

Whalley Parish Council

Statement on the Core Strategy

Following two public meetings and extensive consultation with the community, the Parish Council are of the opinion that the core strategy consultation process is flawed due to:-

a. The Local Development Framework (LDF) suggests a figure of 161 dwellings per year over 5 years. This is derived from the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which has now been abolished by the Coalition Government. Should the process now be placed on hold until clarity and direction are provided by national government? Indeed, the new government has suggested that the LDF should be focused on the needs of the local community and that their views are integral to the process. If this is serious intent, it is clearly evident that members of the public in open meeting and in conclave oppose the options envisaged in the Core Strategy Document.

b. The Core Strategy Document “establishes the vision, underlying objectives and key principals to guide development of the area” (at page 2) and that consultation concludes on 20th October 2010. Planning application 3/2010/0820 submitted during the consultation period is located at site 1E option 1 in the Core Strategy Consultation Document. How can the community have confidence in a process that is asking for comments, yet at the same time developers are submitting plans? Protestations of “just because an area of search is included it does not mean that development will take place in this area at any time in the future” (page 52) ring hollow. It is evident that Regulation 25 is being superseded by events and brings into question if this is just a paper exercise.

The Parish Council of Whalley have certain general overriding views, which should be taken into account when considering more specific observations later in this submission.

1. Any development in Whalley should be proportionate. Whalley has 6% of the Ribble Valley Borough Council population, and a much lower percentage than that of the land area. In the last 12 years, 20% of new houses in the Ribble Valley have been built in Whalley. The 3 stated options in the potential core strategy provide for 30%, 23% and 15% of new dwellings respectively to be constructed within the village. This is disproportionate, and unrealistic in a community where the infrastructure has already been exhausted by previous development on the brownfield site at Calderstones.

2. Whalley Parish Council consider it desirable that secondary school provision be made in the Ribble Valley. This should be accomplished now, and should not be in any way connected to housing plans. This could either be by provision of a new secondary school or by substantial extension of the secondary schools already within the Ribble Valley. Pupils from Whalley are already being transported to schools in neighbouring boroughs, which is not acceptable.

3. As a general policy, development pursuant to the Core Strategy and future development plans should be linked to the A59 or the major road network, either in Whalley or in other parishes in the Borough. The Core Strategy should take this issue into account and focus development where road transport is accessible, and does not create further traffic problems. Already, the centre of Whalley is regularly congested, and this problem is likely to be exacerbated by any development in the village. Additionally, access to the A59 and A671 should be improved, particularly at the junction of

Wiswell Lane with the A671, once again to prevent tailbacks and the potential for accidents where there is a crossroads at a junction with a major road with the national speed limit.

4. Whalley remains a village, where much of the social infrastructure is provided by volunteers. The sports facilities in the village are run by volunteers on land owned by trusts, and this should be compared with the Local Authority provision in the towns of Clitheroe and Longridge. It is unreasonable to expect volunteers working in their own time to accommodate further demands of participants without adequate support from public resources. In particular, any sports facilities in the village require improvements to changing facilities, road access, and drainage.

Similarly, provision of cultural, entertainment and youth facilities in the village are volunteer led and organised, compared to the supported activities available in Clitheroe at the Grand and the Trinity Youth Club. Again, it is unreasonable to expect volunteers to extend themselves further.

Therefore, appropriate support should be given to sport, cultural and youth activities in the village before any further demands are placed on the volunteers concerned.

5. The infrastructure of Whalley is already subject to excessive demand. This has particularly arisen since the development of the site at Calderstones Park (320 properties already developed and a further 39 in the course of development). Children are being turned away from the village primary school. The primary schools in the neighbouring villages of Langho and Barrow are believed to be at or beyond capacity. Whilst there is a Doctor's surgery in the village, patients are being referred for certain attendances to the related surgery at Sabden.

6. In consideration of any proposed development, regard must be had to the drainage facilities within the village. There have been previous erroneous assumptions that any flood risk in the village is related to the River Calder. Whilst this watercourse presents a flood risk on rare occasions, the issue in the village is surface water drainage. A brook flows from the north east of the village and runs in a culvert under King Street. This brook and culvert are full beyond capacity on a number of occasions each year, at which time there is flooding in the village, with manhole covers on King Street being removed by the force of the water. Any development, involving creation of areas of hard standing will prevent natural seepage of water, and aggravate the current problem. It is fundamental to any development that provision is made (either by public authority or by the developer) for improvement of the drainage to an adequate standard.

The Parish Council have considered various aspects of the Core Strategy, and make the following specific representations:-

1. Housing.

The Parish Council do not support options 1, 2 or 3 in the Core Strategy Consultation. All three proposals are disproportionate, and will create an unachievable demand on education, drainage, and the road infrastructure in the village. Other issues, such as provision of health care (both by General Practitioner and Dentists) will require further provision in some way.

The Parish Council consider that any housing provision in Whalley should be social housing and affordable housing. Any affordable housing should be subject to a degree of control, so as to prevent it being sold in the private market and becoming unaffordable. Social housing is required in

the village, with a view to making provision for the elderly, and for young people within the village. Local people in the village and its immediate surrounding parishes should have preference for any social housing. If social housing is provided under either Local Authority or Housing Association ownership, this should be retained in the rented sector.

A Housing Needs Survey is contemplated for Whalley in the near future, and the Parish Council consider it would be appropriate to await the outcome of this survey before specific plans are made for the village.

There are 2 sites identified in appendix 3 of the Core Strategy Consultation, which appear in all 3 options. The Parish Council's views in relation to these sites are as follows:-

a. The site to the east of Clitheroe Road identified at 1F in option 1, and 2H in option 2. This land is not suitable for residential development. It would result in a significant loss of visual amenity both from the village and the surrounding area. The Parish Council believe that the land drains into the brook and culvert to which reference has been made earlier, and therefore the existing drainage and flooding problems would be exacerbated by any hard standing which appears in that location. The site is a nature conservation area, with trees which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. The social infrastructure problems of education, health care and transport remain with regard to that site. Even if the authority were to ignore the above views and to consider development on that site, provision should then be made for direct access onto the A671 rather than creating an additional impact in the village.

b. The site identified as 1E in option 1 and 2L in option 2. This site includes the area of land in respect of which a planning application has just been submitted by the Co-op, who are the landowners. Once again, development should not take place on this land without there being work carried out to address the issues of education, drainage, and impact on transport. Consideration could be given to direct access to the A59 were this site to be developed, to avoid exacerbation of the current transport issues within the village.

The Parish Council's preferred option would be option 4, providing for the following. Consideration could be given to provision of social housing and a community centre on the existing site of Whalley Church of England Primary School. The school itself could be relocated to the south end of the Co-op site at Riddings Lane / Hayhurst Road. This would provide adequate space for a larger school and for playing fields. Part of that site could be allocated for housing of a suitable nature, with direct access to the A59, but subject to the developer addressing the issue of drainage throughout the village.

Alternatively, consideration could be given to relocation of Whalley Church of England Primary School to a location on the site of the nursery opposite the Eagle at Barrow, where provision could be made for a primary school to address the needs of both Whalley and Barrow. This would be a stand alone project to endeavour to meet the primary educational needs. If needed, this could be linked to a further junction to the Bramley Meade roundabout at the A59 / A671.

2. Retail within the village.

Currently, Whalley has a successful and vibrant centre, but the range of shops do not cater for village people. Competition is needed for day to day items, including a bakery for example. Village retail premises appear to be successful, with there being no empty shops or charity shops, but the nature of the businesses do not satisfy a demand for local and competitive retail outlets. Rather, the premises cater for tourists and visitors to the village, or particular services for certain residents and visitors.

The village requires short term car parking. This should be properly monitored and enforced. Continued investigations can be made into a long term car park (possibly at the field on Accrington Road behind Woodfield View), but this search should not be used to justify any postponement of short term parking provision.

Consideration should also be given to development of a retail outlet and possibly a public house or community facilities at Calderstones Park. Permission has been given for further expansion of this community, which is poorly served by public transport, without any real consideration for the convenience of the residents.

3. The village economy.

The Parish Council appreciate the desire for there to be employment within the village or in the vicinity of the village. However, any development site should have good main road access.

A potential site is the former chicken farm located on Accrington Road, which is currently used as storage facilities. This has convenient access to the A671 and the major road network.

An alternate site that could be available is the Barnes & Tipping haulage site on Mitton Road. However, development of this site would only be encouraged if consideration could be given to access to the A59 from this site. If there were to be achievable, then it would also provide A59 access for residents of Calderstones Park, thereby relieving some of the traffic pressures in the village at peak times. (If the funds are there for A59 access from this site and from Riddings Lane/ Hayhurst Road, engineering consideration could be given to the feasibility of a roundabout access in the vicinity of the A59 crossing the railway line to accommodate access from the Barnes & Tipping site and the Riddings Lane / Hayhurst Road area).

4. Environment.

The Parish Council suggest creation of a car park, together with river access and a picnic area in the field on Accrington Road, immediately behind Woodfield View to the east of the village.

The Parish Council recommend that improvement should be made to river side walking access to the village from the Calderstones Park Estate.

The Parish Council consider that improved tourism literature could be made available for the village, provided that this can be delivered to, and collected from suitable outlets.

In relation to the recreational environment, the Parish Council recommend that adequate support be given to the sporting facilities, as mentioned above, if development is to take place within the village.