

**Town And Country Planning Act 1990 - Planning Appeal**

**FORMER DXC TECHNOLOGY SITE, EUXTON HOUSE, EUXTON  
LANE CHORLEY PR7 6FE**

**By Bellway Homes Limited**

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**PLANNING PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF RICHARD WOOD**

**SUMMARY**

**APPLICATION REFERENCE: 21/01475/FULMAJ  
APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/D2320/W/22/3309262**

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## **SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

### **Richard Wood BA (HONS) BPI MBA MRTPI**

1. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (since 1991). I have worked as a planner in the public and private sectors for 33 years. I am a Director at Richard Wood Associates Ltd and work as an independent planning consultant. I hold an Honours Degree in Town and Country Planning and a post-graduate Bachelor of Planning Degree, both from the University of Manchester, and a Diploma in Management Studies and Master of Business Administration from the University of Hull.
2. Previously I was a Director at O'Neill Associates, Chartered Town Planning Consultants in York, working for public and private sector clients. Prior to working in consultancy, I was Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Transport at City of York Council and Head of Strategy at the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly (leading the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy).
3. I declare that the case and evidence which I have prepared and provided for this appeal is true and has been prepared in accordance with the guidance of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I confirm that the opinions expressed by me are my true and professional opinions and that this Proof includes all facts which I regard as being relevant to the opinions I have expressed. I am aware that as an expert witness my overriding duty is to the inquiry irrespective of by whom I am called. To inform my appraisal I have visited the appeal site and surrounding locality.
4. My evidence focuses on planning considerations. The Proof of Mr Sandwell addresses employment land matters.

### **Appeal Proposal**

5. The application subject to the appeal seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing building on site and the erection of 108 no. dwellings (Use Class C3). The appeal proposal comprises both market and affordable dwellings, over a range of house types in a traditional design style. Car parking spaces are predominantly

provided within the plot or through integral garages. Some properties are accompanied by detached, single garages.

6. In summary the appeal site is located within the settlement area at Euxton and falls within the Buckshaw Village Strategic Site boundary. The site measures 3.02 hectares in area and is occupied by the two storey 'DXC Technology' office building, surface car parks, areas of grass sward and some landscaping. The appeal site is fully vacant.

### **Development Plan and Other Material Considerations**

7. The Development Plan comprises the:
- Central Lancashire Core Strategy (CD 2.1), adopted July 2012, with a plan period of 2010-2026; and
  - Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 (CD 2.2), adopted 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015.
8. Other material considerations relevant to the appeal proposals are the National Planning Policy Framework (CD 1.1), the National Design Guide (CD 8.10), National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, CD 1.2), the Walking and Cycling Strategy for England (CD 8.5), CIHT guidance (CD's 8.2 & 8.4), Building for a Healthy Life (CD 8.9), Putting Health into Place guidance (CDs 8.11 & 8.12) and the Chorley Economic Strategy (CD 9.8).

### **Reason for Refusal 1 – Employment Land - Planning Analysis**

9. Key findings from Mr Sandwell's evidence are that:
- i. there is a shortfall in Chorley Borough's employment land supply, and this has consistently been the case over recent years.
  - ii. there is strong demand for industrial/warehouse uses in Chorley Borough.
  - iii. Buckshaw village is an area of high demand, with strong locational advantages.
  - iv. there are a number of successful industrial developments in the Buckshaw market area that are presently well occupied.
  - v. Positive market signals show the current strength of the industrial market.

- vi. Chorley Borough's industrial stock has a high occupancy rate, at a level that indicates a supply shortfall.
  - vii. The 2017 employment land study identifies that all parts of Buckshaw village are, or have the potential to be, rated as 'Best Urban'.
  - viii. The earlier 2009 assessment of the wider Xton Business Park and college site ranked this larger site area as 'Good Urban'.
  - ix. The Core Strategy sets out a presumption that Best Urban and Good Urban sites will be retained for employment use.
10. It is therefore important for the Borough to protect its existing stock of E(g)/B-Class land. The redevelopment of the 3.02 ha appeal site, for housing, would represent an unacceptable loss for a Borough which already has insufficient land to meet its long term needs. The appeal proposal conflicts with Core Strategy Policy 10 – criteria (a), (c), (d), (g) and (h). There is clear evidence of need for employment land in Chorley.
11. The appeal site should be considered as a key economic site (in the context of NPPF paragraph 123) based on the assessment of the appeal site as part of a wider site in 2009 as 'Good Urban' and the more recent 2017 assessment of the commercial elements of Buckshaw Village as being 'A Grade' or 'Best Urban'.

#### **Reason For Refusal 2 – Site Location and Suitability - Planning Analysis**

12. Building for a Healthy Life identifies the need for 'Integrated Neighbourhoods', integrating well with their wider natural and built surroundings and avoiding the creation of isolated and disconnected places. The appeal site is isolated from existing residential areas and the distances to services and facilities will not support an integrated and walkable neighbourhood. Most local services and facilities are well beyond the 800m walkable distance set out in both the National Design Guide and Planning for Walking (CIHT).
13. There would therefore be a lack of integration with established communities and supporting amenities. The appeal proposal conflicts with Core Strategy Policy 17 – criteria a), (c), (e), and (i) and the requirements of the NPPF to achieve well-designed

and healthy and inclusive places. NPPF requirements to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, reduce emissions and limit the need to travel would not be supported.

### **Planning Balance**

14. Paragraph 11 d (ii) of the NPPF is engaged, as Chorley does not have a five-year deliverable supply of housing. Planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
  
15. It is accepted, based on footnote 8 of NPPF Paragraph 11 d (ii), that as the most important policies for determining the application/appeal Core Strategy Policies 10 and 17 are out of date. These policies are though otherwise consistent with the requirements of the NPPF, and weight can still be given to the policies of the Development Plan under the 'tilted balance'. I attach significant weight to both Core Strategy Policies 10 and 17.

### **Economic Objectives**

16. The November 2021 Economic Benefits Statement (CD 10.13) submitted with the application for the appeal proposal sets out benefits associated with the construction phase and with the new housing. Economic benefits of the appeal proposal which are associated with the construction phase would be relatively short-lived. Whilst housing is important to the economy, the appeal proposal is substantially a residential scheme. In the overall scale of the economy in Chorley, the contribution of the economic benefits would be modest. I thereby attach limited weight to the economic benefits.
  
17. In the context of Framework paragraph 123, redevelopment of the appeal site for residential development would undermine a key economic site. The appeal proposal would contribute to a shortage in employment land supply in the borough, harming economic growth. Chorley Borough has shortfalls in its employment land supply. The appeal proposal would result in the loss of employment land in a strong and attractive market area, in a Borough experiencing high occupancy levels and strong demand.

18. Significant weight is given to Core Strategy Policy 10. As set out in Section 5 the appeal proposal does not satisfy the requirements of criteria (a), (c), (d), (g) and (h) of Core Strategy Policy 10. There is harm to the Development Plan. I attach significant weight to the economic adverse impacts.
19. Overall, there would be significant adverse economic impacts that would undermine the economic policies of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy 10. On balance the economic adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the economic benefits.

### **Social Objectives**

20. The appeal proposals will provide 108 dwellings in total, including thirteen affordable homes. Chorley does not have a five year supply of housing land and there is a pressing need for more affordable homes in the Borough. The delivery of market and affordable housing is a significant benefit and I attach significant weight to this.
21. The appeal site is isolated in locational terms. It is not an accessible location that promotes connectivity by sustainable modes of transport to key services and facilities. Such an approach to place making does not promote healthy and inclusive places as promoted in Framework Paragraph 82 and does not result in a development that functions well, as required by Framework paragraph 130.
22. The distances to services and facilities will place reliance on use of the private car and does not encourage residents to walk to facilities. The distances to nearly all nearby local services and facilities are greater than the 800m distances set out in the National Design Guide. The use of active travel modes is important in achieving positive health outcomes. Similarly, poor accessibility to services and facilities does not support an inclusive place. Criteria a, c, e, and i of Core Strategy Policy 17 are not satisfied.
23. I attach significant weight to the housing delivery benefits associated with the appeal proposal. I also attach significant weight to the place making adverse impacts that would result from the proposal's isolated and disconnected location, as it will not achieve the Framework's requirements to create well-designed and healthy and

inclusive places. The development would be unlikely to function well over its lifetime because of its poor connectivity. Overall, I assess the social balance as neutral.

### **Environmental Objectives**

24. There would be a net improvement in amenity as a result of the appeal proposals, due to the provision of Public Open Space, a Local Equipped Area of Play and bringing a vacant site back into viable re-use. Through the creation of private rear and front gardens and a landscaped area of open space and planting of trees elsewhere on the site, a net gain in biodiversity is achieved. I attach limited weight to the environmental benefits.
25. The use of unsustainable modes of transport would be encouraged given the lack of appropriate walking distances to local services and facilities. This does not serve to reduce the need to travel with resulting impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. The proposal would not limit the need to travel or offer a genuine choice of transport modes. I attach moderate weight to the environmental adverse impacts.

### **Achieving Sustainable Development**

26. The appeal proposal would not represent sustainable development considered against the requirements of the NPPF. Net gains would not be achieved against the environmental and economic objectives of the planning system.

### **Overall Planning Balance**

27. On overall balance the economic, social, and environmental adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the economic, social and environmental benefits. The appeal proposal is contrary to the development plan and material considerations reinforce the case for refusal.
28. For the reasons set out above, I respectfully support the view that this appeal should be dismissed.