

| Agenda Item | Committee Date | Application Number |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| A6 | 6 April 2018 | 17/01133/FUL |
| Application Site Land North Of Kellet Road Over Kellet Carnforth Lancashire | Proposal Erection of car showroom (sui generis), maintenance workshop and preparation building (B2), display area, storage compound with associated access and landscaping | |
| Name of Applicant Parker And Parker Limited | Name of Agent Miss Hannah Walker | |
| Decision Target Date 8 January 2018 (Extension of time agreed till 14 April 2018) | Reason For Delay Awaiting amended highway design and further information regarding sequentially preferable sites | |
| Case Officer | Mr Mark Potts | |
| Departure | Yes | |
| Summary of Recommendation | Refusal | |

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 The site is located 1km to the east of Carnforth town centre and 1.25km to the west of the village of Over Kellet, and extends to 2 hectares. The site forms the southern portion of a wider field parcel totalling around 5 hectares, and is currently used for cattle grazing. The site is undulating; generally reducing in height to 31 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) as the site drops to the west towards the M6 motorway, with the highest part of the site adjacent to the A601(M) at circa 39 metres AOD.
- 1.2 A post and wire fence marks the western boundary with open views across the site from the M6 motorway. The southern boundary is defined by a strong tree belt limiting views into the site from Kellet Road. The eastern boundary is defined by mature hedgerow with a grass verge between the A601 (M) and the site. Current access is afforded to the site via an existing gated access from Kellet Road close to the junction of the A601(M).
- 1.3 To the north of the site includes the wider field parcel currently used for cattle grazing and this is bound by the roundabout at Junction 35 of the M6. The land beyond the A601(M) to the east comprises open agricultural land. Leapers Wood Quarry is located to the south of the site but is screened by substantial vegetation. The M6 is the west with Carnforth Business Park beyond.
- 1.4 The site is allocated as Countryside Area in the adopted Local Plan (and within the emerging plan), and the entire site is covered by a mineral safeguarding zone. The Kellet Lane verges are located on the southern periphery of the site and these are Biological Heritage Sites. Footpath number 5 is located 60 metres to the west of the proposal which runs parallel to the M6 motorway.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the development of a car showroom (to be used by Porsche) and ancillary maintenance workshop, wash and preparation building, display area, storage compound, parking and soft and hard landscaping, together with a new access off the A601(M).

- 2.2 The Porsche Centre would be two storeys in height (measuring 51m x 38m x 7.5m) with a gross internal floor space of 1,820 sq.m (across the two floors). The ground floor would accommodate a welcome area for customers, sales reception, car showroom, specification lounge and a sales and handover area, a manager's office and small café. There is also proposed 2 x MOT servicing bays, a workshop with 6 bays and a parts storage area. On the 1st floor this would include a meeting room for staff, accounts offices and staff room with kitchen areas. The building proposed is contemporary in form and the centre will have a rectangular form with a curved façade along the west elevation of the building (when viewed from the M6). The materials would consist of silver rainscreen cladding, grey black horizontal trapezoidal cladding and curtain walling.
- 2.3 The vehicle preparation building would measure 25m x 11m x 5m, and is proposed to be constructed in a grey black horizontal trapezoidal cladding. The building would provide for valeting, smart repair and wash facilities.
- 2.4 Externally the scheme provides for a car display area for 28 vehicles, and a platform for a display of a single vehicle facing the site's new access off the A601(M) with a new shared cycle/pedestrian access cutting through the site to Kellet Road. Landscaping in the form of trees, hedgerow and shrubs are proposed along the western boundary of the site.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 There is no recent planning history on the site though the applicant has engaged with the Local Planning Authority with respect to development the wider part of the site.

| Application Number | Proposal | Decision |
|--------------------|---|------------------|
| 18/00125/EIR | Erection of car showroom (sui generis), maintenance workshop and preparation building (B2), display area, storage compound with associated access and landscaping | EIA not required |
| 16/01619/PRETWO | Proposed mixed use development to include B1, B2, B8, A4 and C1 | Advice Provided |

4.0 Consultation Responses

- 4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

| Consultee | Response |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| County Highways | Initially raised an Objection due to a lack of information in regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility splays (to be set back to 4.5m not 2.4m); • Revised site access plans, addressing lane widths on the A601(M); • Shared pedestrian access from Kellet Road; • Queue survey Information to be submitted; • Further traffic modelling to account for the impact of the proposed development at the Kellet Road junction, and account for the completion of Carnforth Business Park. <p>The applicant has subsequently met with County Highways in January 2018 and an amended Transport Statement which looked to address the above concerns and has been submitted in support of the scheme in March 2018. The observations of the County have still to be received and these will be reported verbally to Members.</p> |
| Over-Kellet Parish Council | Objects to the development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) development is within the countryside area and should be retained as such; 2) land should be safeguarded for agricultural purposes; 3) the land is adjacent to the Kellet Road Verges BHS; 4) highways impacts associated with increased queuing at the times on the A601(M) at the junction of the B6524; and 5) consider that there are alternative sites available for development in Carnforth. |

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| Carnforth Town Council | No Objection and approves of the application in principle. |
| Cadent Gas | No Objection , though makes reference that there is a gas pipeline located within Kellet Road. |
| United Utilities | No Objection. Recommends conditions that foul and surface water is drained on separate systems and that a surface water drainage scheme is submitted for consideration. |
| Local Plans Team | Advice: Recommends that the amended assessment of alternative sites from February 2018 is sufficiently robust and no suitable locations exist within local settlement areas. However, a balance needs to be made against the economic benefits of the scheme and the associated impact on amenity. |
| Environmental Health (Noise) | No Objection , though would recommend conditions associated with hours of construction and dust control mitigation. |
| Greater Manchester Ecology Unit | No Objection. Conditions are recommended associated with protection and enhancement of the Kellet Road Verges, protection of habitat for nesting birds and landscaping. |
| Natural England | No Objection |
| Tree Protection Officer | No Objection in principle subject to further clarification over visibility splays and the associated impact on existing trees, understanding the drainage system and the implication that this may have on trees and that ensuring existing land levels within root protection areas of retained trees or hedgerows are maintained. |
| Environment Agency | No observations to make on the application |
| Lead Local Flood Authority | No Objection to the proposed development subject to the inclusion of conditions associated with a final detailed surface water drainage scheme and management and maintenance plan. |
| Highways England | No Objection. Highways England recommend that the development would not result in there being a severe traffic impact upon the operation of the M6, and recommends the following conditions: 1) There shall be no development on or adjacent to the M6; 2) No drainage from the proposed development shall connect to the M6 drainage; 3) No mud, surface water or dust shall transfer between the site and M6; 4) No access of any kind between the M6 and the site; 5) No lighting from the development shall be directed towards the M6; 6) No works associated with the development shall require the closure of the motorway to traffic; 7) No works shall occur on land within the control of Highways England; and 8) There shall be no planting of trees that are of a height that when mature could fall on the motorway and recommends revisions to the landscaping scheme to ensure driver distraction is kept to a minimum. |
| Fire Safety Officer | No objection |
| Engineering Team | No observations received within the statutory timescales |
| Ramblers Association | Neither objects or supports the scheme |

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 One letter of objection has been received raising the following concerns:

- Landscape and visual impacts and views from the footpath across the motorway will be severely compromised and recommends that when viewed from the AONB there could be adverse views;
- Highway Safety – Concerns over the access road arrangements; and
- Sustainability – The site would be better located on the Industrial Estate in Carnforth.

Thirteen letters of support (including one from Porsche) has been received:

- The local authority should be supporting the applicant's proposals and support for this scheme will be good for other business in Carnforth;
- The building is eye catching, hi-tech and modern; and
- Current dealership is incapable of expansion.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 – Sustainable Development and Core Principles
Section 1 Building a Strong, competitive economy
Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Section 4 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 7 – Requiring Good Design
Section 8 – Promoting Healthy Communities
Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Section 12 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following two Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enables progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. The DPDs will be published in February, after which there will be a 6 week period for representations prior to the submission of the documents to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination. If an Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council, potentially in late 2018.

The **Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD** will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual 'saved' land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2017, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The **Review of the Development Management DPD** updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft 'Review' document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the 'Review' will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.3 Lancaster District Core Strategy Policies

SC1 – Sustainable Development
SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design
E2 – Transportation Measures

6.4 Development Management DPD

DM7 – Economic Development in Rural Areas
DM15 – Proposals involving employment land and premises
DM20 – Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages
DM21 – Walking and Cycling
DM22 – Vehicle Parking Provision
DM23 – Transport Efficiency and Travel Plans
DM27 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity
DM28 – Development and Landscape Impact
DM29 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

DM35 – Key Design Principles
DM37 – Air Quality Management and Pollution
DM38 – Development and Flood Risk
DM39 – Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage
DM40 – Protecting Water Resources

6.5 Lancaster District Local Plan Saved Policies

E4 – Development within the Countryside

6.6 Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

M2 – Safeguarding Minerals

6.7 Other Material Considerations

- Surface Water Drainage, Flood Risk Management and Watercourse Planning Advisory Note (May 2015);
- Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging New Points (September 2017)
- Provision of electric vehicle charging points new developments (September 2017)
- Low Emissions and Air Quality (September 2017).

7.0 Comment and Analysis

The application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development;
- Landscape Impact and Design Matters;
- Trees and Hedgerows;
- Highways;
- Drainage;
- Ecological Matters;
- Other Matters.

7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 National guidance is clear that development in rural areas should be carefully managed in order to protect its intrinsic value, and the local authority will consider the loss of greenfield sites if it can be demonstrated by the applicant that there are no alternative, more suitably located, brownfield sites that exist, and that the benefits of the proposal outweigh any adverse impacts that may result from development. Policy DM7 of the Development Management DPD is one of the policies that must be considered in determining this planning application, given the development is within the open countryside on greenfield land. The Review of the Development Management DPD at Policy DM46 has very similar wording, and therefore there is conformity between the adopted Development Management Document and the emerging Development Management Document. The site is allocated as Countryside Land (Policy E4) in the adopted Local Plan and continues with this allocation within the emerging Land Allocations document.

7.1.2 The applicant has been looking for a number of years to relocate its current operations from Kendal, but have been unable to identify any available opportunities. It is understood that Parker and Parker Limited (the applicant) is one of the last remaining privately-owned Porsche dealerships in the UK. They consider the application site is relatively unconstrained, has the space available, and is an accessible gateway location, and the site is considered to provide the only suitable, and desirable site within the North Lancashire/ South Cumbria area, in which to meet the applicant's requirements to relocate its business. Officers do accept that Porsche continues to be a relatively small manufacturer, with less than 40 dealerships in the whole of the UK, therefore, the appropriate site must be strategically located to look after a wider geographical area.

7.1.3 The applicant is seeking a key gateway location to meet the needs of a wider sub-regional area of North Lancashire and Cumbria. The applicant has not stated that there needs to be a specific requirement for the development to be located in Carnforth other than it represents a central location

within the North Lancashire/Cumbria Region (but by the applicant's own submission on the limits of the sub-regional area given sites in Lancaster have been discounted). The applicant has, however, as part of their submission included an assessment of availability of other sites within the town such as at Carnforth Business Park, Kellet Road Business Park, the Former TDG Site on Warton Road, the former Thomas Graveson's site on Warton Road (also referred to as Millhead) and Lundsfield Quarry. A flaw of the original assessment was that it failed to take into account every allocated employment site within the Carnforth area, notably the employment sites on Scotland Road which represent the main northern most gateway into the town. Taking these issues aside, the assessment process highlights that the conclusions over the preferred location for this development is not driven by the availability of land, moreover that the decision is driven by the desire for the applicant to secure a site which is considered to be a prestige location and this is highlighted within the conclusions reached for the former TDG site where it is apparent that the site is available but does not provide an attractive environment for the applicant.

- 7.1.4 Returning to Paragraph 7.1.2 the Porsche Centre is considered to be of sub-regional importance to the business but very little justification was initially provided to show that other sites within the sub-region such as Kendal, Penrith, Lancaster, Morecambe, and Heysham were considered. Further comment in this regard was sought from the applicant. Policy DM7 is quite clear in that development proposals on greenfield sites within the open countryside will be supported where it is demonstrated that no alternative suitable locations exist within local settlement areas and that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the impacts on local amenity. Given there was a lack of information as to why the proposal needs to be in Carnforth, it was important that the assessment considered all local settlements which (at least) include settlements along the M6 corridor including Kendal (where the business has successfully operated for many years), Milnthorpe, Carnforth and Lancaster.
- 7.1.5 Given the concerns raised above, additional information was supplied by the applicant in February 2018 where further consideration of alternative sites was put forward, essentially strengthening the position which was put forward in the original assessment. Sites in Carnforth were examined such as Lodge Quarry (where Tesco is sited within), Scotland Road (where the southern edge is occupied by Booths and Aldi) and Carnforth Levels (where Travellers Choice Coaches and Ashlea Landscapes are located). These sites were discounted due to being unavailable or unsuitable for development and therefore the applicant considered that there are no suitable locations within Carnforth to deliver the proposed development. The applicant has also provided details on sites within Kendal and Milnthorpe. Officers consider that there would be scope within Lancaster to site the business but the applicant has not considered such sites because it is too far south to serve customers in Cumbria (despite land available at Junction 34 on Lancaster Business Park being located 6km away). A new Porsche showroom with associated facilities has recently been approved in Preston and this would serve the catchment around Central Lancashire, so there is value to suggest maybe a more central facility in the likes of Penrith or Kendal could be more suitable to serve Cumbria and North Lancashire. Planning Policy officers consider that the amended assessment of February 2018 does assist with addressing the concerns over the choice of location and that the assessment of alternative sites is robust and there are a lack of available locations within local settlement areas for the needs of the business. Nevertheless, the case officer still has concerns over the appropriateness of the assessment and whilst an argument has been put forward to suggest Junction 34 of the M6 has been discounted due to being outside the catchment of the site this is purely on the basis that it does not meet the locational/operational requirements of Porsche. If the assessment was to be followed this in reality would have to result in a personal permission for Porsche, something which legally would be challenging to do. The applicant has expressed a willingness for a personal consent and officers are considering the legalities of such a consent.
- 7.1.6 The local planning authority is supportive of new business ventures within the district and the diversification and continuity of existing business. The applicant has stated the benefits will amount to economic investment in Carnforth and will create 9 new jobs (in addition to those already at the site in Kendal) and that there will be a visual improvement to the key gateway and this proposal would act as a catalyst for economic growth. Benefits can relate to economic, social and environmental matters and amenity can relate to a wide range of matters such as visual amenity and landscape impact. It is welcomed that a prestigious brand such as Porsche wishes to invest in the district, however, many of the claims made by the applicant are not backed up by evidence. The 9 new jobs are welcomed but bearing in mind this is a 2 hectare greenfield site, the benefits are rather weak when compared against the area of the development, though it is recognised that a small number of other associated jobs might be created in the area as a result as this development.

The business would seek to support local apprenticeships and this is something to be supported and encouraged. Officers continue to have significant concerns as to the proposed levels of economic benefit associated with the scheme occupying quite a sizeable footprint but delivering little in the way of new employment prospects.

7.1.7 Officers welcome inward investment into the district. However, the proposed scheme is a sui-generis use comprising employment, storage and retail uses on a non-allocated greenfield site outside of the urban core, in what is open countryside land (albeit accepting the presence of the motorway). Whilst Porsche is proposed, in reality any consent will permit any car dealership to operate from the site, though the comfort is that the building as proposed is the unique Porsche building. There are certainly benefits of the proposals and there is the aspiration that Porsche could act as a catalyst for growth in the Carnforth area, however, it is only an aspiration. On balance, whilst there is significant support for inward investment, the scheme is a departure from the local plan and the benefits associated with the scheme are very limited. It is considered that the proposal fails to conform to the policy requirements of DM7 of the Development Management DPD in that the benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm caused to the landscape (which is discussed further at Section 7.2).

7.2 Landscape Impact and Design Matters

7.2.1 The development is not within a protected landscape though the Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located 1.4km to the west. The applicant has included a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment in support of the planning application and some helpful photomontages. The conclusions of which assume that the proposed development would be visually contained by the landform that rises to the east and the existing vegetation of the boundary hedgerows. The applicant's assessment assumes that there would be a moderate impact once the landscaping, as a form of mitigation, has been implemented and this is notably from the Public Right of Way to the west of the M6, and from Kellet Road on the bridge over the M6. There will inevitably be impacts by virtue of the site's transition from grazing land to a car showroom and associated facilities. Due to the engineering works that are involved in creating the platform for which the building would be sited, this will actually exacerbate the visual impact of the building, and rather than working with the landform it would be engineered to facilitate the development. The landform is quite distinctive and the site straddles the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Areas - Low Coastal Drumlins – Warton/Borwick (12b) and Drumlin Field – Docker, Kellet and Lancaster (13c).

7.2.2 The building itself is contemporary in nature, utilising aluminium cladding and glazed curtain walling with a curved façade fronting the M6 and the vehicle preparation building whilst smaller would be constructed in grey black cladding. The building is modern, but does stand alone, and given the land level changes that would be required to facilitate the development it would project above existing motorway level. Officers had advocated a more sensitive split level building which would have blended into the landscape in a more sympathetic way and took more reference to the local countryside area. However, the applicant wished to stand by the current design. There will be at its maximum extent a 4 metre increase in land levels which is quite significant and this raises the prominence of the building. It is clear from the submitted plans that the design strategy for the site is to provide a modern, purpose built showroom and given the commanding position of the site adjacent to the M6 it is clear that the building is intended to maximise visibility of the proposed building from the M6 and make use of this frontage. Design is subjective and the Framework at Paragraph 64 states that planning permission should be refused for developments of poor design that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and that way it functions. It is the case that other Porsche dealerships in the North West such as the site on Manchester Road in Bolton utilises a very similar building and the same will be true of the site off Watery Lane in Preston. It is considered that the innovative and iconic landmark type building fits well into a more urban environment, and would so in the centre of Carnforth, or Lancaster for example. However, in a semi-rural environment it is considered that the building lacks to respond to the local character of the site and therefore fails to respond positively to Policy DM28 of the Development Management DPD.

7.2.3 As part of the application process and assisting with officer concerns regarding landscape impact the applicant has sought to address concerns regarding the regrading of the site, and has proposed landscaping in the form of hedgerows and amenity shrubs along the western boundary which will assist with softening the landscape impacts. Specimen trees along the cycle/pedestrian route to the

eastern boundary have also been proposed. However, the amended landscaping scheme submitted in February 2018 only mitigates the level changes marginally.

7.3 Trees and Hedgerows

7.3.1 The Council's Tree Protection Officer has no objection to the scheme in principle, but has asked for further information with respect to visibility splays (and the associated impact on trees and hedgerows), together with an understanding that there will be no levels changes within close proximities of trees or hedgerows. The site does look to amend levels quite significantly and the plans submitted in support of the scheme show a level reduction along the A601(M) roadside verge (the location where hedgerows and trees are planted and therefore within root protection areas). The concerns have been conveyed to the applicant's agent and further comment is required, as there is concern that since the visibility splays have been increased in March 2018 this could lead to an increase in the amount of trees and hedgerows that need to be removed to facilitate the development (given the AIA only recommends the removal of 40m of hedgerow). It is considered that there is insufficient information to allow for a positive recommendation in this regard as officers cannot be sure of the extent of removal of hedgerow on the site and the impact the change in levels will have on the existing hedgerows along the A601(M). The scheme therefore fails to conform to Policy DM29 of the Development Management DPD.

7.4 Highways

7.4.1 Access to the site would be afforded off the A601(M) via the creation of a new vehicular access measuring 7.3m in width. The formation of the new junction would include the widening (to the north) of the A601(M) to provide a deceleration and right turning lane, with both running lane and the turning lane being 3.65m in width. The site access has been amended to enable HGVs to turn left out of the access without using carriageway space in the right turn lane on the A601(M). The scheme initially proposed visibility splays in the region of 2.4m x 120m in each direction, and the provision of a new foot and cycle pathway measuring 3 metres in width and would connect the site to the existing farm access (on the southern periphery of the site). The County initially had quite significant concerns with the content of the Transport Assessment and an amended assessment was submitted for consideration in March 2018. Additional information with respect to trip rates associated with vehicle movements on the local highway network has been included which takes into account committed developments such as Carnforth Business Park. As part of the amended submission the visibility splays have been increased to 4.5m x 160m to the north east and south west, and the cycleway that connects to the existing gate to the south of the site has been increased from 3m to 3.5m in width. At the time of compiling this report no observations have been received from County Highways. However, given collaborative working has occurred with County Highways it is hoped that the amended Transport Statement adequately addresses their concerns and therefore whilst this report has included highway safety as a reason for refusal this may be omitted by the point of determination by Planning Committee, dependent on the stance of County Highways. Members will be verbally updated in this regard.

7.5 Drainage

7.5.1 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which concludes that the site would be drained by a combination of permeable surfaces and positively drained impermeable (i.e. with interceptors) areas prior to discharge to the subsurface via infiltration based SuDS. The use of an infiltration trench along the western and eastern boundary is proposed. The Lead Local Flood Authority have no objections to the development on the understanding that the detailed calculations are controlled by means of planning condition and associated maintenance. Highways England advises that no drainage from the proposed site shall connect into any part of the motorway drainage system, and this can be controlled as such. Some of the proposed drainage measures are located outside the red edge boundary, so the applicant is providing amended plans to contain this within the red edge though at the time of drafting this report these amended plans have not been received. Members will be updated verbally.

7.5.2 Foul water from the site would be connected to an independent package treatment plant and treated effluent will be discharged to an existing culverted watercourse / land drain. No objection has been received from United Utilities on the basis of flood risk or foul water. It is therefore considered that a planning condition can be utilised to ensure foul water is controlled in a safe and responsible manner.

7.6 Ecological Matters

7.6.1 The application is accompanied by an ecological statement which was carried out in May 2017, and a full botanical survey of the site has been undertaken. The Kellet Road Verges are Biological Heritage Sites (BHS) and form part of the southern boundary of the site though will not be impacted on by the development. The proposal includes a buffer between this and the development. There is an outstanding question on land ownership and this has been highlighted with the applicant's agent, as it unclear whether this forms part of the adopted highway; the adoption plans seem to suggest not. The state of the verges are in poor condition though the BHS should be protected, and where possible enhanced, during and post construction. The site itself consists of species poor neutral grassland which is used for livestock grazing. From an ecological perspective whilst the development will result in the loss of a small area of low ecological value grassland, mitigation can be achieved on site. There could be net gain achieved through the imposition of planning conditions providing high quality landscaping and attractive boundary and entrance features.

7.7 Other Matters

7.7.1 The scheme is likely to promote additional journeys through the air quality management area (AQMA) of Carnforth, and it is the case that some additional movements will pass the AQMA. It is considered that whilst there would be an impact on the AQMA this is likely to be minimal and therefore NO₂ and PM10 concentrations are not proposed to be significant. The applicant is proposing 5 electric vehicle charging points as part of the proposal and this is considered acceptable. The land has been historically grazed and therefore it is unlikely that it would be contaminated to a degree of any significance, and therefore this could be satisfactorily addressed by the imposition of planning conditions.

7.7.2 The site is located within a mineral safeguarded zone. It is not expected given the proximity to the motorway that the site would be commercially worked for aggregate. No observations have been received from either Back Lane or Leapers Wood Quarries, nor have the County Council as the waste and mineral planning authority for Lancashire expressed an interest in this planning application. It is therefore considered that the development would not adversely prejudice any commercial extraction of mineral deposits (likely to be sand and gravel, or limestone).

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 Given the application is proposed to be refused, there are no planning obligations to consider as part of this planning application.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 Members are faced with a delicately balanced planning argument on both sides. The Framework is explicit that government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support *sustainable* (our emphasis) economic growth, and naturally significant weight does need to be attached to this. The City Council wholeheartedly adopts this stance also. Members have to determine whether the benefits associated with the development of this greenfield site, outside the urban core of Carnforth, outweigh the impacts the development would have on the amenity of the area, namely in the form of the development's impact on the local landscape character. Officers consider that the benefits of the scheme are relatively low when considered against the scale of the development proposed. Whilst there is an impact on the landscape the harm caused has been mitigated to a limited extent via the provision of landscaping. Taking this into account, in the view of officers, this does not outweigh the harm caused, and whilst officers are supportive of new development within the district they cannot recommend support for the scheme from a principle objective.

9.2 Whilst amended information with respect to the development's impact on the local highway network has been submitted, the views of the County Council as Highway Authority were not available at the time of drafting, and therefore there is uncertainty as to whether the scheme proposed can be found acceptable from a highway perspective.

9.3 The Arboricultural Implications Assessment has failed to examine the impact of the proposed access arrangements and in particular the necessary visibility splays, and therefore it is impossible to conclude the likely extent of hedgerow removal in this location. Furthermore, given the applicant's

desire to regrade the site, the regrading would be undertaken in close proximity to the existing hedgerow along the A601 (M), which could undermine the future success of the hedgerow. Taking the above into consideration it is recommended that the scheme cannot be supported.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The site is allocated as countryside area, which is divorced from the main built form of Carnforth and the benefits associated with the proposed development fail to outweigh the harm to the landscape, which is intensified by landform changes on the site, and the appearance of the built form as proposed. The scheme therefore fails to conform to Policies DM7, DM28 and DM35 of Development Management DPD and saved Policy E4 of the Lancaster District Local Plan.
2. There is insufficient information to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the existing highway network can safely accommodate the proposed development which proposes an access that is considered to raise highway safety concerns. The proposal therefore fails to conform to Policies DM20 and DM35 of the Development Management DPD and Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The submitted Arboricultural Implications Assessment fails to demonstrate the loss of hedgerow that would be needed to safely construct the access and the associated visibility splays and how the change in levels associated with the development will impact on the root protection areas of existing trees and hedgerows. The proposal therefore fails to conform to Policy DM29 of the Development Management DPD.

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

In accordance with the above legislation, Lancaster City Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, in the interests of delivering sustainable development. As part of this approach the Council offers a pre-application service, aimed at positively influencing development proposals. Whilst the applicant has taken advantage of this service prior to submission, the resulting proposal is unacceptable for the reasons prescribed in the Notice.

Background Papers

None