

# **Medlar-with-Wesham Town Council**



## **Notice of Objection**

**Proposed Development  
North of Mowbreck Lane, Wesham**

**Application Number 08/1072**

[www.wesham.org.uk](http://www.wesham.org.uk)

April 2009

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# Medlar with Wesham Town Council

## Planning Application 08/1072

### Proposed Development to the North of Mowbreck Lane Wesham

#### INTRODUCTION

Medlar-with-Wesham Town Council (WTC) formally considered planning application 08/1072 under item 11(c) at a meeting held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009. It was resolved that Wesham Town Council **object** to the application. The Clerk to the Council was instructed to advise Fylde Borough Council accordingly, with notification that a formal response would follow. This document outlines the specific reasons for objection. (NB: Cllr L J Nulty, at the Town Council meeting abstained and took no part in the discussion)

The report makes references to the following policies and documents.

• Fylde Borough Local Plan 1996-2006 as altered Oct 2005
• Fylde Housing Monitoring Report 2007-2008
• Fylde Borough Council Interim Housing Policy July 2008
• Fylde Borough Council Local Development Scheme July 2007
• Planning Policy Statements 1, 3, 6, 7 and 9
• The North West Regional Spatial Strategy
• Metacre Design, Access and Planning Statements
• DEFRA Agricultural Land Classification/ Graeme Surtees Associates Ltd Report January 2009
• Medlar-with-Wesham Parish Plan 2008
• Wesham Action Group Mowbreck Lane Development Objection

Where relevant the reference is either quoted in Italics and/or by reference to the page and paragraph within the associated documents.

#### Background

Following the announcement by Fylde Borough Council of the proposed development on land (08/1072) to the north of Mowbreck Lane, Medlar-with-Wesham Town Council (referred to as **WTC** throughout) held public information sessions. It was the Councils intention to give everyone the opportunity to either air their concerns or alternatively offer support for the development.

Two public meetings were held, the first on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 and later on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009. Many residents (over 150) attended the sessions and the vast majority, in fact by a practically unanimous vote, recorded their objections to the proposal. Subsequently a petition was signed.

In addition to the public meetings arranged by Wesham Town Council, the landowner, Metacre, also held a public information session on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2009, which was attended by over 100 residents.

Wesham Town Council base their fundamental objection on the ineffective and inefficient use of the land using the Central Government Planning Policy PPS3. Additional paragraphs examine other topics, which also flaw the application.

## 1. Effective Use of Land

Central Government Planning Policy PPS3 states:

Para 40 “A key objective is that Planning Authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using land that has been \* previously developed”

Para 45 “Using land efficiently is a key consideration in planning for housing.”  
Annex B of the document defines \* as: Previously developed land (often referred to as brownfield land)

### 1.1 Greenfield/Brownfield requirements within the Regional Spatial Strategy

There is a requirement as stated within PPS 3 that brownfield sites are to be utilised before any Greenfield site is allocated. This application is clearly ‘Greenfield’. With reference to the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021, section 7 details requirement for new housing on **brownfield** sites:

	Total Housing Provision 2003-2021	Annual Average rates of housing provision	Indicative target proportion of housing provision to use <b>Brownfield</b> land & buildings
FYLDE	5500	306	<b>At Least 65%</b>
Wyre	3700	206	
Blackpool	8000	444	

Fig 1

In addition, Policy DP4 states a requirement that developments “*build upon existing concentrations of activities and existing infrastructure*” and “*do not require major investment in new infrastructure, **including sewerage***” (see also para 10)

#### Identification of ‘Brownfield Sites/Greenfield Sites

##### 1.1.1 Brownfield

LOCATION	Ref	Capacity	Date Registered	Status
Council Offices, Wesham	03/0668	47	04/07/03	Lapsed. Nursing Home application?
Sunnybank Mill, Kirkham	05/0473	55	23/05/05	Outline
Ashtons Nurseries, Mythop Rd, Lytham	07/1264	10	10/12/07	Outline – approx 10
Petros House, St Annes	07/1314	48	21/12/07	Withdrawn
Kwik Save, St Annes	07/1277	48	17/01/08	Sheltered housing
Fairways, Healey Road, St Annes	08/0092	20	01/02/08	Outline
Lytham Quays Phase 2 – Dock Rd	08/0476	350	03/07/08	Outline
Grassington Road, St Annes	08/0765	31	11/08/08	Full – 31 net after demolition
Elswick Industrial Park	08/0829	10	03/09/08	Outline – approx. 10
68 North Promenade, St Annes	08/0853	14	12/09/08	Full
Westgate Road, Squires Gate	08/0992	(72)	12/11/08	Full <i>REFUSED 11/2/09</i>
Corner Garage, Warton	08/1000	14	13/11/08	Outline
Land at Pontins, Squires Gate	08/1049	370	15/12/08	Outline
Next to Stanways, Lytham	08/0353	55	02/02/09	Outline
Former Clovelly Rest Home	09/0045	9	04/02/09	Full – Conversion to flats
	TOTAL	1081		

Fig 2

### **1.1.2 Greenfield**

Any identification of other potential sites must be considered under PPS 12 through the Core Strategy Process.

#### **Sustainable Community Strategy PPS12 states:**

*"4.37 Core strategies have major effects. Social and economic impacts may include altering property values by a considerable amount; or helping access to housing, jobs, accessible local services and open space for many people, especially people with limited resources. There may be impacts on environmental or cultural assets: the core strategy may affect how much the area contributes to mitigating and reducing climate change. It is therefore essential that core strategies are based on thorough evidence. The evidence base should contain two elements:*

- ***Participation: evidence of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area.***
- ***Research/ fact finding: evidence that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts.***

Evidence gathered should be proportionate to the job being undertaken by the plan, relevant to the place in question and as up-to-date as practical having regard to what may have changed since the evidence was collected.

### **1.2 Wesham Action Group**

At the public meetings held in November 2008 and January 2009 the residents expressed major concern for the proposal resulting in the formation of an action group which formally adopted the name 'Wesham Action Group'.

The group has constructed a formal response that has been deposited with Fylde Borough Council. References can be found at [www.weshamactiongroup.co.uk](http://www.weshamactiongroup.co.uk)

Wesham Town Council fully support the findings contained in the document and consider the 57 page report to be of an excellent quality containing in depth and accurate reliable information. It is the opinion of WTC that the WAG document should be read in association with this report. In additional support of the objection, a residents' petition is also available. (See Annex A)

### **1.3 Medlar-with-Wesham Parish Plan**

With reference to Page 19 of the Parish Plan, during the questionnaire phase, and well before the application was submitted there was a 61% response from the residents that *"There was a general feeling that there has been too much new housing in the last 10 years and that the current infrastructure cannot support any more or even the current amount of housing"*

An action point was left with the Town and Borough Councils' to seek the views of the community through public consultation. The consultation has been completed, the results speak for themselves.

## 1.4 Sequential Site Allocation List

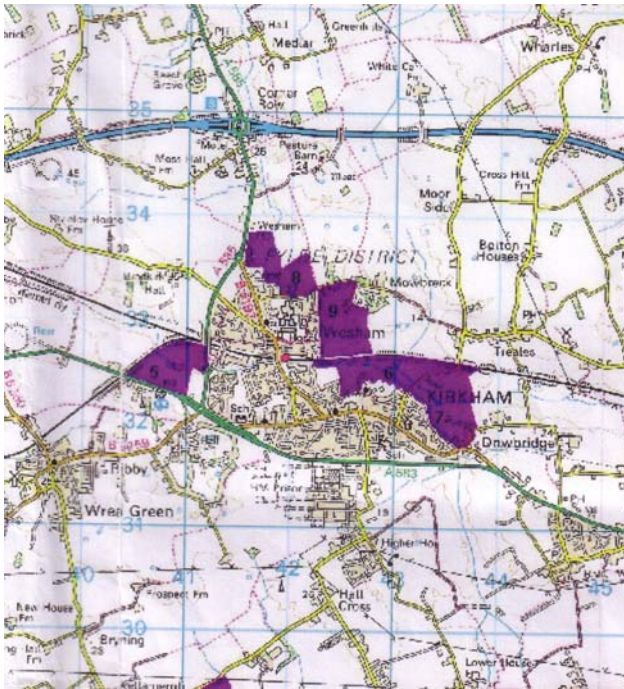


Fig 3

WTC have major concern for the **non adoption** by FBC (as at February 2009) of the Local Development Framework sequential site allocations.

However, developers are being supplied by the Fylde Borough Council Strategic Planning & Development section with the 'Potential Urban Housing Extension Plan', dated 25/07/08 (fig 3) giving a misguided impression of the availability of several **Greenfield** areas adjacent, but outside the settlement boundary of Wesham.

## 2. Countryside Area

Reference to the Fylde Borough Local Plan 1996-2006 (as altered Oct 2005) the application does not conform to policy **SP1**. Para 2.16 states:

### **"Development in Countryside Areas"**

*2.16 A fundamental element of the urban concentration strategy is the need to **strictly control development in the open countryside**. Policies of restraint in rural areas will, on the one hand, encourage development and investment in existing settlements and, on the other hand, will help to protect the intrinsic value and rural character of the countryside."*

Additionally Policy SP2 compels any development in the countryside to fall within the following criteria:

### **POLICY SP2**

**IN COUNTRYSIDE AREAS, DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED EXCEPT WHERE PROPOSALS PROPERLY FALL WITHIN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:-**

- 1. THAT ESSENTIALLY REQUIRED FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE OR FORESTRY; OR OTHER USES APPROPRIATE TO A RURAL AREA, INCLUDING THOSE PROVIDED FOR IN OTHER POLICIES OF THE PLAN WHICH WOULD HELP TO DIVERSIFY THE RURAL ECONOMY AND WHICH ACCORD WITH POLICY SP9**

## **POLICY SP9**

IN THE RURAL SETTLEMENTS DEFINED IN POLICY SP1 AND ON EXISTING FARMS OUTSIDE GREEN BELTS, SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES INVOLVING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE MET:-

1. ON FARMS, THE PROPOSED USE IS ANCILLARY TO THE MAIN FARMING ENTERPRISE AND IS EITHER RELATED TO THE MAIN ENTERPRISE OR HAS A SPECIAL AFFINITY WITH THE COUNTRYSIDE AND IN ANY CASE IS APPROPRIATE TO A FARM LOCATION;
2. PROPOSED NEW BUILDINGS ARE OF APPROPRIATE SCALE, DESIGN AND MATERIALS AND RELATE WELL TO OTHER EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE CHARACTER OF THE RURAL AREA;
3. SATISFACTORY FOUL AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE DISPOSAL ARRANGEMENTS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES CAN BE PROVIDED;
4. ADEQUATE VEHICULAR ACCESS, PARKING, LOADING AND MANOEUVRING AREAS FOR VEHICLES CAN BE PROVIDED;
5. THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AMENITIES ENJOYED BY NEARBY RESIDENTS OR PREJUDICE THE CHARACTER OF EXISTING BUILDINGS OR THE SURROUNDING AREA.

The application does not satisfy Policy SP2 or SP9

## **2.1 Perpetual Countryside Designation**

The Council believes that the land now the subject of this application is of such value to the community and to the local environment, that its designation as Countryside should be maintained in perpetuity, regardless of its potential suitability under any other policy.

Reasoning for this special status falls into three categories:

### **2.1.1 Countryside Issues:**

2.1.1.1 The land quality at Grade 2, or possibly better, put it in the top category within Fylde - an area renowned for its farming heritage.

2.1.1.2 It is vital that, at a time when the economic situation makes home-grown food production as important as it was in the Second World War, the highest quality and most fertile land must be retained as a strategic national resource.

2.1.1.3 Adverse farming economics have caused the failure of many of the Fylde's farms over several decades. However, the family farming the land now under consideration, are running a successful business venture that will be threatened by the loss of this land to housing, Not only would the reduced acreage available affect viability of their business, but the fact that this land is immediately adjacent to the farm house and the range of support buildings and facilities, would make the loss particularly damaging.

2.1.1.4 This working farm is the closest to the urban areas of Wesham and this land has for decades been seen as the integral part of the Town and Country character that is Medlar with Wesham.

### 2.1.2 **Landscape/Townscape:**

2.1.2.1 Mowbreck Lane is an ancient lane that linked the hamlet of Wesham to Treales and beyond. It also forms the natural boundary between Medlar - with its rolling pastures and tree-bounded brooks - and the more industrial urban Wesham. The former Union Workhouse (latterly Wesham Park Hospital) with its adjacent railed boundary, has been developed for housing in tranches, but always, Mowbreck Lane has stood astride the town and the countryside.

2.1.2.2 The link between these contrasting characteristics is in the open vista that all can appreciate from the lane. The landscape view is open across Medlar to the Pennine Hills and is probably the best countryside view in the Fylde. It is just as spectacular when seen from the Recreation Ground on Fleetwood Road (See cover photograph).

2.1.2.3 When submitting plans for the development of the Public Open Space on Mowbreck Lane (PO6), the developer of the Hospital site suggests that the only real use for this parcel of land would be as a picnic site for locals and visitors so that they can appreciate these fine open country views. The Housing development now proposed will obscure this marvellous aspect from the view of the community and reserve it as a 'back bedroom' outlook for 20 or so new households.

### 2.1.3 **Biological Heritage Site:**

2.1.3.1 The BHS is perilously close to the area proposed for development, and although the developer is suggesting that his proposals will enhance the designated area, the Town Council believes that the area surrounding this site is complementary to its attractiveness to the wildlife it supports. Any encroachment towards the defined area will influence the approach, thereby affecting migration characteristics and upsetting the general use of the area. Thus the full ecological impact of the wider area must be considered by the environmental experts and their recommendations considered carefully.

2.1.3.2 The value of the BHS as a middle distance feature will be lost to the community, as sight lines would be obscured by the proposed housing. Observation would then be restricted to those taking paths close to the wildlife with consequential upset to the habitat.

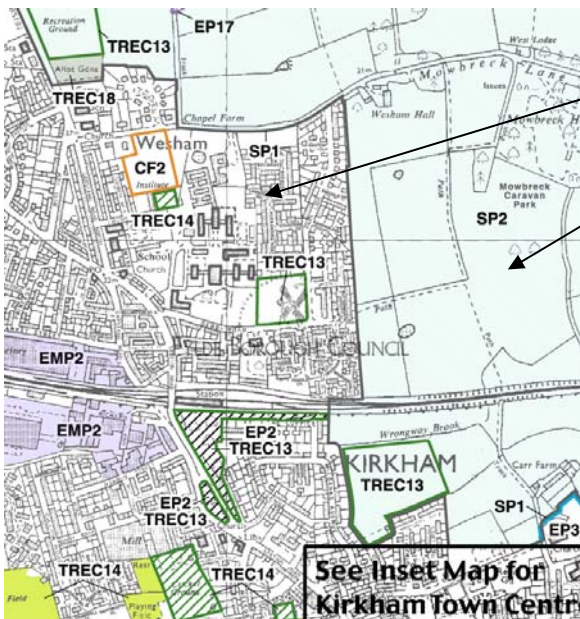
2.1.3.3 During the construction phase of any development significant damage could be caused to habitats through noise, light, dust and run-off pollution. Once built, at close proximity to the BHS, there would be continuing conflict over light, noise and physical intrusion of the new residents of the planned estate.

2.1.3.4 The issue of surface drainage is crucial to the successful moisture balance of the BHS. Any changes to volumes or flow rates or contamination in the water will upset the delicate ecology of the area. The potential for a disastrous outcome is very high and the consequence could be the destruction of the whole eco-system on Wesham Marsh. It is imperative that the full impact of this aspect is understood before decisions are taken.

2.1.3.5 The development of this site will end the solitude of the area forever, and this may fatally flaw the attractiveness of Wesham Marsh to support the ecology important to the Fylde.

### 3. Outside the Settlement Boundary

Fylde Borough Local Plan Policy SP1 states that developments will be permitted WITHIN the settlement boundaries.



SP1 indicates the 'Limit of Development'

SP2 is designated as 'Countryside Area'

This proposed development falls within the countryside area and therefore outside the criteria of Policy SP1 and SP2. Therefore on these grounds alone this application should be rejected.

Fig 4

### 4. Existing Planning Permissions

WTC are of the opinion that Wesham has had more than its' fair share of housing development within the Fylde providing an adequate new stock of affordable housing.

As at March 2009 the following graph indicates the current status of the two developments clearly showing the lack of demand. The creation of yet more homes in Wesham would not support sustainability claims by the proposal.

#### CURRENT WESHAM DEVELOPMENTS

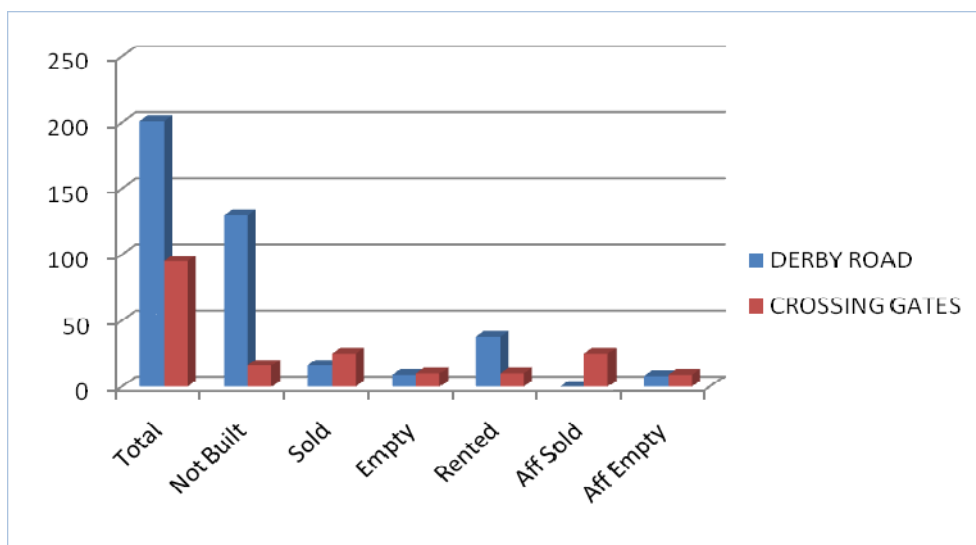


Fig 5

## 5. Affordable Housing Requirement Need

- a) PPS 3 states that the provision of affordable housing of the right numbers and type in the right location and within mixed developments is a main driver in meeting housing needs.
- b) Fylde Borough Council commissioned Fordham Research to prepare a Housing Needs Survey – updated in 2004 - which shows in a 5 year projection, an annual need for 420 affordable homes in Fylde. The annual shortfall by sub-areas tabled below shows the overwhelming needs of Lytham and St.Annes.

Sub Area	Backlog	New need	Existing supply	Shortfall
Lytham	32	212	60	184
St Annes	22	173	51	144
Kirkham/Wesham	5	64	38	31
Freckleton/Warton	5	59	36	28
Remaining rural area	13	47	27	33
Total	77	555	212	420

Fig 6

- c) This need influenced Fylde’s Supplementary Planning Guidance, requiring larger mixed developments to provide 40% and latterly 50% affordable homes. The aim was (and still is) to provide affordable units of the appropriate type closest to the areas of identified need.
- d) The figures for Kirkham and Wesham show a need for 155 units over a 5 year period. Developments approved in this sub area, (the two major sites in Wesham and the development on Sunnybank Mill in Kirkham, together with smaller social housing infill), will meet this requirement. However, the needs of the other sub areas have hardly been addressed, especially in Lytham and St Annes. As the needs generally are high, the key delivery mechanism for Affordable Housing is as a major component on larger mixed development projects. Thus the only way to meet the local affordable housing needs in these under-achieving sub- areas is to prioritise development at those locations with full affordable housing proportionality.
- e) At present, as elements of the new build at Derby and Weeton Roads, come on stream, it is clear that these levels of affordable housing provision are meeting the needs of the area, with some units now offered to those living elsewhere in the Borough. Shared equity property sales are proving largely unsuccessful, and many properties earmarked for this have been converted (some temporarily) to the social rented sector.
- f) The need for more affordable/social housing in Wesham cannot be demonstrated for the next 5 years, whereas there is a huge unmet demand in other areas of the Borough. The over provision of affordable housing in Wesham for the wider benefit of the whole Borough, neither meets the clearly identified housing need, nor the test of sustainability.
- g) It is therefore essential that sites that can meet this need in the appropriate locality are identified and developed before any consideration of any sites in Wesham.

## 6. Flooding risk

With reference to the **Flood Risk Assessment** by Metacre Ltd dated November 2008 WTC disagree with paragraph 4.2.6.

*“Any overland flow that did occur would flow through the site following natural topography to the natural bowl to the north of the site”.*

This submitted evidence is misleading and incorrect .

The evidence from a local farmer who has maintained the land for 27 years and has maintained all the drains on the farm states that although surface water flow in field SD 4233 0453 and the northern half of field SD 4233 0837 runs to the North into the area of marsh land and ultimately Medlar Brook as stated in the assessment, the southern half of field SD 4233 0837 does not, it runs to the South into Wrongway Brook.

This direction is evident throughout the year as the drain entrance on Mowbreck Lane struggles to cope with excess rainfall and run off water from the proposed site causing surface flooding on Mowbreck Lane. This is due to a backlog of water in Wrongway Brook that struggles to get the water away quickly enough and in turn is due to a backlog of water from Carr Brook.

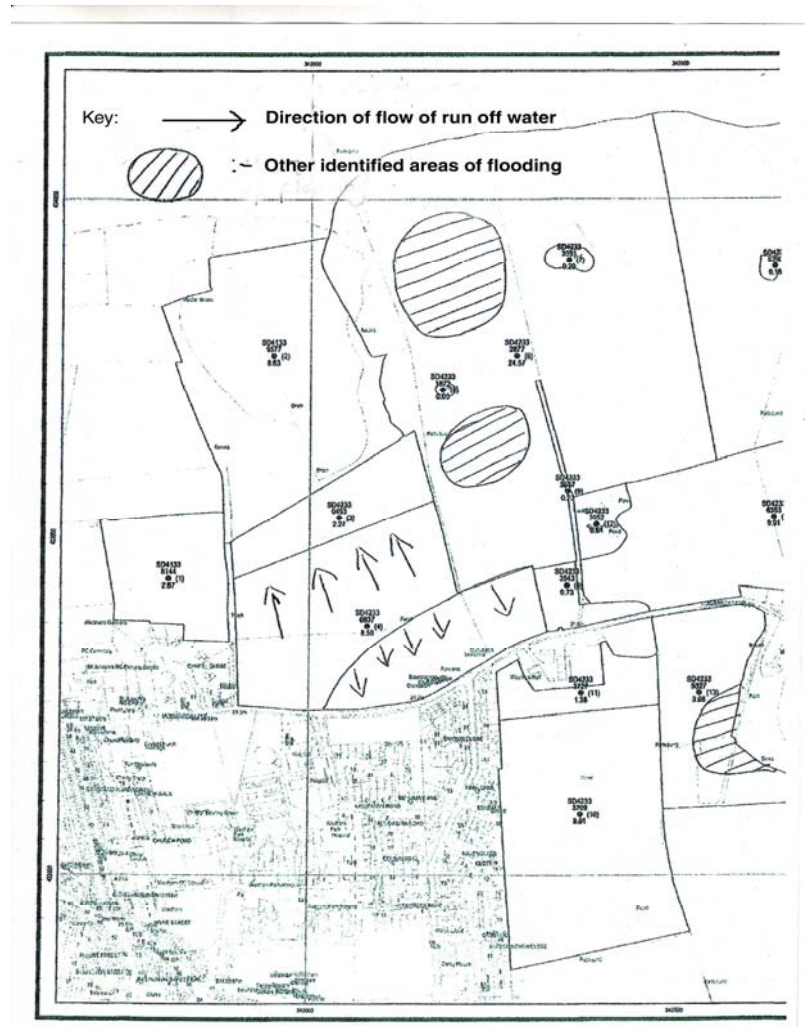


Fig 7

When this occurs not only does the land to the North East of Kirkham ( highlighted as a potential housing development site 7 ) flood , as recognised in paragraph 6.18 of the ***Applicants Planning Statement*** , but the knock on effect is that typically field SD 4233 5327 also floods and therefore causes surface flooding on Mowbreck Lane.

Regarding the flood risk assessment paragraph 5.4.3 Medlar Brook does not drain water away from the site . This is evident in the surrounding land being water logged, not only that of the marsh land already in existence but in fields SD 4233 2877 where there is regular flooding. We have photographic evidence that the land does not drain effectively to the north into Medlar Brook Fig 7 and that even after a sustained period of little rainfall the area continues to be flooded as Medlar Brook struggles to drain.

Regarding the development on the proposed site, surface run off water will affect all of these water courses.

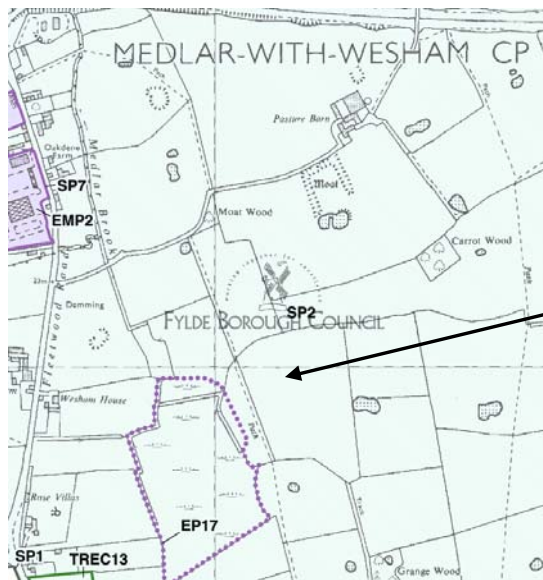
As the applicant has made reference to surface water attenuation in Section 9 of the flood risk assessment, it does state in paragraph 11.1.5 that surface water will increase.

Regardless of the rate of run off water being controlled and restricted by attenuation, you cannot escape the fact that the quantity of water is going to increase putting more pressure on an inefficient system.

The assessment fails to recognise the current flooding issues within the vicinity, and demonstrates a clear misunderstanding of how the drainage system already in place for the proposed site works and is currently inadequate.

With these points in mind WTC are of the opinion that the proposed plan of action for attention to the effective management of run off water is inaccurate.

## 7. **Bioheritage Site**



**Policy ‘EP17’** states “*Development which is likely to impact significantly or fundamentally on the biological/geological resources of sites defined as biological heritage sites, will not be permitted.....*”

The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report identifies the biological heritage site at Wesham as:

**Name** Wesham Marsh, Medlar with Wesham  
**Reference** SD419337  
**Flora/Fauna** Habitat Mosaic  
 Birds  
 Flowering Plants and Ferns

Fig 8

*“The aims of the Biological Heritage Sites Project are firstly to compile and maintain a definitive list of non-statutory sites which make a significant contribution to the biodiversity of Lancashire and secondly to conserve and **protect those sites** through the planning system and by co-operation with site owners, occupiers and managers.”*

WTC are of the opinion that the proposed screening arrangements will, over a period of time, become ineffective. The potential for this area to become a 'recreation site' being used by children, walkers etc would have a long term impact on the site. Consultation with the Fylde Bird Club has resulted in an objection being registered. A letter of objection was sent to FBC on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. WTC fully support the comments of the Fylde Bird Club.

## **8. Gateway to the Town, views across open countryside**

### **Reference to PPS7**

#### ***Countryside protection and development in the countryside:***

*15. Planning policies should provide a positive framework for facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land-based activities and makes the most of new leisure and **recreational opportunities that require a countryside location**. Planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and **character of the wider countryside is protected** and, where possible, enhanced. They should **have particular regard to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities** where greater priority should be given to restraint of potentially damaging development.*

*16. When preparing policies for LDDs and determining planning applications for development in the countryside, local planning authorities should:*

*(i) support development that delivers diverse and **sustainable farming enterprises**;*

*(ii) support other countryside-based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote **recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside**;*

*(iii) take account of the need to protect natural resources;*

*(iv) provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with the policies set out in PPS22; and*

*(v) **conserve specific features and sites of landscape, wildlife and historic or architectural value**, in accordance with statutory designations.*

*(vi) All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and **sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness**.*

With reference to the Metacre 'Landscape and Visual Assessment' document, in particular:-  
Section 8 Landscape Assessment

*8.2 There are no significant landscape or landscape character impacts, either adverse or beneficial.*

*8.3 There will be moderately significant impacts, as follows:-*

*A moderately significant impact on the tranquility of the existing site, as a result of the construction of new houses, roads and lighting; this will reduce over time, but remain moderately significant.*

WTC disagree totally with paragraph 8.2 in that that they consider this open aspect location to be the 'Gateway' to Wesham providing an uninterrupted view of the hills and open aspect to the east. Paragraph 8.3 even states that there will be 'significant' impact on the tranquility of the area, in particular the recreation site enjoyed by many. Metacre themselves state that the impact "will remain moderately significant".



Fig 9

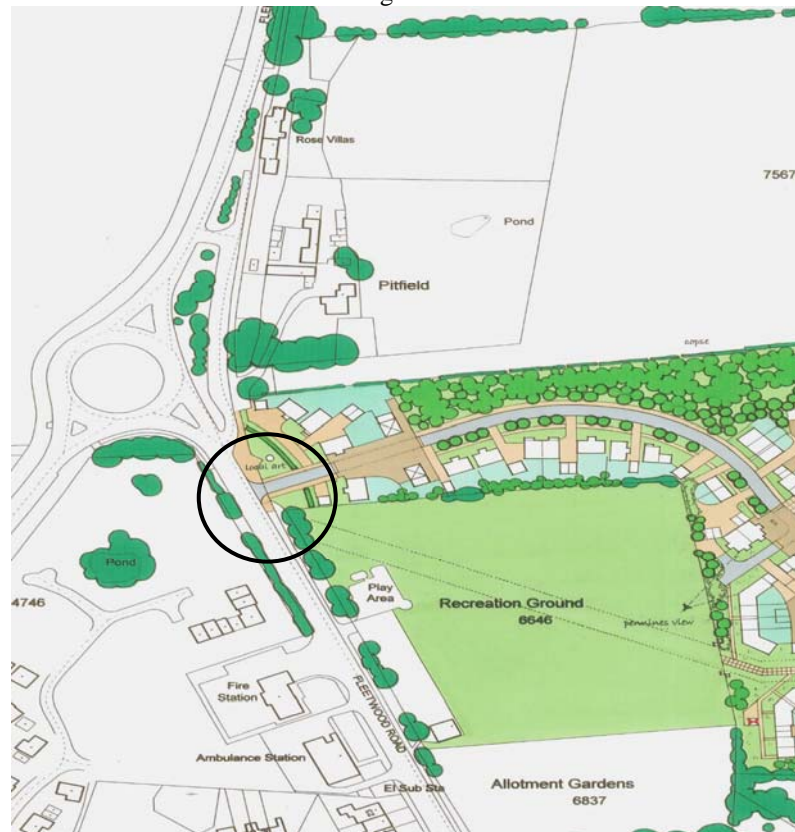
The photographs contained within Metacres' assessment are very misleading, the two photographs, at fig 9 and fig 10, are much more indicative of the visual losses that will occur and contrary to PPS7.



Fig 10

## 9. Roads ~ Junction onto Fleetwood Rd

Fig 11



WTC consider that the proposed junction onto the B5192 shown in figure 11 is totally unacceptable. It is far too close to the existing roundabout junction on the bypass and poses a significant hazard to traffic entering Fleetwood Road from the direction of the M55 Motorway.

This opinion has been previously upheld by the emergency services and Lancashire County Council during the planning application for the Weeton Road development. In granting the application it was a condition that no vehicular access was to be made onto Fleetwood Road.

In a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005 from the Chief Traffic & Development Engineer (North) to Fylde Borough Council (Ref TS/D5/05/1060/KJG/SM) there was reference to ensuring that no vehicles are to enter Fleetwood Road “.....*how vehicles are prevented from using the cycleway footpath linking to Fleetwood Road.*” There was clearly concern by LCC to ensure that vehicles did not enter Fleetwood Road.

In the unimaginable possibility that this application is approved, WTC have severe concern for the potential long term disruption and safety compromises that will be introduced due to the movement of site traffic plant, materials and machinery.

## **9.1 Unacceptable Alternatives**

- a) By preventing vehicular access at point A the only alternative would be to use Mowbreck Lane at the Wesham Cross junction. This would not, as claimed by the applicant relieve the pressure on the Wesham Cross junction, but compound it to make it a totally unsafe situation. As with the Weeton Road development, FBC made it a condition that the ex Wesham Hospital site development was not permitted to access Mowbreck Lane as they recognised the danger at Wesham Cross.
- b) The alternative egress from the proposed site directly onto the bypass roundabout is not encouraged by the Highways Agency as stated under paragraph 9 ref <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/3174.aspx>  
Access to all-purpose trunk roads  
*“Research shows that the formation of new accesses to trunk roads is liable to lead to a greater risk of accident.”*

## **10. Infrastructure:**

### **a) Sewer Capacity Issues**

Policy DP4 states a requirement that developments “*build upon existing concentrations of activities and existing infrastructure*” and “*do not require major investment in new infrastructure, including sewerage*”

WTC have serious concern for the sewerage capacity for the proposed site. During the original consultations, ‘United Utilities’ gave a clear indication of their objection to the proposed development. The TC accept that after discussions with the appropriate authorities some modifications have been proposed. However, given the complexity and anticipated cost for such modifications being put into place WTC are of the opinion that any modifications will be against Policy DP4 and any such modifications will require major investment.

### **b) Railway Station**

With reference to Metacre Ltd’s ‘Transport Assessment’ document dated November 2008, the following paragraphs make various observations:-

*5.4.7 Kirkham and Wesham railway station is around 1,100 metres to the south of the site, less than 15 minutes in walk time.*

*5.4.8 Kirkham and Wesham is a well equipped station with facilities including a staffed booking office during the daytime, CCTV, seated waiting areas and shelters.*

The reality of the situation is:-

WTC accept that there are trains to Preston with connections to all main line destinations; the main drawback is the lack of parking and Network Rail’s lamentable lack of will to either discuss this problem or find a solution.



Fig 12

The surrounding streets are used every working day for parking and on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February there were 54 cars parked outside properties adjacent to the station making it difficult for residents, who are rate payers, to stop in front of their properties. Some of the residents are elderly and there have been at least two occasions when emergency vehicles have had difficulty gaining access. There are only ten official parking places on the lower level under the bridge arches.

See also reference to 'Public Transport' Page 20 Medlar-with-Wesham Parish Plan 2008

The proposed access & egress road to and from the Mowbreck Lane development is planned to be at the island on Fleetwood Road and the distance to the station is approx, 1000 yards. Most travellers would find this too far to walk and much more likely to drive to the station especially in the morning and evening when commuting to and from work, the already difficult parking problem would therefore be exacerbated.

The Railway companies have little interest in providing travellers with any comfort, the waiting area consists of two inadequate bus shelter type open structures providing poor shelter for passengers.

(Any improvements to the station have been carried out by local volunteers & by H.M. Prison Services.)

**c) Amenities**

There is a significant variation in the claimed distances from the site to the following services claimed in the Metacre Sustainability Statement Reference Para 5:-

Banks; Secondary School; Medical Centre; Dentist and Pharmacy. Claims have been exaggerated by as much as 100% and exceed in all cases the Institute of Highways Transportation preference maximum distances to such amenities.

**d) Primary Schools**

Within the Parish there are two Primary Schools: St Joseph's Catholic and Wesham Church of England. It is accepted that St Joseph's School has capacity, however, in the case of Wesham C.E, the school Governors have major concern for its suitability and are campaigning for the long awaited new building. Two classrooms are operating from temporary Portakabin units located within the Church grounds and approaching the end of their lease. The age and quality of the entire school is not capable of supporting additional pupils. (Refer also to MWPP page 22)

## **11. Land Classification**

WTC dispute the claim made by Metacre that the land is of grade 3b. Evidence supplied by ‘Graeme Associates Ltd’ using the official Defra Agricultural Land Classification grading system identifies the land to be “...*certainly Grade 2 and in parts may well be described as borderline Grade 1*”

### **POLICY EP22**

**DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHICH WOULD INVOLVE THE PERMANENT LOSS OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) WHERE IT COULD REASONABLY TAKE PLACE ON PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES, ON LAND WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS OR ON POORER QUALITY AGRICULTURAL LAND.**

### ***PPS7 Best and most versatile agricultural land***

*28. The presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification), should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations (e.g. biodiversity; the quality and character of the landscape; its amenity value or heritage interest; accessibility to infrastructure, workforce and markets; maintaining viable communities; and the protection of natural resources, including soil quality) when determining planning applications. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land (grades 3b, 4 and 5) in preference to that of a higher quality, except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations.*

Using both policies (EP22 and PPS7) WTC consider that if this proposal were to be granted it would be done so clearly breaching EP22 in particular.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

Wesham Town Council respectfully requests that both the Officers and members of the Fylde Borough Development Control Committee consider this document carefully and reach a similar conclusion that this application is flawed in many respects and should be refused accordingly.

Evidence is overwhelming of the unsuitability of this agricultural site, which is outside the settlement boundary.

At the public meetings the level of objection from residents was almost universal with the signing of the petition indicating the strength of feeling throughout the Town. Detailed and additional evidence can be found in a submission from the Wesham Action Group who have conducted an in depth investigation resulting in similar and supporting objections.

WTC had, in November 1995, an informal approach from Metacre Ltd who wished to submit a similar application for the exchange of the recreation ground. The majority of the then Town Council expressed objection to the proposals. As a result the application was never actioned. However, the Town Council’s opinion has remained the same for the last 14 years, in that they are totally opposed to any further development on this Greenfield agricultural land to the North of Mowbreck Lane.



