



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 4 February 2026

Site visit made on 5 February 2026

by **Henry Jones BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd February 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001158

Land east of former Swainson Farm, Goosnargh Lane, Preston PR3 2JU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Gillian Wells, Thomas Swarbrick and Lynn Johnson against the decision of Preston City Council.
 - The application Ref is 06/2025/0182.
 - The development proposed is outline planning application for a residential development comprising up to 95 dwellings (access to be considered and all other matters reserved).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

Site ownership, certification and notification

2. On the planning application and appeal forms the appellants declared that they were the sole owners of the site. However, it has since transpired that this is not the case - McDermott Homes own a part of it.
3. I have no reason to conclude that this error has been borne out of a calculated or reckless disregard of the statutory notification and certification processes. The appellants have taken action to remedy the matter since by serving notice on McDermott Homes, formally notifying them of the appeal. Furthermore, the evidence before me indicates to me that McDermott Homes were already aware of the planning application and the appeal in any case. As a result, McDermott Homes have not been prejudiced by the procedural error, and I have no reason to conclude that any interested parties have been the subject of any procedural unfairness because of the error either. Consequently, I am satisfied that the appeal can proceed.

Late evidence

4. Before the hearing, I requested some further evidence and subsequently received the following:
 - Policy HS4 of the Preston Local Plan 2012-2026 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (the PLP)
 - A Cottam Hall Properties Ltd statement¹

¹ Statement by Savills on behalf of Cottam Hall Properties Ltd (Representor ID A16), dated November 2025

- A Major Hazardous Pipeline position note²
 - A CIL compliance statement³
5. This evidence was requested to provide me with further clarity, and to assist me in making my decision. As a result, I have had regard to it, even though it was submitted beyond normal timescales.
 6. I also received the following evidence before the hearing opened but beyond normal timescales:
 - A representation from David Price⁴
 - A planning committee report⁵
 - An education assessment⁶
 7. Evidence before me indicates to me that efforts were made to submit the representation on time but there was a technical issue, and the document was received slightly late. The main appeal parties were given ample time ahead of the hearing to familiarise themselves with the submission.
 8. The planning committee report was composed for a planning committee to be held on 5 February 2026. It is material to the appeal as it provides an updated position in relation to a site which has a bearing on my conclusions on housing land supply, and it could not have been submitted in evidence earlier. Later, after the hearing, I received confirmation⁷ of the committee's decision to grant approval for the reserved matters.
 9. The education assessment is material: it provides an up-to-date position on the implications of the development on school capacity. Before the hearing opened, the appellants confirmed that they had no objections to its submission.
 10. In the circumstances, it is procedurally fair that I accept the representation, the planning committee report and the education assessment as further evidence.
 11. During the hearing, the appellants submitted an appeal decision⁸ (the Shropshire Decision). It is relevant to the appeal as it partly concerns the approach to establishing an annual housing requirement figure, an issue I cover in my other matters. I adjourned the hearing to enable the Council the opportunity to consider the Shropshire Decision, and I required both the Council⁹ and the appellants¹⁰ to devise position notes outlining their views on the content of the Shropshire Decision and its implications for the appeal before me (the Council's Housing Position Note and the Appellants' Housing Position Note). Through these processes, I am satisfied that appeal parties have had the opportunity to consider the Shropshire Decision and that it is procedurally fair to accept it as late evidence.

² Response to Inspector's Pre-Hearing Note – Position re: Major Hazardous Pipeline

³ Community Infrastructure Levy Compliance Statement

⁴ Representations regarding Land East of Swainson Farm – APP/6001158, by David Price, dated 30 November 2025

⁵ Report to Planning Committee ref 06/2025/0637 - Land south of Bartle Lane, Lower Bartle, Preston PR4 0RU

⁶ Education Contribution Assessment, by Lancashire County Council, dated 11 December 2025

⁷ Email of 6 February 2026 confirming a planning committee decision to grant approval for reserved matters application ref 06/2025/0637 - Land south of Bartle Lane, Lower Bartle, Preston PR4 0RU

⁸ Appeal Decision APP/L3245/W/25/3362414 - Land to the east of Tilstock Road, Tilstock, Shropshire

⁹ Preston City Council Response to Appeal Provided in Respect of Updating Supply by the Appellant

¹⁰ Emery Planning note re. Local housing need (LHN) calculated using the Standard Method (SM), dated 4 February 2026

12. A Statement of Common Ground (the SoCG) was also handed to me during the hearing. The main appeal parties made it clear to me their views that it was agreed, signed and submitted ahead of the hearing, and although I had not seen it before, I have no reason to disagree. Therefore, I have had regard to the SoCG in making my decision.

Emerging Plan

13. The Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041 is an emerging plan (the Emerging Plan). The SoCG explains that the Emerging Plan is in the process of being examined, that hearings commenced on 2 December 2025 but they have not all been completed, and that the Emerging Plan remains the subject of unresolved objections. In the circumstances, the Council and the appellants consider very limited weight can be afforded to the Emerging Plan at this time, and I have no reason to disagree.

Scope of the development

14. Outline planning permission is sought. Access is included for consideration at the outline stage, the matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are all reserved for future consideration.
15. The detail of the access included for consideration at this outline stage is shown on the proposed access plan¹¹, and this depicts the site's access junction with Goosnargh Lane. An illustrative site layout¹² has also been submitted. At the hearing, it was confirmed that where this illustrative site layout depicts circulation routes via estate roads, pavements and footpaths these are indicative only rather than definitive access proposals. Clearly, with access being the only detailed matter included for consideration at this stage, where the illustrative site layout depicts the likes of the layout of the houses, an indication of their size and the provision of landscaping, this is for indicative purposes only.

Main Issue

16. The main issue is whether the site provides a suitable location for the development, having particular regard to the development plan's spatial strategy.

Reasons

17. Most of the site is an agricultural field, and it is on this part of the site that the illustrative site layout depicts the housing. However, the site also includes an access point with Goosnargh Lane and land leading from it which is to form the road layout serving a residential development currently under construction. Whilst the site is located on the fringes of the village of Goosnargh, it is common ground that it is outside of the village's boundary and within open countryside as designated by the PLP Policies Map.
18. The Council's reason for refusal cites conflict with PLP Policy EN1 and Policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Adopted Core Strategy, July 2012 (the CS). The SoCG confirms that it is common ground that these Policies are the most important in the determination of the appeal, and I have no reason to disagree.

¹¹ Proposed Access Plan J1062 access fig 1 Rev C

¹² Illustrative Masterplan Site Layout 01 2393GWP/SFG/IM01 Rev A

19. CS Policy 1 is entitled 'Locating Growth'. It establishes a strategy which seeks to ensure that levels of growth and investment are appropriate for, and proportionate to, the locations where it is proposed. CS Policy 1 therefore seeks to manage growth and investment in alignment with a hierarchy of settlements and strategic sites. The hierarchy is made up of 6 broad locations (a – f). Towards the top are the largest settlements and locations deemed most appropriate for concentrating development such as the Preston/South Ribble Urban Area and the defined Key Service Centres like Leyland/Farlington. At the bottom of the hierarchy (f) are 'other places', and it is common ground that Goosnargh village itself falls within this part of the hierarchy. Within these 'other places', CS Policy 1 sets out that development will typically be small-scale and limited to appropriate infilling, comprise the conversion of buildings, and proposals which meet local need, unless there are exceptional reasons for larger scale redevelopment schemes.
20. Firstly, although adjacent to Goosnargh, the site is not located within a settlement but in the countryside. For this reason alone, there is discord with CS Policy 1. Furthermore, proposing up to 95 dwellings on a site covering 4.35 hectares, the development is a significant one which is clearly not small-scale infill development, whilst it is not a conversion or a scheme dedicated to meeting particular local needs. Therefore, it does not constitute one of the typical forms of development which CS Policy 1 sets out to be appropriate within 'other places'. The development conflicts with CS Policy 1 as a result.
21. PLP Policy EN1 relates to the open countryside. It limits development in the countryside to particular purposes, including development related to agriculture and rural exception affordable housing. PLP Policy EN1 complements the strategy of CS Policy 1 by minimising the level of development which can take place in rural locations. Since the site is within the open countryside and the development constitutes none of its cited forms of permissible development the proposal conflicts with PLP Policy EN1.
22. Indeed, the appellants have acknowledged that the development is contrary to CS Policy 1 and PLP Policy EN1 – this is confirmed within the submitted SoCG.
23. Furthermore, the degree to which the development conflicts with the spatial strategy is a significant one. The key factors I have outlined above - Goosnargh being at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy (even with recent growth), the site being in the countryside rather than being within the village itself, and the significant scale of the development - together mean that the proposal is markedly at odds with how the development plan's spatial strategy seeks to manage the pattern of development and growth.
24. For these reasons, the site does not provide a suitable location for the development - it fundamentally conflicts with the development plan's spatial strategy.

Other Matters

Housing Land Supply

25. The process of establishing whether a Council has a 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS) consists of establishing on the one hand the requirement for housing land over the relevant 5-year period and, on the other, the supply of deliverable

sites to meet that requirement. The housing land supply matters in dispute relate to both elements.

Requirement

26. CS Policy 4 sets out a housing requirement figure for Preston. However, since Policy 4 is more than 5 years old, in accordance with paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the 5YHLS demonstration should be based on a requirement figure set by the local housing need assessment for the area. This involves utilising a standard method set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) chapter 'Housing and economic needs assessment'. This is based on a formula that incorporates a baseline of local housing stock which is then adjusted upwards to reflect local affordability pressures to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for.
27. Paragraph 78 of the Framework places an annual requirement on local planning authorities to identify its 5YHLS against their housing requirement. It does not establish a greater than annual requirement.
28. The PPG¹³ sets out that for decision-taking purposes, and in order to demonstrate a 5YHLS, local authorities can use the latest available evidence such as a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, or an Authority Monitoring Report. This is not an exhaustive list, but each example of available evidence relates to an evidence-based assessment a Council would produce following the garnering and processing of information from various sources. To this end, the Council produced a Housing Land Position of March 2025¹⁴, and it relies on it to evidence its requirement for housing land over the relevant 5-year period and its supply of deliverable sites to meet it. This sets out an annual requirement of 620 dwellings inclusive of a requisite 5% buffer.
29. The Appellants' Housing Position Note sets out that the annual requirement of 620 was correct at the point in time the Housing Land Position of March 2025 was published. However, the appellants set out that since that time new estimates of housing stock and updated affordability ratios have been published and that, factoring these into the calculation, the requirement has risen from 620 to 664 per annum.
30. Neither the Framework nor the PPG demand that a local planning authority identify its 5YHLS against its housing requirement more often than annually. On this basis, it is appropriate that any new estimates of housing stock (usually published in May) and any updated affordability ratios (usually published in March) are factored into calculating the minimum annual local housing need figure when it publishes its next annual 5YHLS position. Since the annual requirement figure of 620 aligns with the processes for establishing one set out in the Framework and the PPG, my view is that it is a robust figure.
31. That said, the appellants, supported by the findings of the Inspector in the Shropshire Decision, presents a compelling case that if more up-to-date housing stock and affordability ratio data is available, it should not be disregarded simply because national policy does not mandate that Councils identify 5YHLS positions

¹³ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 004 Reference ID: 68-004-20241212

¹⁴ Housing Land Position At 31st March 2025 by Preston City Council

against its housing requirement more frequently. I can certainly see the credence in the approach that if it is known that more up-to-date data exists, then making periodic adjustments to the annual requirement figure is an appropriate course of action.

32. Therefore, I have before me an uppermost annual requirement figure of 664, advocated by the appellants, and a lowermost figure of 620 which the Council stands by. The reasons will become clear in my decision why it is not necessary for me in this case to definitively determine what the annual requirement figure is.

Disputed sites

33. *Land at Bartle* – this is a large site with outline planning permission for 1,100 homes with 4 zones (A-D). A reserved matters application is pending for zone D, comprising of 229 dwellings. Progression towards approving the reserved matters application is advanced: it was proposed to make the February 2026 planning committee agenda but, due to the agenda size, this did not materialise. Such progression leads me to conclude that zone D is deliverable.
34. No reserved matters applications have been submitted for housing on the remaining zones, and I have no evidence that conditions have, or are in the process of, being discharged either. The Council submit that advanced discussions have been held with a housebuilder in relation to zone C, which is earmarked for 178 homes. However, altogether, the evidence before me of firm progress in respect to the submission of the reserved matters and even site assessment work is unconvincing. Evidence of the progression of zones A and B is even more limited, with no suggestion that a developer is on board.
35. For these reasons, zone D is the only part of the site I consider to be deliverable. Given zone D's reserved matters application is still pending, and conditions would need discharging, the prospect of the site delivering 99 homes in Year 2 (2026 – 2027) is unrealistic in my view. However, at the hearing, the Council stated on more than one occasion that build-out rates in this part of the District are strong, and I have no reason to conclude otherwise. I have no good reason to think the entirety of zone D could not be delivered in the next 5 years. Therefore, I consider that this site would make a 229-dwelling contribution to the 5-year supply.
36. *Former Whittingham Hospital, remainder of the site* - a reserved matters application for 477 dwellings was approved in October 2025, providing the site with detailed planning permission for this quantum of development. Some pre-commencement conditions have been discharged as well. There is no clear evidence that homes would not be delivered on the site within 5 years and, at the hearing, the appellants accepted it would make a contribution to supply in the next 5 years.
37. The Council submit this site's greatest contribution to 5-year supply would come in Year 2 (2026 – 2027) with the delivery of 33 homes. However, with Year 2 set to commence shortly and some pre-commencement conditions still to discharge, I anticipate some slippage to be quite likely, but I have no good reason to think it would be as significant as the appellant and that a deduction from the Council's 5-year contribution of 126 by as much as 31 is appropriate. Therefore, it seems sensible to me to take a midpoint. Adopting this approach means that this site would deliver 111 homes in the next 5 years.

38. *Land south of Bartle Lane* – this site involves a hybrid planning permission. It has full planning permission for 80 homes and, just after the hearing closed, I received confirmation that a reserved matters application for a further 108 was approved at planning committee. Therefore, the site has detailed planning permission for 188 homes. There is no clear evidence that homes would not be delivered on the site within 5 years and, at the hearing, the appellant accepted it would make a contribution of 135 units to the next 5 years supply.
39. I have no evidence that any houses have started to be constructed, no substantive evidence of the readiness of the developer(s) to start, neither have I any substantive evidence in respect of conditions being discharged. The delivery of 15 homes by the end March this year is not realistic, this would take the site's 5-year contribution down to 173. However, taking a further 38 off, the equivalent of the whole of the year 5 (2029-2030) contribution in the Council's trajectory is also without a compelling basis. Some delivery is likely during Year 2 but, given it seems work is still to do to enable this, I don't expect it to be at the beginning of it and some further limitation on the Council's submission of 40 homes for that year is appropriate in the circumstances. A midpoint between 135 and 173 is 154 and, in my view, this is a sensible figure to settle on.
40. *Former Cottam Brickworks* – this site has a hybrid planning permission in place, but the residential element of it is in outline. No reserved matters applications have been submitted and no conditions in relation to the housing have been discharged. Some pre-application discussions have taken place. However, these have been with the landowner's agent on broad principles for the housing - no developer is on board yet. Overall, the evidence of progression towards even the submission of the reserved matters is limited, likewise there is no firm evidence of a developer's progression with bringing the site forward for housing. There is not clear evidence that housing completions on this site will begin within 5 years, therefore, it makes no contribution to the 5-year supply.
41. *Land rear of Maitland House, Maitland Street* - this comprises of a modest development of just 13 homes. It has full planning permission, and the Council have submitted that the 13 dwellings are built, or at least largely so, and there is no firm evidence before me to suggest the planning permission is not extant. There remains a dispute surrounding a CIL payment/exemption issue, however, I have no reason to conclude this matter cannot be resolved. At the hearing, and in such circumstances, the appellant accepted this site would make a 13-unit contribution to the 5-year supply.

Conclusion on housing land supply

42. The Council's position, evidenced by its Housing Land Position of March 2025, is that the 5 disputed sites would contribute a total of 1,010 dwellings to its 5YHLS. My analysis on the deliverability of these sites and their likely contribution to supply is that this figure should be quite considerably reduced. I have arrived at a figure of a total contribution of 507 dwellings.
43. This results in a reduction in the overall 5YHLS to 3655. Set against the lower housing requirement figure of 620 dwellings per annum this supply figure equates to 5.9 years' worth of supply. Against the upper requirement figure of 664, there is 5.5 years' worth of supply. I return to the implications of this in my planning balance.

Planning Obligations

44. Following the close of the hearing, I received a completed Section 106 agreement¹⁵. The purposes of the Section 106 agreement are in part to secure the provision of affordable housing and public open space within the development. It is also to secure financial contributions towards bus services, any necessary school expansion, and the monitoring of biodiversity net-gain land and employment and skills provisions.
45. The CIL compliance statement adequately sets out sufficient justification for the majority of the obligations: the affordable housing, the public open space and the financial contributions towards bus services, schools and employment and skills provisions. It does so by setting out the relevant planning basis for them with references to applicable planning policies and calculation methodologies. As a result, I am satisfied that these particular obligations would be necessary to make the development acceptable, are directly related to the development, and are fairly and reasonably related in scale and in kind to the development. Therefore, these particular Section 106 obligations satisfy the tests for planning obligations set out at paragraph 58 of the Framework and at Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (the CIL Regulations).
46. However, my conclusions on the monitoring of the biodiversity net gain land differ, and I cover the reasons why in my biodiversity section below.

Locational accessibility credentials

47. Occupiers of the development would benefit from access to some bus services and, for a modest rural settlement, Goosnargh has a reasonable array of facilities within a walkable distance including a primary school, shops and a village hall and there is some access to sources of employment.
48. Nevertheless, its accessibility credentials are relative. For a settlement of its size and rural location they are satisfactory, but Goosnargh is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy. The development would result in significant housing growth taking place in a location which the development plan's spatial strategy, devised in the context of the whole of Preston and beyond, deems inappropriate.
49. Therefore, the site's locational accessibility credentials do not weigh in the proposal's favour.

Character and appearance

50. The proposal would entail the development of agricultural land within the open countryside, and some transformative effects of the site would ensue as a result of it becoming built-upon. However, the SoCG confirms, amongst other matters, that the main appeal parties are in agreement that the site is not distinctive in landscape terms, does not have notable landscape value in terms of character and appearance and that the development would not adversely affect important views towards or out of the settlement. It also sets out that, at this outline stage, and subject to its necessary refinement at the reserved matters and discharge of condition stages, the development would have a neutral impact on the landscape character of the area and visual amenity.

¹⁵ Section 106 agreement dated 11 February 2025

51. The submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal¹⁶ sets out that the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (the NL) is located approximately 3.75km away from the site. National Landscapes have the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty, and a statutory duty¹⁷ requires me to seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the NL. At the hearing, I posed questions in relation to the effects of the development upon the NL, and no assertions of any harm to its special qualities were made. Given all that is before me, I have no reason to disagree, and I am satisfied that the development would conserve the natural beauty of the NL.
52. Given this, and the rest of the evidence before me, it is clear that the Council's case is not asserting that the development would harm the character or appearance of the area, and I do not have compelling reasons to come to a different conclusion. However, overall, neither would the development result in beneficial effects, and the development's impacts in relation to the character and appearance of the area would not weigh in favour of the appeal proposal.

Benefits

Housing

53. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes. In this context, and with up to 95 homes proposed, the boost to the general supply of housing would be very valuable. This is the case even though I have found that the Council can demonstrate in excess of 5 years' worth of housing supply.
54. The development would provide a choice of housing in the area and, as a part of this, a policy compliant 35% of the development would be affordable homes. The need for affordable housing across Preston overall is clear and pressing.
55. Therefore, the benefit which would be derived from the housing is a substantial one, and the benefit which weighs the most in the proposal's favour.

Biodiversity

56. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment¹⁸ sets out that, although the proposal would deliver a greater than 10% net gain on-site in respect of hedgerow and watercourse units, a loss would result in habitat units. Therefore, off-site biodiversity enhancements are proposed in order to achieve the 10% net gain objective introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the statutory BNG).
57. The obligations of the Section 106 agreement do not secure the delivery of the off-site biodiversity enhancements. At the hearing, the main appeal parties submitted to me that a Section 106 agreement, completed prior to the grant of planning permission, need not secure the off-site enhancements. It was asserted that later, the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition, which would be statutorily imposed on any planning permission granted, would permit this to be secured.

¹⁶ Landscape and Visual Appraisal Report, by ReLandscape, referenced 325-REL-XX-XX-RP-L-3/01, dated 30 January 2025

¹⁷ Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

¹⁸ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, by Project Ecology, referenced PE.1768, dated 12 December 2024

58. I am unconvinced. Certainly, for any on-site biodiversity gains, I accept that the determination of the Biodiversity Gain Plan would be the appropriate mechanism to achieve the 10% net gain objective. However, when off-site gains are being relied upon, the appropriate means to secure this would be via a Section 106 agreement completed before planning permission is granted. Therefore, I am not satisfied that the off-site biodiversity enhancements have been secured.
59. As a consequence of this, it has not been demonstrated that the Section 106's obligation seeking to secure a financial contribution towards the monitoring of the off-site biodiversity gain land is directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and in kind to the development. In effect, this obligation requires a financial contribution to go towards monitoring land which the planning permission does not control is for biodiversity net gain purposes. As a result, I find this particular planning obligation would fail to satisfy the tests for planning obligations set out at paragraph 58 of the Framework and at Regulation 122 the CIL Regulations.
60. These matters said, I am also mindful that the statutory BNG has been principally designed as a post-permission matter. The PPG makes clear that it is generally inappropriate for decision makers to refuse a proposal on the grounds that the biodiversity gain objective will not be met. Reflective of it being principally a post-permission matter, the statutory BNG's minimum information requirements do not necessitate that post-development biodiversity values accompany a planning application. Therefore, decision makers should consider more broadly whether the biodiversity gain condition is capable of being successfully discharged.
61. The off-site enhancement approach is that being advanced by the proposal. It would likely offer greater flexibility for the layout of the housing development on the site itself. However, that is not to say that through the reserved matters, and through the devising of a Biodiversity Gain Plan, an on-site scheme could not be achieved which would meet the 10% net gain objective. A grant of planning permission, with the statutorily imposed pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition, would place a requirement on the development to achieve it.
62. Therefore, whilst I have concerns with the means advanced to me to achieve the 10% biodiversity net gain, this does not mean that it could not ultimately be achieved. Furthermore, taking this approach, I also accept that the achievement of the 10% biodiversity net gain would be a benefit of the scheme, but the weight I attribute to it is somewhat tempered because the means by which it would be achieved, and the ability for the development to achieve anything over 10%, has not been clearly demonstrated to me.

Economic factors

63. The development would create construction jobs and benefit supply chains. Through the devising of a detailed employment and skills plan, which could be ensured through the imposition of a condition, measures to support and foster employment opportunities and learning would be ensured. The development would support local services, facilities and businesses. Although each of these are not precisely quantified, given the scale of the construction process and the number of houses which would be introduced to the area I nevertheless fully expect that these benefits would, overall, be significant.

Other benefits

64. The Section 106 agreement secures public open space and play facilities on the site. This could be accessed for recreational purposes by existing local residents as well as the site occupiers. It is also proposed that the reserved matters would ensure footpath connections to the existing public footpath network in the area which would benefit walkers.
65. The Section 106 agreement also secures a financial contribution to support and maintain local bus services. This would provide some security for Goosnargh's bus services which would benefit existing residents as well as those who would occupy the development.
66. The financial contributions towards increasing school capacity are to be the subject of review, with regard had in the future to the most up-to-date position on school capacity. Assuming that there would be insufficient capacity in local schools to cater for the development, the financial contributions which would then be required would principally mitigate the effects of the increase in the school age population arising from the development. That said, any school expansion which would materialise would entail improvements to the school buildings and infrastructure which, overall, would therefore result in a benefit to pupils more widely.
67. These each constitute further modest benefits of the development.

Other cited appeal decisions and developments

68. My attention has been drawn to a number of other appeal decisions as well as some other housing developments determined by the Council.
69. Appeal decisions rely heavily on case-specific evidence and circumstances. Not all of the evidence which will have been before the Inspectors or the Council in making those decisions is before me. Furthermore, while some broad comparisons can be drawn between the appeal proposal and the cited developments, they also have their distinct features which mean that they are not fully comparable.
70. For instance, the permission in principle the Council granted on land also off Goosnargh Lane¹⁹ was for only 2 dwellings. Although a more major development than that, the development allowed in the Broughton appeal²⁰ proposed nearly half the number of houses that the proposal before me seeks. Given such distinguishing factors, it does not follow that I should come to the same conclusions in respect to matters like the degree to which there would or would not be discord with the development plan's spatial strategy. The schemes at Nantwich²¹, Winterley²² and Alfreton²³ relate to sites in different parts of the country, involved settlements which will have their distinctive characteristics and which were considered in the light of different development plans to that which is before me.

¹⁹ Application reference 06/2025/0487 - Land south of Goosnargh Lane, Goosnargh, Preston PR3 2JU

²⁰ Appeal Decision APP/N2345/W/23/3330709 - Land West of Garstang Road, Broughton, Preston PR3 5JJ

²¹ Appeal Decisions APP/R0660/A/13/2197532 - Land off Audlem Road/Broad Lane, Stapeley, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 and APP/R0660/A/13/2197529 - Land off Peter Destapeleigh Way, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7

²² Appeal Decision APP/R0660/W/20/3251104 - Land off Crewe Road, Winterley

²³ Appeal Decision APP/M1005/W/24/3343782 - Land west of Chesterfield Road, Alfreton DE55 7AH

71. I have also had regard to the previous appeal decisions at this site²⁴ and that adjacent²⁵. Although the 5YHLS position differs now, my planning balance draws together the reasons why I consider I should again dismiss a housing development on this site. Importantly, the visual improvements to the approach to Goosnargh, which the Inspector found would arise from the development on the adjacent land, were a decisive factor for him, and they do not apply to the scheme before me.
72. I have therefore reached my conclusions based on the evidence before me, and the particular site-specific circumstances of this appeal.

Further other matters

73. Whether a local finance consideration can be considered material to a decision will depend on whether it could help make the development acceptable in planning terms. It is inappropriate to make a decision based on the potential for a development to raise money for a local authority or other government body. Whilst the appellants refer to the New Homes Bonus and Council tax revenue the development would generate, it is not clear to me how this is relevant to the planning merits of the development. Therefore, these matters do not weigh in the proposal's favour.
74. Farm buildings have been demolished because of redevelopment in the area, and the site may now be somewhat divorced from other agricultural holding land. However, it has a crop on it now, and it can still be accessed. Therefore, I have no compelling evidence that it is redundant and cannot serve an agricultural purpose in the future. Even if the efficiency and effectiveness of utilising the site for agricultural purposes has been somewhat compromised this does not mean that the development should come forward.
75. The SoCG refers to a number of technical matters and other planning considerations. These make it clear to me that the main appeal parties are agreed that the development would not, amongst a range of other matters, result in the loss of best or most versatile agricultural land, result in unacceptable effects on the local road network or increases in flood risks in the area. However, the absence of harm in relation to these and other matters is of neutral consequence.
76. The appellants have drawn issue with the manner in which the Council handled the planning application, citing delays in its determination and inconsistencies in its consideration of the merits of the case. However, I must determine the appeal on its planning merits, upon which these matters have limited bearing.

Planning Balance

77. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 12 of the Framework sets out that where a proposal conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not usually be granted.
78. In my main issue, I have found that the development conflicts with CS Policy 1 and PLP Policy EN1. In doing so, the proposal would result in a development

²⁴ Appeal Decision APP/N2345/W/20/3258898 - Land at Swainson Farm, Goosnargh Lane, Goosnargh, Preston Lancashire

²⁵ Appeal Decision APP/N2345/W/20/3258896 - Land at Swainson Farm, Goosnargh Lane, Goosnargh, Preston Lancashire

markedly at odds with how the development plan's spatial strategy seeks to manage the pattern of development and growth. Therefore, the site does not provide a suitable location for the development. CS Policy 1 and PLP Policy EN1 are the most important development plan policies in the determination of the appeal and, since the proposal is in such conflict with them, conflict arises with the development plan as a whole.

79. In terms of the 5YHLS position, I have concluded that the Council has 5.5 years' worth of supply set against the upper requirement figure and 5.9 years' worth against the lower. In excess of 5 years' supply therefore exists in either scenario. Given the 5YHLS position, the most important development plan policies in the determination of the appeal should not be treated as being out-of-date. They are not out-of-date for any other reason either, a matter the main parties acknowledged at the hearing. Therefore, paragraph 11d) of the Framework is not engaged.
80. The development would bring with it clear benefits, most significant of all of them the boost to housing supply and choice, including its affordable housing contribution.
81. However, the development's benefits are not of sufficient weight to override the fundamental conflict with the development plan's spatial strategy and the conflict with the development plan as a whole which results from this. This is the case applying either of the 5YHLS positions I have outlined.

Conclusion

82. The development conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Jones

INSPECTOR

Appearances

For the appellant:

Gillian Wells	Appellant
Helen Leggett	Associate Director at Emery Planning

For the local planning authority:

Fiona Clarke	Principal Planning Officer
Carolyn Williams	Planning Policy Manager

Interested Persons:

David Price	Local resident
Tony Ingham	Local resident

Documents submitted at the hearing

From the appellant:

1. Appeal Decision APP/L3245/W/25/3362414 - Land to the east of Tilstock Road, Tilstock, Shropshire
2. Emery Planning note re. Local housing need (LHN) calculated using the Standard Method (SM), dated 4 February 2026
3. Statement of Common Ground

From the Council:

1. Preston City Council Response to Appeal Provided in Respect of Updating Supply by the Appellant

Documents submitted after the hearing closed

From the appellant:

1. Section 106 agreement, dated 11 February 2025

From the Council:

1. Email of 6 February 2026 confirming a planning committee decision to grant approval for reserved matters application ref 06/2025/0637 - Land south of Bartle Lane, Lower Bartle, Preston, PR4 0RU