

COMMITTEE DATE: [01/12/2015](#)

Application Reference: **15/0457**

WARD: Clifton
DATE REGISTERED: 23/07/15
LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION: Protected School Playing Fields/Grounds
Neighbourhood action plans

APPLICATION TYPE: Outline Planning Permission
APPLICANT: The Co-operative Group

PROPOSAL: Erection of a residential development comprising up to 54 dwelling houses, utilising existing access and including car parking and associated works, following demolition of existing buildings (outline proposal).

LOCATION: CO-OPERATIVE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB, PRESTON NEW ROAD, BLACKPOOL, FY4 4RE

Summary of Recommendation: Agree in principle and delegate approval to the Head of Development Management

CASE OFFICER

Ms Pippa Greenway

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

In this instance, whilst policies relating to the retention of playing fields and the strong objection from Sport England would suggest that the proposal should be refused; there are other material considerations, such as the lack of need for this playing field facility; the financial contributions to improving sporting facilities at Common Edge Road; the financial contribution to affordable housing within the Inner Area and the Government's drive to encourage housebuilding that outweigh those objections.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is owned by The Co-operative Group (TCG) and is broadly rectangular in shape. It comprises a single storey brick built former social club with parking at the front; with disused sports pitches to the rear (a football pitch of 0.6 ha and two bowling greens' 0.3 ha) and a sports pavilion. The social club closed in July 2013 as it was no longer financially viable. Despite the pitches being available for private play until the social club closed in July 2013 they had not been used for several years prior to that. The site extends to 3.9 acres (1.6 hectares) and is situated approximately two miles south-east of Blackpool town centre, within the predominantly residential suburb of Marton. It is located on a main route into Blackpool from the M55, and is served by a single vehicular access point from Preston New Road.

Well established residential areas are situated to the east, south and west of the site including Ribchester Avenue, Catforth Avenue and Devona Avenue. The site is bounded to the north by A583 Preston New Road and the rear of an ATS Euromaster car servicing workshop and an HSS hire shop

to the western half of the site's northern boundary. There are several bulky goods retail units opposite the site, across Preston New Road.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the erection of a residential development of up to 54 dwelling houses, utilising the existing (widened access) and including car parking and associated works, following demolition of existing buildings. The proposals are in outline with all matters reserved with the exception of access from Preston New Road. The application seeks to establish the principle of residential development (Use Class C3) on this site with the layout, type, size and appearance of dwellings to be determined at the detailed design/Reserved Matters (RM) stage.

The proposal is supported by the following documents:

- Day Time (Dec 14) and Nocturnal (Jun 15) Bat Survey
- Design and Access Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Geo-Environmental Desk Study Report
- Independent Financial Viability Appraisal (IFVA) (CONFIDENTIAL)
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Planning Statement
- Pre-Development Arboricultural Survey
- Preliminary Ecology Assessment
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- Transport Statement

Heads of Terms for a Section 106 is to be submitted during the course of the application, to secure financial contributions towards replacement sporting facilities and affordable housing.

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

The main planning issues are considered to be:

- Principle of the loss of playing field
- Housing Issues
- Development Viability
- Design and Amenity
- Highway Safety
- Parking and Servicing Arrangements
- Other Issues

CONSULTATIONS

Environment Agency: The Environment Agency has no comment to make.

Head of Transportation: No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the update note.

Head of Environmental Services: No comments have been received at the time of preparing this report. Any comments that are received before the Committee meeting will be reported in the update note.

Contaminated Land Officer: Requests a Desk Top Study to be submitted. This has been submitted and any further comments will be reported on the update note.

United Utilities: Recommends conditions regarding surface water drainage and states that a water main will be needed to serve the site.

Sport England: Originally submitted a Statutory objection, which was subsequently revised to: To conclude I wish to maintain the objection as there is insufficient evidence still that this can meet any aspect of our policy, even if some weight is attributed to the Council's 'draft' Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Given that this site was a not an insubstantial sports ground in its day containing a pavilion with changing rooms, double bowling green site and a senior football pitch, the financial contribution offered is minimal given the range of facilities previously open at the site.

It seems likely, although the independent evidence has not been submitted, this application will not trigger our statutory role (as the sports facilities had not been used for five years prior to the application) in which case we could be amenable to negotiating a commuted sum as a contribution to help resolve deficits identified. For information Sport England's own figures for new sports facilities developed from our own experience and to support our national lottery investment state provision of the following facilities would equate to:

Two team changing pavilion and club house = £275,000

One bowling green = £125,000

One senior natural turf football pitch = £75,000

(Figures as of quarter 1 2015).

In light of the above, Sport England objects to the proposal because is not considered to accord with any of the exceptions in Sport England's playing fields policy.

Head of Leisure and Catering Services: Our view hasn't changed on this piece of land. A new football season has started with no team attached to this pitch. As mentioned by Sport England our Play Pitch Strategy (PPS) is out of date and requires updating. We were aware of this and have engaged KKP Consultants to commission a new PPS. When completed, the PPS will set out our grass sport provision and our requirements. Sport England might change their view once they have sight of the new document. The PPS won't be completed until early next year.

Lancashire Football Association: Having spoken to Blackpool Council officers responsible for parks and leisure services I can confirm that Lancashire Football Association would not object to the development proposal. We would however expect that this is subject to payment of a Section 106 sum in contribution [£100,000] towards the development of existing playing pitches and changing facilities, one such venue being Common Edge Playing fields.

Head of Property and Asset Management: I refer to the Independent Financial Viability Appraisal (IFVA) in respect of the Preston New Road proposals and conclude that it was a fair assessment of the value of the site for residential redevelopment. My only comment would be that some of the comparison second hand properties in Swift Close etc. have a value that is compromised by the flooding issues, however, the new prices predicted bear a close relationship to other new properties with the Blackpool area.

PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Press notice published: 06 August 2015

Site notice displayed: 31 July 2015

Neighbours notified: 24 July 2015

Objections received from 26 Catforth Avenue and 19 Devona Avenue:

- The site has historically been a recreation area for Blackpool in an area where elderly residents have no other amenity. The Co-operative which has many members and ex-employees in the area should be considering a socially responsible solution for the site rather than looking at it as a part solution to their self-imposed financial problems.
- Such a development will make the area into a huge faceless, graceless, nameless welcome to what is apparently the third poorest town in the UK rather than being a prestigious fun centre. And the close proximity of the proposed site entrance to Ribchester Avenue will create a dangerous interchange at busy times, particularly for eastbound traffic on the dual carriageway where there is no filter lane. Also the area should have an identifiable centre to give some semblance of character to any development.
- There are plenty of houses available for sale in estate agent windows so another 54 houses is of no benefit to the town other than being an additional council tax cash cow. Have school places and class sizes been considered?
- The area is green historically and if the area is to breathe it should not be turned into concrete jungle especially when the council have so many well supported recycling initiatives in operation.
- These properties will be overlooking my property which will mean I will have a loss of privacy.
- The area has some beautiful trees which border my property, there is also quite a lot of wildlife and birds in the area.
- My property is currently not overlooked and the area is very quiet. 54 dwellings could cause an increase in noise and disturbance.

These issues are addressed in the assessment section of the report.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF defines “*sustainable development*” and highlights that it has three interrelated dimensions; economic, social and environmental which give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being; and,

An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.”

These roles are not to be undertaken in isolation but should be seen as mutually dependent. The NPPF states that “*...to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system...*”

Paragraph 14 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development for decision-making: *“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan-making and decision-taking:*

For decision-taking this means:

approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay; and, where the Development Plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or,*
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.”*

With regard to housing, paragraph 47 is relevant: To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should:

- use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period;*
- identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land;*
- identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15;*
- for market and affordable housing, illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory for the plan period and set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing describing how they will maintain delivery of a five-year supply of housing land to meet their housing target; and set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances.*

Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Para 50 To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with*

children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);

- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand; and*
- *where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.*

Paragraph 74 regarding health is particularly relevant: Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

In terms of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, paragraph 109 requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

Paragraph 204 provides guidance on the tests that are necessary before using planning obligations:

Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- *necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- *directly related to the development; and*
- *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*

Obligations must be fully justified and evidenced. Where affordable housing contributions are being sought, obligations should not prevent development from going forward.

Paragraphs 16 and 26 of the NPPG ('Viability') states:

"Decision-taking on individual applications does not normally require consideration of viability. However, where the deliverability of the development may be compromised by the scale of planning obligations and other costs, a viability assessment may be necessary. This should be informed by the particular circumstances of the site and proposed development in question. A site is viable if the value generated by its development exceeds the costs of developing it and also provides sufficient incentive for the land to come forward and the development to be undertaken."

To incentivise the bringing back into use of brownfield sites, local planning authorities should take a flexible approach in seeking levels of planning obligations and other contributions to ensure that the combined total impact does not make a site unviable.

Paragraph 19 states:

"In making decisions, the Local Planning Authority will need to understand the impact of planning obligations on the proposal. Where an applicant is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the planning obligation would cause the development to be unviable, the local planning authority should be flexible in seeking obligations. This is particularly relevant for affordable housing contributions which are often the largest single item sought on housing developments. These contributions should not be sought without regard to individual scheme viability. The financial viability of the individual scheme should be carefully considered in line with the principles in this guidance."

SAVED POLICIES: BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN 2001-2016

The Blackpool Local Plan was adopted in June 2006 and the majority of its policies saved by direction in June 2009. The following policies are most relevant to this application:

- BH1 Neighbourhoods
- BH3 Residential and Visitor Amenity
- BH4 Public Health and Safety
- BH6 New Open Space Provision
- BH7 Playing Fields and Sports Grounds
- BH10 Open Space in New Housing Developments
- BH21 Protection of Community Facilities
- LQ1 Lifting the Quality of Design
- LQ2 Site Context
- LQ3 Layout of Streets and Spaces
- LQ4 Building Design
- LQ5 Public Realm Design
- LQ6 Landscape Design and Biodiversity
- LQ7 Strategic Views
- LQ8 Energy and Resource Conservation
- LQ9 Listed Buildings
- HN4 Windfall Sites
- HN6 Housing Mix
- HN7 Density
- HN8 Affordable and Specialist Needs Housing
- NE10 Flood Risk

AS1 General Development Requirements
SPG 11 Open space requirements

Other relevant documents are:

A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England – Policy on planning applications for development on playing fields – Sport England

Blackpool Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study Report – February 2014

Blackpool Open Space Audit (2009)

Blackpool, Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit and Position Statement (November 2014)

Blackpool Playing Pitch Strategy (November 2014)

Blackpool Deliverable Five Year Housing Land Supply, 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2020 (April 2015)

Sport England Facilities Costs First Quarter 2015 (2015)

Blackpool Playing Pitch Strategy Stage A Report: Prepare and tailor the approach (Nov 2015)

EMERGING PLANNING POLICY

The Core Strategy Proposed Submission was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in December 2014 and an Inspector conducted an examination of the Core Strategy in May 2015. Consultation has taken place on modifications to the Core Strategy arising from the examination and Inspector is currently considering them. He will then publish his final report on the Core Strategy and the document will be adopted early in 2016.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF allows relevant policies to be given weight in decision-taking according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given); the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. Overall, a limited number of representations were received to the Proposed Submission document. Of those representations made expressing concern with the proposed policies, it is not considered that the issues raised justify the need for modifications to be made to the policies prior to submission (other than minor modifications to improve clarity for example). Therefore, the Council considers that, due to the advanced stage of the Core Strategy all relevant policies to this development should be given considerable weight in decision making.

Emerging policies in the Core Strategy Submission version that are most relevant to this application are:

- CS1 Strategic Location of Development
- CS2 Housing Provision
- CS7 Quality of Design
- CS9 Housing Mix, Density and Standards
- CS12 Sustainable neighbourhoods
- CS14 Affordable Housing
- CS15 Health and Education

None of these policies conflict with or outweigh the provisions of the adopted Local Plan policies listed above.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of the loss of playing field

The majority of the site is allocated as 'Playing Fields and Sports Grounds'. The front element of the site (the social club) is unallocated within the Local Plan, whilst the remainder of the site is allocated as a Playing Field.

Policy BH7 states that development that would result in the loss of existing playing fields and sports grounds will not be permitted unless, proposals are shown to meet at least one of a number of criteria to mitigate this loss. This includes demonstrating that the land is not required to meet other existing or potential future community needs and that its development is supported by the wider community. In addition, the supporting justification for Policy BH7 states that development adversely affecting the quantity or quality of playing field or sports ground provision will only be permitted where there are wider community benefits and the development is supported by the wider community.

Whilst the land is in private ownership, the supporting text to BH7 acknowledges that these still provide an important recreational resource used by the public and so they are protected from inappropriate development. They also serve an important amenity function as open land within the urban area, even where they are not publicly accessible. Development adversely affecting the quantity of playing field provision will only be permitted where there are wider community benefits and the development is supported by the wider community.

To satisfy Policy BH7 an assessment would be needed to show the building and playing fields to be surplus to requirements and that the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF covers similar ground stating, amongst other things, that existing open space and sports land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss would be replaced by better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

The pitches are currently unplayable, the site is not currently used as playing fields and is not intended to be accessible to the public. Despite the pitches being available for private play until the social club closed in July 2013 (no longer financially viable) they had not been used for several years prior to that.

The Council's current PPS identifies the application site (ID 17 - Co-op Sports Club and Fields) as being in private ownership with no community use, i.e. in accordance with the Sport England definition, the pitches are identified as not being in secured public use. In addition, the PPS only regards the ancillary facilities at the application site as 'average', which in turn fundamentally affects the quality and capacity of existing pitch facilities. The Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Audit and Position Statement also recognises the application site facility (0.9 ha) as one of private outdoor playing facilities in the Borough not open to the public, which all together total 9.2 hectares of sports area.

The bowling greens at the application site have not been in use for a number of years, with bowls teams relocating to other greens within the area. To bring the sports facilities at the application site up to modern standards would be expensive and there would be significant and unviable annual

maintenance costs. In any event, bowling greens do not fall within Sport England's definition of playing fields. The previous football clubs using the pitch at the site relocated due to the maintenance costs. There is spare capacity at Stanley Park and Mereside to accommodate any bowling or football teams wanting to set up in the area. Physically restoring the site to playing fields and other sports provision could not be achieved without significant financial outlay which is not viable. The Council's position is that it considers there to be an excess of football pitches in the town and the Council does not have the resources to take over management of additional separate space. There are no proposals by the Council to compulsorily acquire the site to return it to playing fields for public recreation. To bring these facilities up to standard would be expensive and there would be annual maintenance costs. The Council's preference would be for a commuted sum to be used to develop/upgrade current facilities elsewhere.

The PPS states that there is sufficient green space to meet demand for outdoor sports, however the quality is patchy, particularly changing rooms. Bowling is not part of the Strategy and is not included in Sport England's methodology, so should be excluded from the assessment of how much mitigation is required.

The Head of Leisure and Catering Services considers that raising the standards over three or four sites would result in a better uplift in provision (boggy, wet pitches deter teams and loses players). The Preston New Road site is not considered as a viable pitch in any event. He considers it not sensible to invest in the Mereside pitches (five x full size), due to the development of the additional sports facilities as a result of the Whyndyke housing proposal which includes football pitches, a cricket pitch and changing rooms. Common Edge Road is the biggest facility in the southern part of the borough, particularly for senior football and team members will travel the length of the borough to play on a decent pitch. Common Edge Road is in need of investment in the infrastructure and changing rooms. Junior football teams are emerging as a force and Fishers Field (Foxhall juniors) need to relocate for three years due to United Utilities works on their pitch. There is potential for the Common Edge Road facilities to become a Centre of Excellence if the changing facilities can be upgraded with a new kitchen etc. and there is a shortfall of one artificial pitch which the TCG site could fund as an upgrade.

It is considered that the application site is surplus to future playing pitch requirement and the Council's up-to-date strategy and the evidence base on playing pitches and outdoor open spaces, which is being used to inform the emerging development plan, does not point to a need to maintain the application site as playing pitches.

A Local Area of Play (LAP) measuring 100 sq.m. is proposed in the centre of the housing layout, which will be publically accessible for community use. This would help to partially mitigate the loss of the private playing pitches on-site and would sacrifice a sizeable proportion of the site's developable area.

Based on Sport England Facility costs, a sum of £80,000 was originally proposed as mitigation for the loss of the natural turfed senior football pitch, which would ensure that a contribution for off-site affordable housing and potentially other S106 contributions could still be met. Confirmation that the sum was acceptable was received from Blackpool Council Leisure Services. However, following further discussion with the Head of Parks, it was considered preferable to focus the money on the improvement of the Common Edge Road facility towards a Centre of Excellence; and an improved level of contribution of £100,000 would lever in more from the Lancashire Football Association, who crucially supports this approach.

There is a new PPS currently being produced by consultants to inform the next ten years, which it is anticipated will state that there is an excess of poor quality playing field provision. The applicant has agreed to provide a commuted sum to the Council to allow a playing field at Common Edge Road to be replaced with a higher quality one.

In view of the above, it is considered that at least one of the following specific circumstances in 'Planning Policy Statement – A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England (Sport England)' applies to the application proposals:

i. *there is a demonstrable excess of playing fields in the catchment and the site has no special significance for sport (exception E1).*

Whilst the building at the front is outside of the open space allocation, Policy BH21 (loss of community facility) is relevant. However, it is in private ownership and has not been in community use for a long time and there is no demand for it in the area.

Housing Issues

In terms of housing land supply, until a point is reached where the Blackpool Local Plan: Part 1 - Core Strategy is adopted and the Council's 1 April 2015 updated housing land supply position is accepted by an Inspector, the development plan must be considered out of date. Where policies of the development plan are out dated or silent, the presumption in favour of sustainable development included within paragraph 14 of the Framework provides that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This site is in a sustainable location and will contribute to the five year housing land supply.

In terms of Policy HN8 and the requirement for 30% provision of affordable housing, Mereside is already well provided with affordable housing. The Council's preference is for market housing on this site; with any commuted sum raised being used for the provision of affordable housing within the inner areas.

With regard to policies HN6 and BH3, the scheme is for family housing, which would contribute to a more balanced and healthy community. There is a National space standard for new build residential development, which I would expect new development to adhere to, in addition to the relevant parts of "New Homes from Old Places". Contributions towards Education and health provision are currently not required within Blackpool.

Although the proposal is a departure from the Development Plan, the Council does not need to refer the proposal to the Secretary of State for his consideration, as the playing field has not been used by an educational institution within the last five years.

Development Viability

An Independent Financial Viability Appraisal (IFVA) produces a residual land value which, when compared with the viability threshold, produces a positive residual viability figure of circa £350,000 which can be regarded as being available for the provision of affordable housing or other elements of planning gain. No abnormal costs have been included within the assessment due to lack of information at the current stage of the development process and the inclusion of such additional costs will impact upon viability.

Discussions held between the applicant and the Council are 'in confidence' because they can be commercially confidential. The residual appraisal assumptions have been adopted with reference to those which were included within the Blackpool Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study Report which was produced for Blackpool Council by HDH Planning and Development Ltd and URS February 2014.

The Council's Head of Property and Asset Management broadly agrees with the outcome of the appraisal.

On a development of 54 dwellings, the contribution towards affordable housing of 30% would be in the order of £800,000 if the full contribution was sought (based on the Whyndyke figures of £50,000 contribution per affordable unit). Here, the IFVA shows a residual viability of £350,000, of which £100,000 is allocated to mitigate the issue around playing fields. The developer has offered £162,000 towards affordable housing, which equates to £10,000 per affordable unit and is well below what would normally be expected. However, in view of the marginal viability of the site for residential development in the IFVA, and the financial contributions towards delivering high quality housing and wider community benefits in the area, it is considered that the provision of less than the full 30% contribution to affordable housing is acceptable in this instance.

The site is wholly owned by The Co-Operative Group and is available for development now. The site is suitable as it is situated within the predominantly residential suburb of Marton and is immediately adjacent to well established residential areas to the east, south and west of the site including Ribchester Avenue, Catforth Avenue and Devona Avenue. Thus the development of the site for residential purposes would be in keeping with the existing character of the area. The site is in a sustainable and accessible location with good access to local services, amenities and public transport links.

TCG's Planning Statement and submitted technical documents demonstrate that the development would not result in any adverse impact which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. Furthermore, the specific policies of the NPPF do not indicate that the development should be either restricted or refused.

In summary, the land is a suitable site which can accommodate much needed housing. Utilising suitable previously developed sites such as this will reduce the pressure on more sensitive green field sites and Green Belt land in the push to deliver the required level of housing.

The site is achievable for development as could deliver housing within the next five years, which would positively contribute to the Council's current shortfall of housing. There are no physical constraints or limitations which would prevent the site's development and financial contributions in relation to the provision of an upgraded off-site playing pitch and affordable housing (together with abnormals) mean that development of the site is viable. The conclusion is that the site is suitable, available, achievable and viable for housing development.

Design and Amenity

The proposal is for a mix of two and three bedroom terraced, semi-detached or detached dwellings. The majority of the proposed dwellings would be two storeys in height to reflect the prevailing height of the majority of homes in the direct vicinity of the site, which are generally in the region of eight metres in height. The layout as depicted in the illustrative masterplan shares a similar density to the dwellings around the site, with a residential development that is sympathetic to its neighbours in terms of scale and density. The design and schedule of accommodation would be

determined through a Reserved Matters application. It is envisaged that the proposed development would positively contribute towards meeting the residential needs of Blackpool and have a positive impact on the surrounding area in Marton.

In terms of Policy BH10, a Local Area of Play (LAP) measuring 100m² would be centrally located within the development. There would be no provision for older play facilities and a commuted sum towards this could be required additional to the requirement to replace the sports provision. However as a commuted sum of £100,000 is already earmarked for the Common Edge Road facilities, which includes senior football, I feel that there would be more benefit in dedicating the residual money to affordable housing.

Noise - Preston New Road runs directly north of the site, with the rear of an ATS Euromaster car servicing workshop and an HSS hire shop adjacent to the western half of the site's northern boundary. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been submitted and its findings and recommendations have been used to inform the illustrative layout. The gardens of the road frontage dwellings should be located to the rear (south) of the dwellings to benefit from the screening provided by the dwellings themselves. Road frontage dwellings have been set back circa. 28 metres from the nearside kerb of Preston New Road and, where practicable, gardens are located to the rear (south) of the dwellings. No specific measures are considered necessary for the dwellings located to the rear of the commercial units fronting onto Preston New Road, as no significant noise emissions were noted during the noise survey when the units were noted to be operating as normal.

The ambient noise climate across the application site is primarily associated with road traffic noise. Recommendations for a scheme of sound insulation works have been developed to protect the proposed residential development from the ambient noise climate in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. If the application was approved, environmental impacts such as dust, noise and general disturbance during construction could be minimised and controlled through a planning condition requiring a Construction Management Plan.

Overlooking/privacy - The scheme can be designed at Reserved Matters stage so that it would have no significant impact on the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Highway Safety

In terms of sustainability and accessibility, this is a medium accessibility location regarding local services, amenities and public transport links and there are a range of key facilities and services within walking distance from the site. This includes include a Morrisons Local supermarket, an Asda Superstore and schools, such as Stanley Primary School; Mereside Primary School; and St Georges Church of England High School. In addition, the major employment areas of Little Marton and Blackpool and Fylde Industrial Estate are also within walking distance of the site. With regard to public transport, eastbound and westbound bus stops are 130 metres to the east of the site access along Preston New Road which are served by Service 16 which links the site to Blackpool town centre via a 30 minute frequency during the weekday.

Access would be taken from Preston New Road using the existing access point in the form of an all movement priority T-junction. The proposals include a widening of this access junction to ensure that two-way vehicle movements are achievable with no risk of vehicles queuing back onto Preston New Road. The proposed access along with a swept path analysis demonstrates two-way movements of a refuse vehicle and car. Visibility to the east and west would be provided within a 4.5 x 90 metre splay which is the recommended standard for this type of junction. Improvement to the Preston New Road / Preston Old Road / Cherry Tree Road North junction, to the west of the

proposed development site is not considered to be necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning and highways terms.

Parking and Servicing Arrangements

The total provision for the site is 102 spaces (just short of the two spaces per dwelling standard i.e. should be 108 in total), however there would be cycle parking within the curtilage of the dwellings and the site is on reasonable public transport routes. With regards to internal roadway circulation, the swept path analysis for refuse vehicles, service vehicles and private cars is acceptable.

Other Issues

Ecology and Trees - an ecological desk study was carried out, a walkover survey undertaken, also a Daytime/Night time Bat Survey and an Arboricultural Survey were undertaken. As much of the existing tree/shrub habitat as possible is to be retained and a commitment to increased biodiversity through the use of trees, open space, bat and bird boxes where appropriate is proposed.

As all matters are reserved except access, details of the proposed works are unknown but would be expected to be shown at Reserved Matters (RM) stage. Mitigation measures can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition(s) which mainly relate to the timing and phasing of works (disturbance of birds etc.). As such there is no conflict with the relevant local and national policies that relate to ecology and/or impact on biodiversity.

Flood Risk and Drainage - The site lies within an area classified as Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding from rivers and sea is considered low. Environment Agency guidance dictates for sites more than 1 hectare in Flood Zone 1 or more than 0.5 hectares within a Critical Drainage Area requires a Flood Risk Assessment to support a planning application (submitted), however, the main focus will be on the management of surface water run-off.

In terms of surface water flooding, there is a very low risk identified on the Environment Agency surface water flood maps, however there is an isolated area along the southern boundary at low to medium risk of surface water flooding and is due to the ditch located along the southern boundary. The surface water flood risk is considered low providing that the mitigation measures are carried out upon development. SUDS should be incorporated into the RM design wherever possible. United Utilities recommends a surface water drainage condition. A scheme can be secured by condition to ensure that suitable drainage methods are used so surface water run-off from the site is appropriately controlled. The indicative drainage strategy proposes to connect into combined manhole 7401 at the existing 1050mm combined sewer with flow restricted to 9.1 l/s.

The site can be considered to have a low probability of suffering from any form of flooding, and will not increase the potential for flood risk to other properties within the local catchment area.

Ground Conditions - Records indicate that historically this area comprised brickworks and there might be some contamination associated with this or the adjacent petrol filling station (now redeveloped as industrial/trade warehousing). A Desk Top Study (DTS) has identified potential risks at the site relating to both human health and groundwater resources and recommends these are assessed further through appropriate investigation which should be sufficient to enable development of a remediation strategy for the site, in particular with regards to ground gas generation in areas of the former on-site pond. The DTS recommends further intrusive investigation and assessment (phase 2) to determine the necessary level of remediation that may be required. This would be in the form of a ground investigation (combination of window sampling and trial

pitting (where possible) with the installation of monitoring wells and subsequent groundwater/gas monitoring) to assess both the environmental and geotechnical issues identified within this report.

CONCLUSION

In this instance, whilst policies relating to the retention of playing fields and the strong objection from Sport England would suggest that the proposal should be refused; there are other material considerations, such as the lack of need for this playing field facility; the financial contributions to improving sporting facilities at Common Edge Road; the financial contribution to affordable housing within the Inner Area and the Government's drive to encourage housebuilding that outweigh those objections.

If the Committee is minded to approve the application, the proposal should be deferred and delegated to the Head of Development Management to issue the decision notice subject to the signing of an appropriate S106 agreement.

LEGAL AGREEMENT AND/OR DEVELOPER FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The IFVA produces a residual land value which, when compared with the viability threshold, produces a positive residual viability figure which could be for the provision of affordable housing or other elements of planning gain. In this instance, the agreement would allow for a financial contribution of £100,000 in relation to the loss of playing pitch resulting from the proposed development and a contribution of £162,000 towards the provision of affordable housing within the Inner Area. Although the viability sum is in the order of £350,000, the shortfall of £88,000 is taken up with abnormals, which haven't been factored into the equation.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Under Article eight and Article one of the first protocol to the Convention on Human Rights, a person is entitled to the right to respect for private and family life, and the peaceful enjoyment of his/her property. However, these rights are qualified in that they must be set against the general interest and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is not considered that the application raises any human rights issues.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the Council's general duty, in all its functions, to have regard to community safety issues as required by section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Application File(s): 15/0457 which includes the representations referred to in the report and all other information relevant to the application. The file can be accessed via the link below:

<http://idoxpa.blackpool.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=weeklyList>

Recommended Decision: Agree in principle and delegate approval to the Head of Development Management

Conditions and Reasons

1. i. Approval of the following details (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority:
 - Layout
 - Scale
 - Appearance
 - Landscaping

ii. Applications for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission and the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

Reason i and ii: This is an outline planning permission and these conditions are required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. No development shall be commenced until detailed site investigation has been carried out in accordance with a written methodology, which shall first have been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If remediation methods are then considered necessary, a scheme for decontamination of the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented and completed prior to the commencement of the development. Any changes to the approved scheme shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a safe form of development that poses no unacceptable risk of pollution to water resources or to human health and in accordance with Policy BH4 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016.

3. No development shall take place until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Management Plan shall include and specify the provision to be made for the following:
 - dust mitigation measures during the construction period
 - control of noise emanating from the site during the construction period
 - hours and days of construction work for the development
 - contractors' compounds and other storage arrangements
 - provision for all site operatives, visitors and construction loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period
 - arrangements during the construction period to minimise the deposit of mud and other similar debris on the adjacent highways
 - the routing of construction traffic.

The construction of the development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved Construction Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of surrounding residents and to safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policies LQ1 and BH3 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016.

4. Prior to the commencement of any development, details of the foul drainage scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Foul shall be drained on a separate system. No building shall be occupied until the approved foul drainage scheme has been completed to serve that building, in accordance with the approved details. This development shall be completed maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a safe form of development that poses no unacceptable risk of pollution to water resources or to human health and in accordance with Policy BH4 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016.

5. Prior to the commencement of any development, a surface water drainage scheme and means of disposal, based on sustainable drainage principles with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions (inclusive of how the scheme shall be managed after completion) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme must be restricted to existing runoff rates and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no surface water shall discharge to the public sewerage system either directly or indirectly. The development shall be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a safe form of development that poses no unacceptable risk of pollution to water resources or to human health and in accordance with Policy BH4 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016.

6. Prior to commencement of development, a scheme for the provision of open space in the form of a 100 square metres Local Area of Play (LEP), shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the occupation of the first house on site, the LEP shall be constructed in the form agreed and shall thereafter be maintained and retained.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity and in accordance with Policies BH3 and BH10 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001 - 2016.

7. Unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections, any removal of vegetation including trees and hedges shall be undertaken outside the nesting bird season [March - August inclusive]. Any removal of vegetation outside the nesting bird season shall be preceded by a pre-clearance check by a licensed ecologist on the day of removal.

Reason: To ensure that there are no adverse effects on the favourable conservation status of birds and to protect the bird population from damaging activities and reduce or remove the impact of development, in accordance with Policy LQ6 of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001 - 2016 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Advice Notes to Developer

1. Please note this approval relates specifically to the details indicated on the approved plans and documents, and to the requirement to satisfy all conditions of the approval. Any variation from this approval need to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing and may require the submission of a revised application. Any works carried out without such written agreement or approval would render the development as unauthorised and liable to legal proceedings.