

Application Number

07/2018/3875/FUL

Address

Howick Cross Service Station
248 Liverpool Road
Penwortham
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 0LY

Applicant

Inthebox Solutions Limited

Agent

Mr Joshua Hellowell
2 Lockside Office Park
Lockside Road
Preston
PR2 2YS

Development

Change of use of land for self storage facility (class B8) including siting of 54 steel shipping containers together with the relocation of existing fence and gate

Officer Recommendation

Refusal

Date application valid

19.06.2018

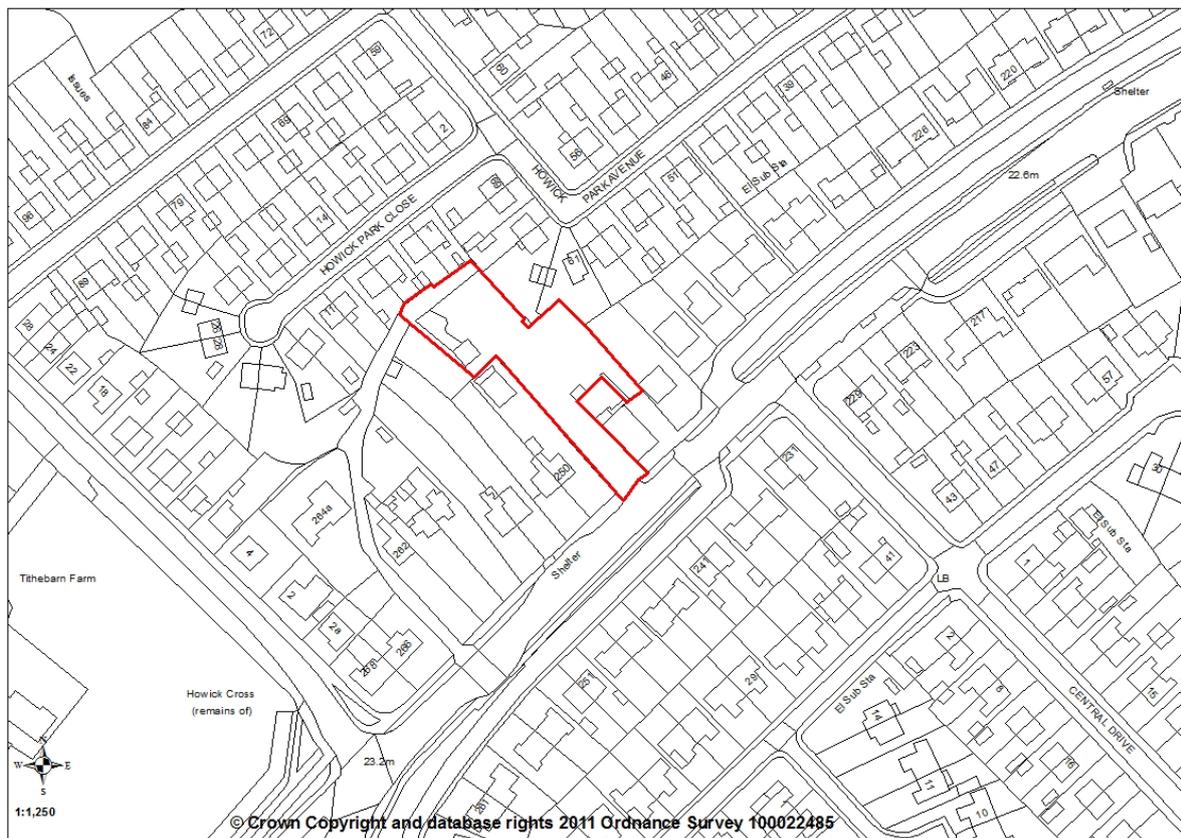
Target Determination Date

14.08.2018

Extension of Time

N/A

Location Plan



1. Report Summary

1.1 This application has been called to planning committee for determination by the local ward councillors due to the past history of the site, its location, its relationship to residential properties and the nature of the proposal.

1.2 The application proposes the change of use of the rear part of the site to a self-storage facility consisting of 54 steel shipping containers, a car parking/unloading area, and the relocation of fencing and gates for security. The existing petrol filling station building and canopy are to be retained and are excluded from this application site boundary.

1.3 The site is within a residential area on the busy A59 Liverpool Road and neighbouring residents consider the proposal would be detrimental to residential amenity, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area and cause a number of issues, including potential for criminal activity, an increase in traffic, increase in site activity and a detrimental impact on their residential amenity.

1.4 It is officer's view that, on balance, the proposed development fails on two aspects. The introduction of metal shipping containers for use as storage units would have a detrimental impact on the character of the residential area in which they are located. By their very nature, metal shipping containers are of a style, design and construction that is better suited to an industrial area. Additionally, it is considered there will be an unacceptable increase in the level of activity, particularly in the location of the parking and unloading area which will have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and particularly the adjacent property, 250 Liverpool Road. The application is therefore considered contrary to Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and policies B1 and G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan and is therefore recommended for refusal.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 The Howick Cross Service Station site is located on the north side of the A59 Liverpool Road in the built-up area of Penwortham, within a predominantly residential area. The site was formerly a petrol filling station with ancillary car sales to the side and rear. There is a building set centrally within the site which was used as the retail kiosk associated with the petrol filling station, and this is surrounded by areas of forecourt with the infrastructure for petrol sales set to the front of the building with a canopy over. The building, the forecourt to its front with canopy over do not form part of this application site boundary.

2.2 The rear part of the site is predominately hardstanding and it is this area to which this application relates, together with the western side of the front forecourt area. The site abuts residential properties on three sides. The adjacent property to the east is 246 Liverpool Road, to the west is 250 Liverpool Road with a brick-built workshop present to the rear. To the north-west are properties on Howick Park Close and to the north-east properties on Howick Park Avenue.

2.3 A single lane private road runs from Liverpool Road between 262 and 264 Liverpool Road, behind 250-262 Liverpool Road, to the rear western corner of the application site. Numerous properties on Liverpool Road and Howick Park Close use this access road for vehicular purposes. As the access road approaches the rear western corner of the site it degrades and is overgrown but is included within the application site boundary.

3. Site History

3.1 Until circa 2008 the site was operated by Rydal Motors as part of a combined use comprising of car and petrol sales, an ancillary A1 shop and a self-operated car wash hose located along the boundary with 246 Liverpool Road. It is understood that the car sales and petrol/shop use operated independently of one another.

3.2 In January 2009 planning permission was granted for a Tesco Express store with a petrol filling station on the site. An amended scheme for the same use was approved in December 2009. Neither permission was implemented.

3.3 In April 2011 a temporary planning permission (07/2011/0133/COU), for a 12 month period, was granted for the change of use of the forecourt area to a hand car wash. This permission was implemented.

3.4 Sometime during the course of 2012 the operator of the car wash on site changed hands which, as a result in the change of equipment being used and change in washing practices, resulted in numerous complaints being received by Environmental Health.

3.5 In December 2013 a retrospective application (07/2013/0802/FUL) for the use of the site as a hand car wash was withdrawn to allow the applicant to investigate mitigation measures in respect of noise/spray from the jet washes following concerns raised by Environmental Health.

3.6 In June 2014 an amended retrospective application (07/2014/0033/FUL) was approved, for a 2 year period, which included the erection of a 2.7m high acoustic fence along the party boundary with 246 Liverpool Road to reduce noise and spray.

3.7 Following the erection of the acoustic fence, the use of the forecourt area of the site for the washing of cars continued to generate complaints from neighbours in relation to noise and spray.

3.8 Circa April 2016 the operator of the car wash changed hands to the current operator, who took control of the wider site. The queuing system of the car wash was altered with the car washing process being immediately behind the former ancillary Class A1 shop and continued along the site boundary with 246 Liverpool Road (in areas of the site where car washing was not permitted under the previous temporary approvals). Valeting of cars took place under the canopy, where cars were previously washed. The washing of cars continued to generate complaints from neighbours in relation to noise and spray, with neighbouring properties to the rear on Howick Park Avenue also submitted complaints Environmental Health.

3.9 On 24 June 2016 application 07/2016/0209/FUL for a change of use of part of existing building to a tool hire office, erection of 3m high screen to side, washing and rinsing areas for car wash and the erection of a building for MOT's and car servicing and tool hire storage. This application had sought to regularise the situation on the site but was refused on three grounds. The reasons for refusal were:

“1. The proposed hand car wash, with use of jet-washing equipment, would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the owners/occupiers of residential properties in close proximity to the site, particularly 246 Liverpool Road, through noise disturbance. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policies B1(c) and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan (2012-2026).

2. The proposed MOT/car repair garage and tool hire storage building, by virtue of its design and proximity, would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the owner/occupiers of residential properties to the north on Howick Park Close, through noise

disturbance. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policies B1(c) and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan (2012-2026).

3. The cumulative impact of the proposed development, which comprises of 3 uses that have the potential to generate noise in close proximity to residential properties, would have an adverse impact on the residential amenities of the owners/occupiers of residential properties in close proximity to the site. As such, the proposed development is contrary to Policies B1(c) and G17 of the South Ribble Local Plan (2012-2026)."

3.10 07/2017/0772/FUL for the erection of MOT station/tool hire storage building, part retrospective conversion of former retail outlet to tool hire company office and waiting room for car wash customers, use of land as car wash facility, with erection of associated acoustic screens (not retrospective). Use of land for sale of gas storage bottles and the erection of a 3 metre high free standing metal frame was refused by on 5 July 2017 on two grounds:

"1. The development would result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to neighbouring residential properties and the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed noise mitigation measures are adequate to overcome the adverse impacts caused by noise. The proposal would be seriously detrimental to residential amenity and therefore, is contrary to Policy 17 criteria c) and d) in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

2. The proposed 3m high acoustic fence along the boundary with the adjacent residential property 246 Liverpool Road, will have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the occupant of that property by virtue of its size, scale and proximity. Additionally, due to the location of the 3m high acoustic fence, it will have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan."

4. Proposal

4.1 The application proposes the change of use of part of the former Howick Cross Service Station site for use as a self-storage facility (class B8) including siting of 54 steel shipping containers together with an associated car parking/unloading area and the relocation of an existing fencing with gated access.

4.2 The proposal is to provide 54 storage units to the rear of the site, with a parking and unloading area adjacent to the existing petrol filling station building which is to be retained (not part of the application site boundary). An office building to the rear of the main building does form part of the application and is to be retained and remain in office use. The site is accessed directly off Liverpool Road utilising the existing access.

4.3 The storage units will be shipping containers measuring 6m by 2.4m to a height of 2.6m and would be located to the rear of the site, behind the existing petrol filling station building and its canopy. The site would be secured through the relocation of an existing fencing with a gated access and a site-specific Redcare security system. The fencing and gates will be 2.4m in height and will be located to the western and eastern sides of the existing petrol filling station building. The hours of use are 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:00 on Saturday and 11:00 to 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays

4.4 The application does not alter the area to the front of the site, which includes the existing canopy and petrol filling station building which are to be retained and do not form part of this application. The existing site access is to be utilised and area of forecourt to the western side of the site and building will be utilised for parking and unloading.

4.5 Information provided in the supporting statement highlights that the applicant has recently secured an agreement with the National Union of Students to be a preferred storage

partner for students across the UK. The aim of this partnership is to provide affordable storage for students from outside the area who need to store possessions securely during holidays, for UCLAN and the University of Lancaster.

5. Summary of Publicity

5.1 Eighty-two neighbouring properties were notified and a site notice posted with 52 letters of representation being received, objecting as follows:

- Residential area, this proposal should be on an industrial estate.
- Industrial development and site should only be allowed for residential development
- Noise disturbance to residential properties from loading/unloading containers
- Use in evenings will cause disturbance from banging and clattering of metal
- Cranes will need to be used to lift the steel containers which will add to the noise
- Impact of lighting on residential properties
- Containers will be visible from residential properties due to being higher than fencing.
- Security – proposal will attract unwanted visitors/opportunists
- South Ribble already has numerous storage sites within industrial areas close to motorway junctions – how will this proposal benefit the local community
- Increase traffic generated on Liverpool Road
- Impact on house prices
- Student storage should be on university campus
- Proposal would be a blight on the area
- Vibrations from banging and dropping of the steel containers
- Crime will increase as people try to break into the containers
- Containers may contain combustible, flammable or chemical items which will be hazardous to residents
- Containers would be crammed up against common boundary fence causing an overbearing presence
- Plans do not include any landscaping to protect residents outlook and to improve the view
- Not in keeping with the character and appearance of the area
- The facility has no benefit to local residents
- Not an appropriate use of this land in a residential area
- If the access track is used, this would be highly dangerous
- Yet another unsuitable business proposition on a site more suited to residential development
- Shipping containers are ugly
- Single track access road must not be used to access this site. It is for residential use only to access their properties and not a through road and is not fit for traffic going to and from a commercial premises.
- This facility is not compatible with this residential area

5.2 Additionally, one letter of support has been received, commenting: *“The local residents and certain councillors deserve to look at an eyesore as they should not have been disrespectful of the previous tenants who had over 30 years in the car valeting trade but got treated with utter disrespect.”*

5.3 The applicant’s agent submitted a further supporting statement specifically relating to the issues raised by objectors to the scheme. Their statement provides a response to the comments on environmental issues (noise, light, vibration, odour, flammable substances); the impact on the street scene; planning policy; traffic and secondary access and crime.

6. Summary of Consultations

6.1 **County Highways** has no objections to the proposed development and is of the opinion that the proposed development should have a negligible impact on highway safety and highway capacity within the immediate vicinity of the site. They have reviewed the Lancashire County Councils five year data base for Personal Injury Accident (PIA). The data base indicates there has been 3 recorded incidents within the vicinity of the site. On investigation of the details recorded, the incidents appear to be of a nature that would not be worsened by the proposed development. The level of vehicle movements expected for the proposed development would be lower than those associated with the current use class and therefore is acceptable. County Highways also confirmed that their view would not alter should the petrol filling station building be brought back into use.

6.2 The submitted plans and planning statement indicate that the proposed development will be accessed from the existing sites access on Liverpool road. County Highways are satisfied that the proposed access arrangements as stated are acceptable. The available sight lines from the sites access onto Liverpool Road are acceptable based on the recommendations from Manual for Streets. Additionally, the proposed internal site layout and parking provision is acceptable for a development of this size and nature.

6.3 A narrow private access track also runs up to the North-Western corner of the site, this currently serves the rear of a number of private dwellings. The submitted documentation does not indicate that this track will be utilised, however the LCC Highways would have 2 concerns if this track was subsequently used as a preferred or secondary route to the proposed development. Therefore they require a condition be imposed, should permission be granted, that all vehicular and pedestrian movements to the site to use only the existing access on the sites frontage with Liverpool Road.

6.4 **Environmental Health** do not provide a view on the proposal other than that they require a number of conditions be imposed, should permission be granted, in respect of lighting; the operating hours; the use of the site for storage only; signage, drainage and contaminated land. Unfortunately, not all of the requested conditions meet the tests for imposing conditions and could not be included.

6.5 **United Utilities** comment that, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the site should be drained on a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way. The NPPG clearly outlines the hierarchy to be investigated by the developer when considering a surface water drainage strategy. We would ask the applicant to consider the following drainage options in the following order of priority:

1. into the ground (infiltration);
2. to a surface water body;
3. to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. to a combined sewer.

6.6 **Penwortham Town Council** object to the proposal. The site was originally a petrol station then a car lot, none of which created major problems for neighbouring properties. However, the recent use of the site as a car wash was a problem to the local community. This new application for 54 steel shipping containers raised serious concerns to the Town Council who consider this proposal would be more suited to an industrial estate, not a residential area and would have a detrimental effect on the whole neighbourhood.

7. Policy Background

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.1.1 **Chapter 11. Making effective use of land** at paragraph 118 c) the NPPF gives substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land; and at d) promotes and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).

7.2 Central Lancashire Core Strategy

7.2.1 **Policy 1: Locating Growth** encourages the focussing of growth and investment in the Key Service Centres of Chorley and Leyland and the other main urban areas in South Ribble. In Penwortham the focus is on the regeneration of the District Centre.

7.2.2 **Policy 17: Design of New Buildings** requires new development to take account of the character and appearance of the local area, including the siting, layout, massing, scales, design, materials, buildings to plot ratio and landscaping; be sympathetic to surrounding land uses and occupiers and avoid demonstrable harm to the amenities of the local area and ensure that the amenities of occupiers of the new development will not be adversely affected by neighbouring uses and vice versa.

7.3 South Ribble Local Plan 2012 – 2026

7.3.1 **Policy B1: Existing Built-Up Areas** permits development proposals for the re-use of undeveloped and unused land and buildings, or for redevelopment, provided that the development complies with the requirements for access, parking and servicing; is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; and will not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents.

7.3.2 **Policy G14: Unstable or Contaminated Land** has a presumption in favour of the redevelopment of previously developed land. However, previously developed land can be unstable and subject to contamination and therefore development will be subject to a number of criteria. These include the requirement for applicants provide evidence of a satisfactory site investigation and show that any proposed remedial works are adequate to deal with any identified hazards.

7.3.3 **Policy G17: Design Criteria for New Development** permits new development, including extensions and free standing structures, provided that the proposal does not have a detrimental impact on the existing building, neighbouring buildings or on the street scene by virtue of its design, height, scale, orientation, plot density, massing, proximity, use of materials. Furthermore, the development should not cause harm to neighbouring property by leading to undue overlooking, overshadowing or have an overbearing effect; the layout, design and landscaping of all elements of the proposal, including any internal roads, car parking, footpaths and open spaces, are of a high quality and will provide an interesting visual environment which respects the character of the site and local area; the development would not prejudice highway safety, pedestrian safety, the free flow of traffic, and would not reduce the number of on-site parking spaces to below the standards stated in **Policy F1**.

8. Material Considerations

8.1 The site is within the Existing Built-up Area of Penwortham where Policy B1 in the South Ribble Local Plan permits development proposals for the re-use of undeveloped and unused land and buildings, or for redevelopment, provided that the development complies with the requirements for access, parking and servicing; is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area; and will not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents.

8.2 The site was formerly a petrol filling station with ancillary car sales to the side and rear. There is a building set centrally within the site which was used as the retail kiosk associated with the petrol filling station, and this is surrounded by areas of forecourt set to the front of the building. The building and forecourt area to its front and eastern side are to be retained and do not form part of this application site boundary. The rear part of the site is predominately hardstanding where the siting of the storage containers is proposed. The forecourt to the western side of the site frontage will be utilised for parking and unloading. The proposal use is considered to accord with the aims of Policy B1 in that the proposal re-uses unused land and a building. However, compliance to Policy B1 is subject to the three criteria set out in the Policy.

8.3 Access, Parking and Highway Safety

8.3.1 The site has a longstanding commercial history and, when used as a petrol filling station, the site access would have been used by a high number of vehicles and visiting members of the public accessing the car sales area. The proposed development will be accessed from the existing site access on Liverpool Road. County Highways have no objections to the proposed development and are of the opinion that the proposed development should have a negligible impact on highway safety and highway capacity within the immediate vicinity of the site. The level of vehicle movements expected for the proposed development would be lower than those associated with the previous use and therefore is acceptable.

8.3.2 County Highways have also reviewed the Lancashire County Councils five year data base for Personal Injury Accident (PIA). The data base indicates there has been 3 recorded incidents within the vicinity of the site. On investigation of the details recorded, the incidents appear to be of a nature that would not be worsened by the proposed development

8.3.3 The submitted plans and planning statement indicate that the proposed development will be accessed from the existing site access on Liverpool Road and therefore County Highways are satisfied that the proposed access arrangements as stated are acceptable. The available sight lines from the sites access onto Liverpool Road are acceptable based on the recommendations from Manual for Streets. Additionally, the proposed internal site layout and parking provision is acceptable for a development of this size and nature.

8.3.4 However, it is officer's view that, although the parking provision is acceptable, the parking area will also be used for unloading of items for storage. Clients would need to park up and transport their items to, in some cases, the far end of the site, to access their storage unit. This may result in a number of vehicles parked in the designated parking area for some time whilst items are transported either manually or by use of a trolley. This parking area has the potential to be unacceptably busy if a number of clients arrive to unload at the same time.

8.3.5 County Highways comment on the narrow private access track that runs up to the north-western corner of the site which currently serves the rear of a number of private dwellings. The submitted documentation does not indicate that this track will be utilised, however County Highways would have two concerns if this track was subsequently used as a preferred or secondary route to the proposed development. Therefore, if it is minded to approve this application, County Highways recommends the a condition be imposed to ensure that all vehicular and pedestrian movements to the site to use only the existing access on the sites frontage with Liverpool Road in order to ensure that a safe and satisfactory access is provided to the site.

8.3.6 A number of objections have been raised in respect of the traffic the proposed development would attract. However, given the view of County Highways and the former use of the site as a petrol filling station, it is considered that the proposal would not unduly increase the level of traffic in this area and the site access is acceptable from the highway

safety point of view. However, it is the proposed use of the parking area for unloading that causes concern, as indicated in paragraph 8.3.4. This issue will be discussed further in the Residential Amenity section of this report.

8.4 Character and Appearance of the Area

8.4.1 Although located on the busy A59, the character of the area in which the application site is situated is that of a mainly residential street scene which is softened by a large amount of hedgerow and tree boundary planting with some low red brick wall boundaries. This results in a pleasant and well maintained character. The exception to this is the former Howick Cross Service Station which is a commercial premises with hard standing, building and canopy fronting Liverpool Road.

8.4.2 The application site was previously a petrol filling station with the petrol filling station building, canopy and forecourt remaining and are not part of the application proposals other than part of the forecourt which is to be used for parking and as an unloading area. Therefore the retention of the existing building, canopy and forecourt and the re-use of the part of the site fronting Liverpool Road for parking and unloading will not alter the appearance to a great extent of that part of the site when viewed from Liverpool Road and therefore any impact on the character and appearance of the area along this stretch of Liverpool Road would not be to such an great extent.

8.4.3 However, there would be a view through the relocated fencing to the shipping containers beyond with no screening or landscaping proposed. The introduction of shipping containers could be considered to be detrimental to the character and appearance of this residential area. Storage containers are by their nature, basic in appearance and of metal construction and would normally be found in industrial landscapes such as docks or industrial estates. Their appearance is considered inappropriate in a residential area and it has been established that this area is predominantly residential in nature. Metal shipping containers would introduce an incongruous feature out of keeping with such a residential area. Whilst it is accepted that the majority of the application site is to the rear of an existing building, canopy and forecourt area which are to be retained and therefore not widely viewed in the street scene of Liverpool Road, there will be some view. Landscaping to the front part of the site could reduce the impact and help screen the view through to the storage facility and this could be secured by condition should permission be granted. However, it would be difficult to achieve appropriate landscaping when the majority of the front part of the site is outside the application site boundary. Additionally, any landscaping would need to ensure that site lines and highway safety is not compromised.

8.4.4 It was noted during the case officer's site visit, two large shipping containers were present to the front of the site which have a detrimental appearance in the street scene of Liverpool Road, although it is understood these have been placed to the front to stop unauthorised access into the site and will be removed.

8.4.5 On balance it is considered that the proposal to introduce metal shipping containers for use as a storage facility would not be conducive to this residential area and although limited view would be afforded in the wider street scene, the proposal would result in an unacceptable level of harm to the area, contrary to Policy G17.

8.5 Residential Amenity

8.5.1 Neighbouring residential properties are located to the site's boundaries on Howick Park Close, Howick Park Avenue and Liverpool Road. To the south-western boundary is 250 Liverpool Road, a residential property with substantial two storey scale garage/workshop building to its rear. The common boundary is a 1m high fence, rising to 1.8m towards the rear where the garage building is located. The dwelling has two ground floor and two first floor windows in its elevation facing the application site and the area of parking and unloading.

8.5.2 To the north-eastern boundary is No 246 Liverpool Road, a detached residential property. The dwelling itself is adjacent the part of the Howick Cross Service Station site that is not included in this application. However, the garden area is adjacent the application site. The boundary treatment is an approximately 1.4m high concrete fence adjacent the property and a 2m high fence with approximately 3m high Leylandii hedge adjacent the rear garden of 246.

8.5.3 To the north-west of the site are residential properties 1-7 Howick Park Close with ground and first floor windows facing towards the application site. There is an area of intervening land, including in the application site boundary, and an existing conifer hedge which is to be retained.

8.5.4 The proposed shipping containers are located around the site with 8 up to the site's north-eastern boundary with 246 Liverpool Road; 6 to the south-western boundary with 250 Liverpool Road; 9 to the north-western boundary and 6 to the northern boundary with 1-7 Howick Park Close and 5 to the north-eastern boundary with 63/65 Howick Park Avenue.

8.5.5 Access will be between the shipping containers internally within the site with just a short length of access road adjacent the boundary, to the north-western boundary with numbers 61 and 63 Howick Park Avenue. Neighbouring properties will have view of the proposed shipping containers, although this is largely limited to the first floor windows. There will be view of the shipping containers at ground floor level, the extent of which is largely due to the height of the boundary treatments and height of the shipping containers.

8.5.6 The supporting statement submitted with this application recognises that there are residential properties in close proximity to the site but does not consider that these will be negatively impacted by the proposals due to the separation distance to the proposed units which will ensure that they do not appear overbearing when viewed from the rear of these properties. The supporting statement goes on to outline that the "*containers will be single stacked and are roughly the same height as the existing steel fence and notably shorter than the existing building and canopy structure*". It is considered that the proposal has only limited impact on residential amenity in terms of criteria a) of Policy G17 (design, height, scale, orientation, plot density, massing, and proximity). However, in respect of the use of materials, the shipping containers are of a steel construction, this would introduce an incongruous feature out of keeping with residential properties, resulting in a detrimental impact on neighbouring buildings, contrary to Policy G17 criteria a).

8.5.7 Additionally, other amenity issues are of concern and neighbouring residents have objected to the proposal on a number of grounds. They consider the proposal will be detrimental to their residential amenity in terms of noise and disturbance, lighting, increase in activity and the potential for criminal activity, stating the storage facility would be better suited to an industrial estate. These are discussed below.

8.6 Noise and Disturbance

8.6.1 The proposed self-storage facility comprising 54 shipping containers for storage could have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance and a major concern would be on the noise generated by persons accessing the containers due to the materials used in their construction. Metal can result in a noisy environment not conducive to a residential area.

8.6.2 Neighbouring residents have also objected on these grounds - that noise and disturbance will be generated from the site, due to the nature of the activity and that the storage units are to be metal shipping containers.

8.6.3 The supporting statement outlines that use is “*thought to be of a relatively low impact. The use will generate minimal noise*” and also refers to a noise assessment which demonstrates that the proposed development is acceptable and that residential amenity would not be negatively impacted and is far preferable to the previous operation as a petrol filling station and car sales unit which would generate greater noise impacts throughout a longer period of the day. It is noted that no noise assessment has been submitted with this application.

8.6.4 The proposed hours of use are 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:00 on Saturday and 11:00 to 16:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The supporting statement indicates: “*The operating hours would be in-line with normal working hours and not extend significantly into the evening, where noise impacts would be of greater significance.*” It is accepted that these are daytime hours of use with nothing proposed for the evenings. Environmental Health have no objections to these proposed hours providing a condition is imposed to restrict the hours of use to those applied for.

8.6.5 Environmental Health also requested a condition be imposed requiring the developer to provide conspicuous signage on the exterior of their premises advertising that the surrounding area is residential and customers must limit activities which can cause a noise nuisance such as shouting, banging, leaving engines idling etc. Whilst the aim of this is to protect residents from noise, the condition does not meet the test for imposing conditions and would not be enforceable.

8.7 Increased Activity

8.7.1 The supporting statement outlines that whilst the intention is to provide 54 storage units the proposal is not thought to generate excessive vehicle trips to site on the basis users generally visit the storage units on an infrequent basis as the facility will target those in need of archive storage. It is estimated that 3-4 clients per day would visit the site. However, as no traffic assessment has been carried out and the number of trips by each individual client cannot be assessed or controlled, it is unknown whether the facility would generate an excessive number of vehicle trips. Some clients may want to access their storage a number of times per day. Whilst it is accepted that the number of trips is unlikely to exceed that of the former use as a petrol filling station, the activity would not be confined to the front of the site. The storage units are located adjacent to residential properties with access to each via internal access routes. The main access route is 2.2m wide and not intended as a vehicle access. Vehicles would park in the parking area and unload and transport the storage items either by hand or by a wheeled trolley or similar. Therefore the increase in activity would be restricted to pedestrians rather than vehicles.

8.7.2 It is considered that the increase in activity to the rear of the site would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding residential properties due to the close proximity of the storage units to residential boundaries, the number of potential visitors to the site and the proposed hours of use. The proposed hours of use include weekend use with the potential for a number of clients visiting their storage units to load/unload with the associated noise this would bring, when many existing residents are at home.

8.7.3 Additionally, there would be an increase in activity adjacent to 250 Liverpool Road where the parking and unloading area is located. Vehicles will need to park and unload their storage items which will increase the activity in this part of the site. County Highways estimate that the parking area proposed would accommodate at least 4 vehicles. The unloading could result in a number of trips to and from the storage unit, resulting in an unacceptable level of activity adjacent the residential boundary. The use of the site as a petrol filling station did allow for parking in this area but would mainly have resulted in vehicles accessing the site and going through to the petrol pumps and would not have been

the level of activity as is no proposed. Whilst it is accepted that the estimate is for 3-4 clients per day, there is nothing to control this and the level of activity could be considerably higher.

8.7.4 Environmental Health have raised no objections but require a condition be imposed, should permission be granted, to ensure the site is only used for storage with no other activity to be undertaken such as any maintenance of equipment or manufacturing as their concern is that the units would also be used for maintenance and repairs of equipment stored in the units.

8.7.5 In summary it is considered that the proposal would result in an increase in activity to the rear of the site where the storage units are to be located but this would be of a pedestrian nature. Due to the daytime hours of use proposed, this would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of the majority of the neighbouring properties and is conducive to the past use of the site as a petrol filling station. However, it is the potential for an increased level of activity to the parking and unloading area which is of concern. Due to the proximity to the residential boundary of 250 Liverpool Road and the nature of the activity, it is considered this element of the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the occupants of 250 Liverpool Road.

8.8 Lighting

8.8.1 The proposed lighting for the storage facility will be low level LED strip lighting. This location of the LED strip lighting is indicated on the Proposed Site Plan 2017_EAD_010_02 which states the lighting will be fixed to plinth of containers and operated by microwave PIR sensors. Additionally, the supporting statement indicates: *“The proposed lighting is low level LED strip lighting, removing any need for lighting poles to be erected. Furthermore, the lighting will be linked to PIR sensors meaning no light will be evident unless there is activity on site.”*

8.8.2 However, it must be noted that the site has 11 lighting columns to the north-eastern and south-western boundaries. The columns are 6m tall with 80cm wide by 18cm high 50 watt LED lights on top. The previously refused application 07/2017/0772/FUL indicated that the lighting was originally previously approved under planning permission 07/2000/0628. Although the supporting statement indicates the proposed low level LED strip lighting removes any need for lighting poles to be erected, it does not provide clarity of the existing lighting.

8.8.3 Environmental Health have only commented on lighting in terms of the imposition of a conditions requiring details of the location of the site compound and storage yard be provided as lighting of the compound has the potential to adversely affect the amenity of the local area for near-by land uses and hence the compound should be located in such a position to minimise this impact. It would be more appropriate to impose a conditions requiring the removal of the existing lighting columns prior to first use of the development, should permission be granted.

8.9 Crime and Disorder

8.9.1 Neighbouring residents considered the proposal has the potential to attract criminal activity and have raised objections. The proposal includes the re-location of a fence and gates from the western side of the existing building to the boundary with 250 Liverpool Road. Additionally, the supporting statement indicates there will be a site-specific Redcare security system. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer was consulted on this application but no response was received. It is considered that, provided the security measures are fully implemented and the site appropriately managed, there would be no greater risk of criminal activity that with any other commercial premises.

8.10 Other Issues

8.10.1 Environmental Health have commented that it is likely that the site is heavily contaminated related to its previous use as a petrol station. They have been informed by a local resident that whilst digging the foundation for an extension, contaminants (hydrocarbons) were found which may have leached from the application site. This will be investigated at a later date by the Environmental Health Department and the site owner may be required to investigate ground contaminants and if necessary undertake remediation work. However, as this proposal does not involve any intrusive ground works such as footings and the proposal retains the existing hardstanding and buildings, this is not considered an issue relevant to this planning application.

8.10.2 The proposal does not involve any new building works or changes to the existing building on the site. However, United Utilities have made comment on this application in respect of drainage. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the site should be drained on a separate system with foul water draining to the public sewer and surface water draining in the most sustainable way. The NPPG clearly outlines the hierarchy to be investigated by the developer when considering a surface water drainage strategy. UU therefore ask the applicant to consider the following drainage options in the following order of priority:

1. into the ground (infiltration);
2. to a surface water body;
3. to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
4. to a combined sewer.

8.10.3 UU also recommend the applicant implements the scheme in accordance with the surface water drainage hierarchy outlined above. Therefore, in line with these comments, UU recommend a condition is imposed should permission be granted.

8.11 Conclusion

8.11.1 Policy B1 in the South Ribble Local Plan allows for the change of use of unused land and buildings and the proposal for a change of use of the site for use as a self-storage facility on a site which was formerly a petrol filling station, then more recently used for car sales and a car wash facility would be in compliance with the aims of Policy B1. However this is dependent with the proposed use being in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and have no adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residents.

8.11.2 The planning balance to consider in this case is whether the proposed use would have a greater impact on the character and appearance of the area than the former use of the site as a petrol filling station and car sales facility. In assessing this it is considered that the proposed use would have a different impact by introducing a self-storage facility where a number of clients would visit and store items with unknown number of trips by each clients. Additionally, the existing building, forecourt and canopy are to remain as existing and therefore the cumulative impact of two separate uses on the site would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area.

8.11.3 Although only a limited view of the storage units would be available from Liverpool Road, on balance it is considered that the proposal to introduce metal shipping containers for use as a storage facility would not be conducive to this residential area and this is exacerbated by part of the site remaining unaltered and remaining in its current use. The cumulative impact is considered to result in an unacceptable level of harm to the area, contrary to Policy G17.

8.11.4 A further consideration is the balance between the proposal and the existing use of the site on residential amenity. It is considered that the proposal would result in an increase

in activity to the rear of the site where the storage units are to be located, albeit of a pedestrian nature. Due to the hours of use proposed, the proximity of the storage units to residential boundaries and the increase in activity in this area, it is considered this would be detrimental to the residential amenity of the majority of the neighbouring properties around the site. Additionally, the increased level of activity to the parking and unloading area, due to its proximity to the residential boundary of 250 Liverpool Road and the nature of the activity in this location, it is considered this element of the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the occupants of 250 Liverpool Road.

8.11.5 In summary, the application is considered contrary to Core Strategy Policy 17 and Policy B1 and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan and is recommended for refusal.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Refusal

10. Reasons

1. The proposal, by virtue of the introduction of metal shipping containers for use as a storage facility, would not be conducive to the residential area in which the application site is located. A view of the application proposal would be afforded in the wider street scene of Liverpool Road which would result in an unacceptable level of harm to the character of the area, contrary to Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan.

2. It is considered that the proposal would result in an increased level of activity to the parking and unloading area adjacent and in close proximity to the residential boundary of 250 Liverpool Road which would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the occupants of 250 Liverpool Road, contrary to Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan.

3. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties by virtue of the proposed use adjacent to residential boundaries resulting in noise and disturbance, contrary to Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan.