

Haighton Parish Council

Development Management
Development Directorate
Preston City Council
Town Hall
Lancaster Road
Preston
PR1 2RL

20th August 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Application No. 06/2018/0711

Proposal: Outline planning application for up to 70 dwellings with associated infrastructure with all matters reserved except for access.

Site Address: Land south of Whittingham Lane, Grimsargh.

This proposal represents another attack on the open countryside that lies to the west of Grimsargh and adjoins the parish boundary of Haighton. It threatens to transform an attractive rural area into urban sprawl.

The proposed site lies outside the settlement boundary for Grimsargh as shown on the Policies Map of the Local Plan (July 2015).

- Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy aims to focus growth and investment on well located brownfield sites, the Strategic Location of Central Preston, the Key Service Centres of Chorley and Leyland and the other main areas in South Ribble, whilst protecting the character of suburban and rural areas. The proposed site does not conform with this policy.
- The Whittingham Hospital site has permission for 600+ dwellings, yet development has only taken place on the surrounding greenfield areas. No further applications for large-scale development such as the 70 dwellings in question here should be considered until the Whittingham Hospital site is fully developed.
- Grimsargh is not identified in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy as a Rural Local Service Centre, and therefore no significant growth aspiration exists for Grimsargh. The proposed expansion of residential development into open countryside would therefore be inappropriate within the context of the Core Strategy and the Local Plan.
- Policy EN1 of the Local Plan- Development in the Open Countryside- states that 'development will be limited to: a) that needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural

area including uses which help to diversify the rural economy;b) the re-use or re-habitation of existing buildings;c) infilling within groups of buildings in smaller rural settlements.' The proposed development does not satisfy any of these criteria.

- The proposed development does not extend an existing area of residential development; it would in effect initiate a new zone of development west of the recreation ground. The explanatory text to Policy AD1(a) of the adopted Local Plan 2012-2026 states that favourable consideration will be given to proposals containing measures likely to result in an overall improvement to the environment and amenity of the area. The area of countryside in question comprises an inclined field (as viewed from Whittingham Lane), with the background of trees and hedgerow with the playing field behind, and forms a lovely entrance to the village of Grimsargh. This would be transformed into an urban view of houses made all the more prominent by their elevated position. Therefore, this development would result in a significant loss of amenity for the area to the west and for those entering the village.
- Policy EN4 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the identity, local distinctiveness and green infrastructure of villages such as Grimsargh and rural areas such as Houghton by the designation of Areas of Separation (AOS) to ensure that those places at greatest risk of merging are protected and that environmental/open space resources are safeguarded. In this case, the AOS applies to the open countryside between the villages of Grimsargh and Whittingham/Goosnargh.
- This proposal would result in the transformation of open countryside into suburbia. There would be a significant change in the character of the area, regardless of the development of 34 dwellings at Park House Farm. The success of the Park House Farm development should not be used to justify another intrusion into the countryside. The Adopted Policy 13 and the Central Lancashire SPD 'Rural Development' seek to preserve the rural character of the countryside. The Framework says that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognized, with the planning system contributing to and enhancing the natural and local environment. It is difficult to see how anyone could claim that this proposal could contribute to or enhance this area.
- The proposed development would extend the village of Grimsargh towards the community of Cow Hill. There would be a danger of further applications for developments that would encroach across the field separating these settlements and cause them to merge.
- Grimsargh has already accommodated a substantial degree of housebuilding over recent years, both on greenfield sites and within the curtilages of pre-existing properties. Outline permission has also been granted for 600+ dwellings at Whittingham. This area has therefore absorbed much of the required housing allocation for Preston and is in

danger of urbanization: the transformation of Grimsargh from rural village to a town.

- The local road infrastructure is already overloaded and is set to become even busier with the addition of 600+ dwellings at Whittingham. Whittingham Lane/Haighton Green Lane/D'Urton Lane has become a commuter route since its connection to Eastway in the 1980's. The addition of a further 70 dwellings at this location would make it even busier, and create even more congestion at its junction with the B6243 at Grimsargh.
- The proposed entrance is at the foot of the hill, below the entrance to the Park House Farm estate. It is so far down the slope that the entrance would be obscured from the view of drivers approaching from Grimsargh. They would have little time to react to vehicles entering or leaving the estate. Placing the access point here would create a serious hazard to road users.
- Pedestrians wishing to walk to the shops/bus stop/other facilities in Grimsargh would have to cross the road to reach the footpath on the north side of the highway. This would be hazardous since oncoming drivers from the east (Grimsargh) would have little time to react owing to the steep incline.

In conclusion, this proposal does not comply with the Structure Plan, nor Policies AD1(a) AD1(b), EN1 and EN4 of the Local Plan. Any claimed benefits of the proposal do not compensate for its failure to comply with these policies and the resultant environmental degradation. It would represent an expansion of housing development into an area of attractive open countryside which is not only valued by those who live there, but an asset to the City of Preston.

This area has seen more than its fair share of development (including those sites for which permission has been granted but have not yet been developed) over the past few years. Longridge is set to double in size, Grimsargh has seen every green space disappear with the creation of hundreds of houses, and Whittingham, Goosnargh and Broughton have all seen major expansion. When will we say that enough is enough? Developers are keen to swamp us with their detailed environmental assessments but they take no account whatsoever of the impact of their proposals on the local population, many of whom have lived here all their lives.

Haighton Parish Council is totally opposed to this proposal and would respectfully urge the Planning Committee to decline this application.

Yours faithfully, John N Jones, Parish Councillor and Clerk, Haighton Parish Council

I would be grateful if you could inform me of the recommendation of the Planning Department before this application goes before the Planning Committee.