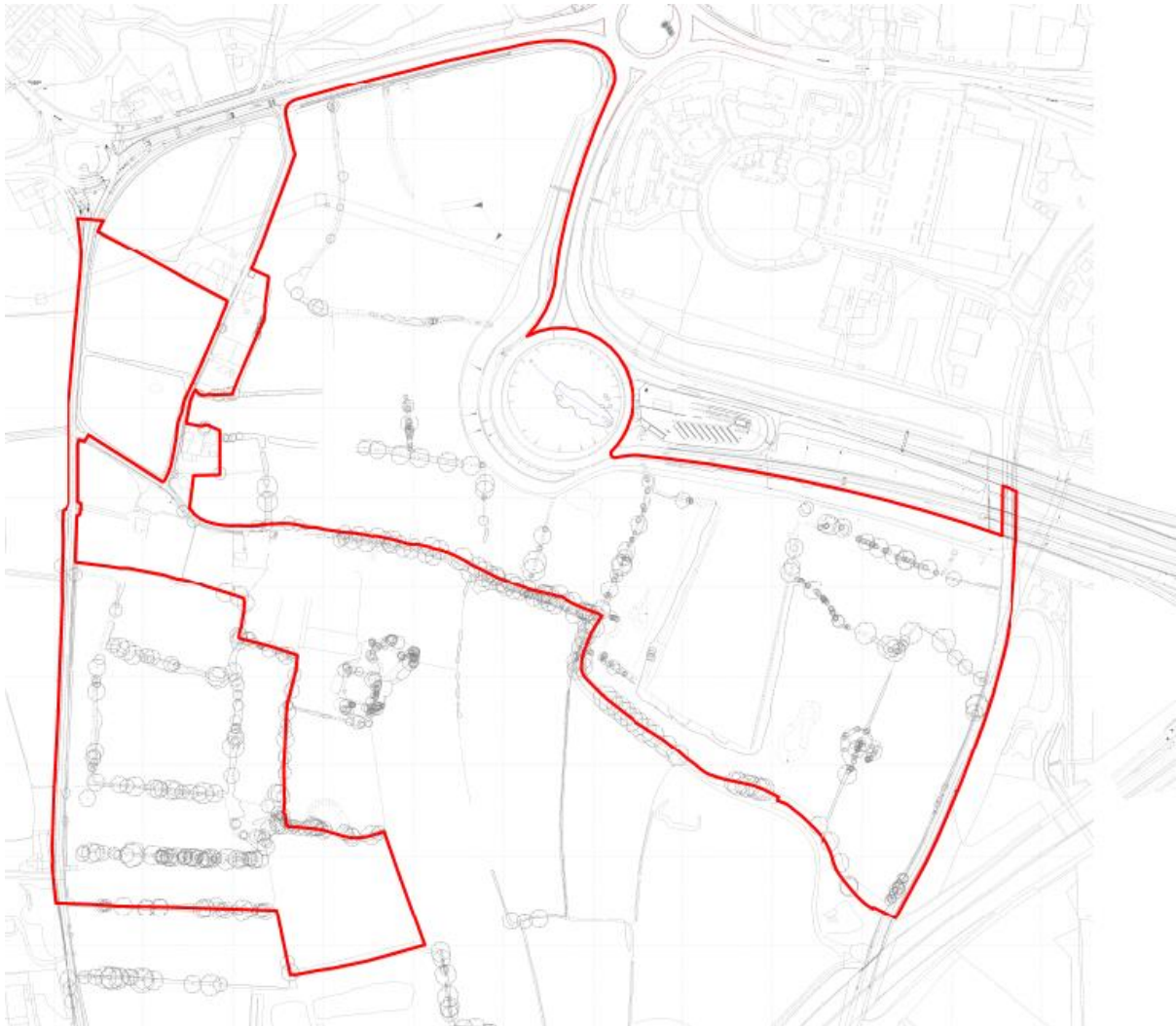


<b>Application Number</b>	Application submitted to and being processed by Lancashire County Council Reference LCC/2022/0044/RH
<b>Address</b>	Cuerden Strategic Site, East of Stanifield Lane, North of Clayton Farm, West of Wigan Road, Lostock Hall
<b>Applicant</b>	Lancashire County Council and Maple Grove Developments Ltd.
<b>Agent</b>	Mr Paul Reeves Barton Willmore 7 Soho Square London W1D 3QB
<b>Development</b>	Application for Outline Planning Permission (with all matters reserved save for access from the public highway and strategic green infrastructure/landscaping) for a mixed-use development including the provision of Employment Class E(a); food, drink and drive-through restaurant use (Use Class E(b)/Sui Generis Drive- Through); hotel use (Use Class C1); health, fitness and leisure use (Use Class E(d)/F(e)/F2(b)); creche/nursery (Class E(f)); car showrooms (Use Class Sui Generis Car Showroom); Residential use (C3) the provision of associated car parking, access, public open space, landscaping and drainage
<b>Officer Recommendation</b>	<b>The views set out in full in the recommendation section below be submitted to Lancashire County Council as the determining Authority</b>

## Location Plan



### **1. Recommendation**

1.1 That Lancashire County Council be advised that South Ribble Borough Council would request that the following points are taken fully into account as part of the processing and determination of this application.

1. That the submitted application on only part of the allocated site will not prejudice the development of the other parcels of the allocated site (owned by Brookhouse Group Limited)
2. Due consideration must be given to the 2015 adopted masterplan and for it to be determined if the application under consideration accords with the broad principles set out in the adopted masterplan together with the policy requirements are met in relation to phasing, a delivery schedule and an agreed programme of implementation

3. That an independent viability assessment is undertaken to ascertain if the “enabling development” (i.e. retail, leisure and housing) is the minimum required to fund essential infrastructure in line with the requirements of Policy C4 of the South Ribble Local Plan
4. That a detailed review of sequential alternative sites is requested from the applicant which considers the merits of the application in terms of compliance with retail and town centre planning policy for assessment
5. That additional information is provided for assessment in respect of retail impact which addresses trade diversion from Bamber Bridge and consideration of a scenario to take account of permitted convenience floorspace at the B&Q store Bamber Bridge not coming forward, as detailed in section 4.1.9 of this report
6. The Design Code stipulations for high quality design and built environments are secured by a suitably worded condition and strictly applied to the consideration of future Reserved Matters applications
7. Assurance is sought that the impact of the additional traffic and the impact on highway capacity/junction safety is fully considered together with the control of HGV routing to safeguard the amenities of residents
8. We would welcome further discussion and engagement as the detail is worked up and would be happy to discuss proposed conditions prior to the publication of the Planning Committee Report.

## **2. Introduction**

2.1 Lancashire County Council are currently processing an Outline planning application for employment, a range of mixed uses, residential and associated car parking, access, public open space, landscaping and other works on land within their control at the Cuerden Strategic Site. The application excludes three parcels of within the Cuerden Strategic Site Local Plan allocation that are under separate ownership (by Brookhouse Group Limited).

2.2 As landowner, Lancashire County Council are utilising legislative powers (Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Regulations) 1992, which requires them to determine the planning application because of the site being wholly under their control.

2.3 The views of South Ribble Borough Council as the authority in which the application site is located are being sought.

## **3. Site History**

3.1 In December 2017 a hybrid planning application (ref. 07/2017/0211/ORM) covering the wider Cuerden Strategic Site Local Plan allocation was approved by South Ribble Borough Council for the following:

*“Hybrid planning application comprising of Full and Outline development – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development*

*Part 1 FULL – Retail floorspace (Use Class A1 & A3) and associated car parking, site access, highway works, drainage and strategic landscaping*

*Part 2 OUT – Employment floorspace (Classes B1, B2 & B8), hotel (Class C1), health and fitness and leisure (Class D2), creche/nursery (Class D1), retail (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 & A5), car showrooms (Use Class Sui Generis), residential (Classes C2/C3) and provision of*

*associated car parking, access, public open space, landscaping and drainage (Access applied for) and affecting the setting of a Listed Building”*

3.2 Whilst site preparation works commenced in respect of the planning permission 07/2017/0211/ORM the anchor retail operator (Ikea) pulled out of a deal to occupy the site in May 2018. Because of this the planning permission has not been implemented to date, with the permission to expire in December 2022.

3.3 Prior to this, in April 2015, a Masterplan for the development of the whole Cuerden Strategic Site was adopted by the Council.

### **3. Planning Application**

#### **3.1 Overview**

3.1.1 The application relates to 51.3 hectares of the 65 hectare Cuerden Strategic Site as allocated under Policy C4 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

3.1.2 The site comprises relatively low lying agricultural fields with typical tree and hedgerow planting. There is a large plantation of woodland to the south of the M65 motorway junction. The roads known as Old School Lane and Stoney Lane and the dwellings situated on these roads (including Brookhouse Farm, Stoney Lane House and the Grade II listed Old Stone House) do not form part of the development site.

3.1.3 The land uses proposed within the Development are detailed below:

<b>Use</b>	<b>Max Gross Internal Area (GIA) sqm/no. Units</b>
Retail (E(a))	4,000
Hotel (C1)	2,500
Gym (E(d))	1,000
Food, Drink and Drive-Through Restaurant (E(b)/Sui Generis Drive-Through)	800
Car Sales (Sui Generis)	4,000
Creche (E(f))	500
Health Centre (E(e))	1,500
Employment (B2, B8)	155,000
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	32,000
Leisure Centre ((E(d), F1(e), F2(b)))	26,000
Residential (C3)	116 units

3.1.4 The Development is proposed to be delivered over 5 development Zones, as detailed below:



3.1.5 The split of land across the Zones detailed in para. 3.4 is proposed to be as follows:

<b>Use Class</b>	<b>MAX GIA SqM/No. Units</b>	<b>MAX Zone Development SqM/no. Units</b>
<b>Zone A – Employment North</b>		
Retail (E(a))	4,000	30,000
Hotel (C1)	2,500	
Gym (E(d))	1,000	
Food, Drink and Drive-Through Restaurant (E(b)/Sui Generis Drive-Through)	800	
Car Sales (Sui Generis)	4,000	
Creche (E(f))	500	
Health Centre (E(e))	1,500	
Employment (B2, B8)	25,000	
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	4,000	
<b>Zone B – Mixed Use</b>		
Employment (B2, B8)	65,000	65,000
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	5,000	
<b>Zone C – Employment South</b>		
Employment (B2, B8)	18,000	18,000
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	5,000	
Leisure Centre ((E(d), F1(e), F2(b)))	13,000	
<b>Zone D – Retail</b>		
Employment (B2, B8)	47,000	47,000
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	5,000	
Leisure Centre ((E(d), F1(e), F2(b)))	13,000	
<b>Zone E – Residential</b>		
Residential (C3)	116	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>227,300 + Residential</b>	<b>160,000 + Residential</b>

3.1.6 It is stated within the application that “A key feature of the development parameters is its ability to offer flexibility and the resilience to adapt to any changes in market demand over the course of construction and implementation”. Consequently, whilst the application seeks planning permission for a total of 227,300sqm of development, the development itself is to be limited to a maximum floorspace of 160,000sqm of employment and commercial development along with up to 116 residential units.

3.1.7 The proposed maximum heights of the Development in each Zone are detailed below:

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Max Building Height (metres above finished floor level)</b>	<b>Max Building Height (metres AOD)</b>
A	20.00*	64.09
B	25.00	77.00
C	22.15	60.15
D	24.70*	74.00
E	13.70	51.10

3.1.8 It is advised the western part of Development Zone A would be subject to a further restriction reducing the maximum height of buildings from 20m to 15m. A similar restriction is also proposed to be placed on the western part of Development Zone D, reducing its maximum height from 24.7m to 18.6m.

3.1.9 The following table provides a comparison of commercial floorspace comparison between the extant 2017 (approved) proposal and the current proposed floorspace composition:

Proposed Use	Approved Max (sq.m GIA)	Proposed Max (sq.m GIA)	Variance (sq.m GIA)
Retail (E(a)) Comparison	67,600	0	-67,600
Retail (E(a)) Convenience	2,843	4,000	+1,157
Hotel (C1)	8,000	2,500	-5,500
Gym (E(d))	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Drive-thru (Sui Generis)	2,600	800	-1,800
Car sales (Sui Generis)	7,200	4,000	-3,200
Creche (E(f))		500	
Health Centre (E(e))	2,000	1,500	0
Employment (B2, B8)	80,000	155,000	+75,000
Business (E(g)(i-iii))	36,000	32,000	-4000
Leisure Centre ((E(d), F1(e), F2(b)))	0	26,000	+26,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,243</b>	<b>227,300</b>	<b>+19,057</b>

3.1.10 The three significant differences between the 2017 proposal considered by South Ribble Borough Council (ref. 07/2017/0211/ORM) and the application currently being considered by Lancashire County Council are:

1. The application only relates to land under the control of Lancashire County Council (51.3 hectares of the 65 hectare Cuerden Strategic Site)
2. The large retail unit approved in the eastern section of the site (which Ikea was to occupy) has been replaced by an expansion of 'Employment Uses' (B2 Industrial and B8 Storage or Distribution, together with possibly a small element of E(g) (i-iii) Offices, Research and Development and Industrial processes)
3. Inclusion of a leisure centre

## 3.2 Access

3.2.1 The proposed Access strategy for the Development comprises of four vehicles access points:

- M65 terminus: access via a third arm off the existing terminus roundabout
- A49 Wigan Road: access via a four-armed signalised junction
- Stanifield Lane (Southern Access): access via a three-arm signalised junction to provide access to the employment development at Zone D and allowing for future linkages into (and through) the Future Phase land and into Zone A
- Stanifield Lane (Residential Access): access via a four-armed staggered priority junction exclusively for the residential development

3.2.2 It is advised that pedestrian and cycle access is to be provided through the Development and is to form *"an intrinsic part of the wider movement strategy"* which will include existing public rights of way (to be retained and realigned where necessary).

## 3.3 Green Infrastructure

3.3.1 Details of the proposed strategic landscaping and open space across the site are included with the submission. These include the retention of existing trees and hedgerows.

3.3.2 Woodland plantation replacement tree planting is proposed to the east of Old School Lane, to take account of losses within Zone D. The proposal also includes native tree and shrub planting, meadow grass areas, ponds/wetlands and further ecological features.

### 3.4 Construction Programme

3.4.1 Supporting documentation advises should planning permission be granted “*the construction is anticipated to commence in 2023 and span approximately 7 years*”. It is advised the construction of road infrastructure and Zone D will form the first phases of the Development. The following table provides an indicative construction programme:

<b>Construction</b>			
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Duration (Years)</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Completion</b>
A	3	2023	2026
B	4	2024	2028
C	2	2027	2029
D	2	2028	2030
E	2	2023	2025
<b>Overall</b>	<b>7</b>	2023	2030

## **4. Material Considerations**

### **4.1 Site Allocation Consideration**

4.1.1 This application is to be determined by Lancashire County Council in accordance with the Policies in the South Ribble Local Plan and the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and also giving due consideration to the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.1.2 The site is allocated as a ‘Major Site for Development’ under Policy C4 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

4.1.3 Policy C4 permits development at the Cuerden site, provided a masterplan for the site has been submitted and agreed, and a phasing and infrastructure delivery schedule and an agreed programme of implementation have been submitted. The Policy also permits the development of alternative uses, such as retail, leisure and housing, provided this enables the development of the employment uses, and is limited to that which is clearly necessary to fund the essential infrastructure needed for the site. Policy C4 also requires that any main town centre uses must satisfy the sequential and impact tests in the NPPF.

4.1.4 The first criteria require there to be a masterplan for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site. A masterplan for the site was adopted by the Council in April 2015 and provides a framework against which future planning applications can be considered. The Masterplan was developed through discussion with landowners, statutory consultees and other stakeholders and through public consultation. It set out a fully integrated and comprehensive development. The masterplanning process considered key drivers for the site including access and movement, highways improvements, sustainable transport, design principles, green space, viability and relationships to existing residential areas. The resulting spatial framework and Masterplan set out the mix and layout of uses considered appropriate for the site together with primary and secondary access arrangements and indicative locations for green open space and plantation replacement landscaping. Lancashire County Council, as the decision-maker, must give due consideration to the 2015 adopted masterplan and



determine if the application under consideration accords with the broad principles set out in the adopted masterplan.

4.1.5 The second criteria of Policy C4 requires that any proposal has a phasing and delivery schedule. The third requires there to be an agreed programme of implementation in accordance with the adopted Master Plan and Design Code.

4.1.6 Additionally the policy provides for the inclusion of alternative uses such as retail, leisure and housing as “enabling development”. However, such provision should be limited to that which is proven to be necessary to fund essential infrastructure.

4.1.7 Policy C4 also requires that any main town centre uses must satisfy the sequential and impact tests in the NPPF. In respect of this, the Council has commissioned Nexus Planning, consultant retail planning specialists, to provide advice in respect of the acceptability of proposed town centre uses.

4.1.8 Nexus Planning advise that they are not satisfied with the applicant’s assertion that there is no requirement to undertake a detailed sequential test assessment, considering the proposal’s compliance with retail and town centre planning policy. In view of Nexus Planning the Policy C4 is clear in that any proposed main town centre use must satisfy the sequential and impact policy tests as set out in the NPPF, as was the approach taken in respect of the extant 2017 consent. As no consideration of this has been provided no conclusions in respect of acceptability of the proposal against the sequential test can be made.

4.1.9 In regard to the impact policy test, Nexus Planning are unaware of any planned or committed investment which is likely to be impacted on as a result of the proposed development. They therefore consider the proposal to comply with the first part of the impact test. However, regarding the second part of the impact test Nexus Planning states:

*“there are two outstanding matters [in the applicant’s retail impact assessment] which need addressing by the applicant, prior to any conclusion being reached in respect of the acceptability of the proposal against the second part of the impact test [...]:*

1. *Further consideration is required in respect of the assumed levels of trade diversion from Bamber Bridge district centre, giving consideration to the trading implications of the Food Warehouse, and how this would alter the cumulative impact assessment; and*
2. *A further impact scenario is required to take account of the potential for the permitted convenience floorspace at the B&Q store to not come forward in practice”*

## **4.2 Character and Design**

4.2.1 The application has been submitted in Outline (with all matters reserved save for access from the public highway and strategic green infrastructure/landscaping. The final design of the buildings would therefore be determined as part of future Reserved Matters application/s, in line with the maximum floorspace and building height parameters set out in paragraphs 3.1.5 and 3.1.7 of this report. A Design Code however has been submitted as part of this application to assist in the shaping of the development of the site.

4.2.2 The Design Code will serve as a technical document to ensure high quality development for future phases of the Cuerden site. The purpose of the Design Code is not to be strictly prescriptive for future phases. It needs to be flexible to address the form and content of future phases. The purpose of the Design Code is to establish high quality, sustainable design aspirations to ensure consistency across the site. It establishes key development-wide aspirations and provides design guidance in more detail for individual character areas. The

character areas are: mixed use; residential; employment & business and employment, business & leisure. The Design Code has been prepared in such a manner so if the mix of uses in locations changes then the character area description is flexible enough to deal with this. For each character area the following design aspirations are discussed:

- Street Types (hierarchy, footpaths, bridleways, cycleways)
- Block Principles (access, frontages, car parking, refuse/servicing)
- Plot Form (plot size, width, adaptability, building envelopes)
- Boundary Treatment/Landscaping/Drainage/Open Space and Heritage Assets
- Building Types and Uses / Density and Building Height
- Building Materials and Features

4.2.3 The Design Code is similar in scope and content to that previously adopted by South Ribble Borough Council in 2017 as part of planning application 07/2017/0211/ORM. The main point which requires consideration is how the change from a large retail unit (i.e. the 'Ikea' site) to a large warehouse unit/s in Zone B is managed to ensure that a high quality design and environment is maintained. On this point the Design Code advises:

*“Zones B, C and D share the common ambition to generate high quality built environments suitable to promote Employment, Business and Leisure uses. Each zone shall aspire to subtly different identities helping to define each zone. Zone B can accommodate larger scale Employment and Business uses reflecting its location to the east of the development. Zone C and D offer themselves to smaller / medium scale built forms while present leisure opportunities to complement the Employment and Business uses.*

*Zone B Infrastructure has been designed to provide access to the East Employment area development. The two access points for Zone B are on the east and western boundaries. The eastern boundary access links to A49 Wigan Road while the western access is off the proposed estate road linking to the two internal roundabouts on the North which transect through the Zone A (mixed used area). The secondary roundabout leads to the M65 spur connecting to A6 and A582 roads.” [...]*

*“A palette of contemporary cladding systems combined with glazed curtain walling and feature design details are envisaged to create an overarching modern high-tech visual aesthetic for the zone. It is important to ensure clear connectivity to the wider development transitions smoothly through the different building uses (via Zone A) with the introduction of a strong streetscape visual markers and choice of building materials. This zone consists of employment and business uses, and it is therefore expected that the buildings should be designed to promote natural daylight (via glazing) to the office areas. This will allow users to benefit from views out towards the surrounding green infrastructure with the opportunity for new landscape enhancement to each plot, all of which will promote healthy and good places to work. Ultimately, the final designs for each building will be borne out of number of criteria that are as yet unknown and will be market led and driven by the requirements of the Occupiers and funders.”*

### **4.3 Highways**

4.3.1 A scheme of this nature will inevitably lead to increased traffic levels and a busier network in its vicinity. A Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan have been submitted in support of the application, scoped and undertaken in liaison with Highways England and the local highways authority.

4.3.2 The proposed infrastructure improvements include:

- implementing speed reduction measures, improved capacity and better lane allocation on the approach to the M65 terminus roundabout;
- additional lanes and signalisation of the M65 terminus roundabout; and
- an additional northbound lane between the M65 roundabout and the A582 Lostock Lane/A6 London Way roundabout

4.3.3 The submitted Transport Assessment advises *“The deliverability of the scheme is dependent on the provision of the right level of infrastructure to open up the site for the jobs and opportunities it will create. The TA provides a quantitative analysis of the impacts, which indicate changes in traffic levels and profiles throughout the week. With the implementation of the infrastructure mitigation proposed, it is concluded that the residual impacts from the site are acceptable.”*

4.3.4 In terms of traffic generation, we would seek assurances that the impact of the additional traffic and the impact on highway capacity/junction safety is fully considered.

4.3.5 Whilst the previously approved scheme included a large retail unit on the site, the change to one or more large storage and distribution uses would attract a greater number of HGVs with the uses potentially operating on a 24 hour basis. It is therefore important to seek assurance that HGV routing is controlled to safeguard the amenities of residents

#### **4.4 Economic Benefits**

4.4.1 The proposed development of the Cuerden Site will bring significant economic benefit by generating investment and securing substantial job numbers through both the construction and occupation of the Site.

4.4.2 An Employment Skills Statement has been submitted in support of the application. This sets out the skills and employment approach, priorities and governance arrangements in Lancashire, Central Lancashire and South Ribble. It goes on to consider how this support the Cuerden Site in Lancashire and South Ribble, and how it can be ensured that arrangements are in place to maximise the potential of the Cuerden Site.

#### **4.5 Noise and Disturbance**

4.5.1 In relation to ‘conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ the NPPF advises, in para174:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*[...] e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans..”*

4.5.2 The Council’s Environmental Health Officers have considered the proposal and would recommend a number of conditions relating to the agreement of a Construction Nuisance Management Plan, detailed Noise Impact Assessments, land contamination, external lighting, the inclusion of sustainable measures and air quality in order to address concerns they have in relation to construction and operations phases of the development, and specifically the impact on current and future residents. We would therefore welcome further discussion and engagement as the detail is worked up and would be happy to discuss proposed conditions prior to the publication of the Planning Committee Report.

## **5. Conclusion**

5.1 This is an important proposal within South Ribble Borough that would bring significant economic benefits to residents and businesses. Careful consideration however needs to be given as to how the impacts of the development can be mitigated and controlled. This report sets out the area's where this authority seeks clarification and further assurances. Following discussion at the Planning Committee these points and any additional matters raised by Members will be forwarded to Lancashire County Council for due consideration.