sundays. Additionally, no plant, vehicles or equipment shall be operated on the golf driving range other than between the hours of 08.00-20.00 Mondays to Saturdays (inclusive), and 09.00-18.00 hours on Sundays.
15. The golf club house shall not be open for customers other than between the hours of 08.00-01.00 Mondays to Saturdays (inclusive), and 09.00-00.00 hours on Sundays.
16. The development shall proceed in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Leisure Lakes Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (dated 14/07/2017, reference w10352-170714-FRA & Drainage Strategy) by Waterco Consultants.
17. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) or any subsequent Orders or statutory provision re-enacting the provisions of these Orders no means of enclosure shall be erected until details of the siting and design have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
18. Prior to implementation of any of the accommodation units, driving range building or golf club house, a scheme for the provision of electric vehicle charging points throughout the development and timescale for implementation shall be submitted to and approved in

writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved scheme.

19. No development shall take place until a detailed construction environmental management plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall identify the steps, measures and procedures that will be implemented to minimise the creation and impact of noise, vibration, lighting, dust and disturbance resulting from the site preparation, demolition, groundwork and construction phases of the development.  
The document shall include protection measures of all sensitive ecological receptors and retained habitats (as identified in the Urban Green Ecological Impact Assessment (updated October 2017) and the Habitat Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan) in addition local residential amenity.
20. No tree felling, scrub clearance, hedgerow removal, demolition or construction works, or site clearance shall take place during the period 1 March to 31 August inclusive unless the absence of nesting/breeding birds is confirmed by an appropriately experienced ecologist. In the event that nesting/breeding birds are present a methodology specifying how they will be protected within the nesting season shall be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreed methodology shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.
21. On commencement of any of the development hereby approved the applicant, or their successors in title, shall implement the Urban Green Habitat Creation, Management and Maintenance Plan (HCMMP) for The Mere, Mere Brow on behalf of Leisure Lakes Ltd April 2017 Rev C (April 2018) (or any later iterations agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) in accordance with a delivery timescale that shall have been previously been submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The annual monitoring and review process and implementation of the HCMMP shall be actively implemented for the duration of the development and the results of annual monitoring and reviews, and any subsequent necessary amendments to the measures, shall be provided to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority on request.

### **Reason(s)**

1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure compliance with the provisions of Policies GN1, GN3 and EN2 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
3. The application is in outline and the matters referred to in the Condition are reserved for subsequent approval by the Local Planning Authority.
4. To ensure adequate information is available for the proper consideration of the detailed proposals and secure an appropriate form of development for the site circumstances in accordance with the requirements of the West Lancashire Local Plan(2012-2027) Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.
5. To protect the local landscape and ensure floodwater holding capacity on the site is retained and thereby comply with the requirements of Policy GN3 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.
6. The creation of independent residential units in this location would conflict with the Local Planning Authority's policy of strict control of development within the Green Belt and modelled areas of flood risk as set out in Policies GN1, GN3 & RS1 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document and as drawn up in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
7. To preserve the openness of the Green Belt and thereby comply with the requirements of Policy GN1 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.
8. The development is only justified by the implementation of planning permission 2015/0098/FUL, otherwise it would constitute an inappropriate form of development in the

Green Belt contrary to Policy GN1 in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document and the NPPF.

9. To ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
10. To prevent flooding and pollution and to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to the construction of the detailed drainage infrastructure for the phased delivery of development and to ensure that the drainage infrastructure which is constructed for each phase is able to cope with the foul and surface water discharges from the entire development site and thereby ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
11. To secure proper and specific drainage details and in order to manage the risk of flooding and pollution from the public sewerage system arising from foul water drainage for each phase of the development and thereby complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
12. To secure a sustainable form of surface water management and ensure that the site is properly drained in the interest of local amenity and that the development, therefore, complies with the provisions of Policies GN3 & IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
13. To ensure suitable management and maintenance arrangements are in place for the sustainable drainage system in order to manage the risk of flooding and pollution during the lifetime of the development and thereby accord with Policies GN3 and IF3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
14. To safeguard the amenity of nearby residential properties and the area generally and so comply with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
15. To safeguard the amenity of nearby residential properties and the area generally and so comply with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
16. To deliver a flood resilient form of development and therefore comply with the requirements of Policy GN3 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.
17. To protect the openness of the Green Belt, the visual amenity and character of the locality, and ensure the lateral movement of wildlife is not prevented, and thereby comply with the requirements of Policies GN1, GN3 and EN2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan(2012-2027) Development Plan Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.
18. In the interests of sustainability in accordance with Policy GN3 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.
19. To safeguard the ecological value of the site and the amenity of adjacent properties and the area generally and so comply with the provisions of Policies EN2 and GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
20. To protect nesting/breeding birds and therefore comply with the requirements of Policies GN3 and EN2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.
21. To ensure the delivery of the necessary measures to mitigate and enhance the ecological value of the site and therefore comply with the requirements of Policy EN2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) Development Plan Document.

### **Reason for Approval**

1. The Local Planning Authority has considered the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan including, in particular, the following Policy/Policies in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document:

SP1 - A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire

GN1 - Settlement Boundaries  
GN3 - Criteria for Sustainable Development  
EC2 - Rural Economy  
IF2 - Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice  
IF3 - Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth  
IF4 - Developer Contributions  
EN2 - Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

together with Supplementary Planning Guidance and all relevant material considerations. Whilst the Local Planning Authority recognises that the proposal does not fully comply with Policy/Policies GN1 and EN2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD it feels that special circumstances exist, namely that the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposals outweigh the planning harm identified. It is considered that these special circumstances justify approval of the application as set out in the Officer's report. This report can be viewed or a copy provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.