

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Preferred Development Option (Regulation 18) Consultation Document
Barondale Grange, Stockport Road

This letter serves to introduce myself as the planning agent of my client, Riverside Developments, as they continue to pursue the release of land in their ownership from greenbelt designation to streamline the delivery of much needed homes on the site.

Emerging Proposals at Barondale Grange

I understand my client has previously been in touch with you directly and presented their emerging proposals for the delivery of 39 units on the site at Barondale Grange, Stockport Road (SHLAA Reference - 1613). The proposal by Randle White Architects is for a mix of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom units, and I reattach these proposals for ease of reference.

My client has indicated their dedication to the principles of sustainable development, and is looking to work closely with the Council to ensure the delivery of a scheme which meets the expectations of as many stakeholders as possible. Any forthcoming application on this site would consider affordable housing contributions and seek to deliver a policy compliant dwelling mix, for instance. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems such as rainwater harvesting, green roofs and permeable paving are being seriously considered by my client with a view to achieving an ecologically harmonious housing scheme in accordance with WBC's strategic objectives with regard to sustainability.

The site benefits from an existing high boundary wall, screening it from Stockport Road, which my client would look to retain, in addition to the designated TPO trees which run along the boundary edge. The site's proximity to the Trans-Pennine Trail would also serve to encourage sustainable modes of transport such as cycling and walking to the nearby villages of Grappenhall and Lymn, with this ease of connectivity bringing economic benefits to their local economies. Access to Trail is an integral part of the emerging proposals at Barondale.

Warrington Borough Council is currently reviewing its Local Plan, and making every effort to accommodate sufficient land for their increased housing target. Whilst it has established that incremental growth adjacent to the outlying settlements would be capable of accommodating a minimum of 1,000 dwellings, approximately 8,000 dwellings will need to be accommodated adjacent to the main urban area in order to meet the overall housing requirement. The LPA have acknowledged that the majority of these will need to be in currently designated greenbelt land.

The current Local Plan 'Preferred Development Option – Consultation' document from July 2017 sets out the Council's preference for a 'Garden City Suburb' to the south east of Warrington. Whilst our client supports the release of greenbelt land for additional housing in this way, we would be keen to ensure that the site at Barondale Grange is carefully considered and allocated for residential development in any subsequent garden suburb masterplan, given the site's particular suitability for accommodation of this kind. As outlined above, the emerging proposals for this site share many of the fundamental 'garden suburb' principles the council is advocating. It appears from the current masterplan, however – and was confirmed by yourself over the telephone on 31st August 2017 – that the land at Barondale Grange is 'safeguarded' as open space in the current preferred option, and not earmarked for residential development, as this representation encourages.

We do not support the current 'safeguarding' allocation for two main policy reasons. Firstly, the NPPF supports new development within pre-existing communities where the need for additional infrastructure is minimal. Barondale Grange abuts the established community of Thelwall, which comprises the Thelwall Community Junior School, four local public houses, and an established parade of local shops on junction of Stanton and Barley Roads – all within a 5 – 10 minute walk from the proposal site. A short distance west is the larger settlement of Grappenhall, with a wider selection of community amenities and infrastructure. The pre-existing road network provides direct links to Manchester, Liverpool and Chester via the M56 / M6, whilst direct bus routes into Warrington and the wider area can be accessed from directly outside the site on Stockport Road. As mentioned above, a proposal on this site would look to encourage access to / from the Trans-Pennine Trail, further encouraging interconnectivity with the local community and established infrastructure as the NPPF encourages. The designation of this land as open space would disrupt this natural progression, and miss the opportunity to benefit from the carefully considered, emerging and deliverable development proposals on this site.

Secondly, whilst Stockport Road itself marks the extent of the greenbelt designation, Barondale Grange comprises a largely brownfield site, whilst the land immediately to the west is made up of similar existing residential development. The NPPF prioritises development on such land over 'virgin' greenfield development. The diagram below illustrates the areas on which development has already taken place at Barondale. If this land is to be earmarked as 'safeguarded open space' in any future garden suburb masterplan, the value of this already is already limited and reduced by virtue of pre-existing buildings and development on the site.



It would seem logical then that the strip of land immediately to the south of Stockport Road but north of the Trans-Pennine Trail – including Barondale Grange – is removed from any greenbelt / safeguarding designation and instead identified as land suitable for residential development. The site is deliverable, and there is an acknowledged demand for housing in the immediate area. We consider the logical greenbelt boundary (or, 'safeguarded open space') to be at the boundary with the Trans-Pennine Trail, to the south of which lies true, open, uninterrupted greenfield land.

Warrington SHLAA and Conclusions

The NPPF identifies the greenbelt as serving five purposes, including limiting the unrestricted sprawl of urban areas; preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserving the setting of historic towns, and; assisting in urban regeneration by encouraging the redevelopment of underutilised, brownfield land. This site's unique location immediately to the north of the Trans-Pennine Trail, proximity to the existing community of Thelwall, enclosure by roads to the north and east, and it's partly brownfield nature means that these criteria are in fact not met, and the site's contribution to the greenbelt is thus extremely limited, if any.

The latest individual 'SHLAA site proformas' document from July 2017 indicates in its concluding recommendations that the site at Barondale Grange (reference 1613) is 'suitable, available and achievable' – with the caveat that the site does not currently benefit from planning permission for residential development. Again, may I take this opportunity to highlight my client's very strong intention to submit at the earliest opportunity – further to close liaison with the Council and the outcome of this latest greenbelt review – a planning application for the delivery of in the region of 40 new, good quality homes in accordance with the Council's adopted planning policy and directives.

Release of this land from greenbelt designation could thus result in the delivery of eight times the current 'recommended gross capacity' showing on the latest SHLAA document (although, a telephone conversation with yourself on 31st August 2017 confirmed this low figure was the result of current policy positions. It is unfortunate that this higher figure cannot be reflected in the published SHLAA document, but I trust that this can be taken into consideration during the Local Plan (greenbelt) review). In addition to this, may I highlight discrepancy between the published site boundary and the land my client wishes to be considered for release? The site boundary should run up to southern continuation of All Saint's Drive

Kind Regards

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Visualisations of Proposed Development at Barondale Grange

