Introduction

The document submitted by HSL (HSLM) is, in our view, a ‘talking point’ and while it contains potentially useful analysis of site constraints and opportunities as well as supporting surveys (actual and desk based) it cannot be considered either as a Masterplan or even a Draft Masterplan. Our understanding from the Wyre Masterplan Guidance document (WMG) is that for the scale and complexity of the Forton extension any masterplan would need to be a more detailed document than that currently provided by HSL.

Also, for the Masterplan to be a bridging document between the Local Plan and subsequent outline/full planning applications the content should be neutral and have the capacity to be applied to any subsequent planning applications. It should not read as a document that is focused upon the issues of any individual developer.

The masterplan should also reference the Local Plan and become in itself a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of planning applications.

This is an exciting opportunity to collaboratively craft a masterplan that will provide a vision for the future development of Forton.

Principles of Development

1. ‘Masterplanning should tell a story about the place as it is now’ (Guidelines 3.2) and ‘before starting planning the change for an area, it is necessary to look at how it works now, how it came to be that way, and how this understanding can be applied to shaping its future’ (Guidelines 9.9)

2. Planning must start from what existing residents have now and what they wish to preserve, enhance, discard.

1. Options

1.1 The HSL document shows one potential layout for the Forton Extension but other options are actively being pursued by the community, landowner and stakeholder groups.

1.2 The options being considered by the community, focus upon the location and feature set of the Neighbourhood Centre, Sports Facilities, Green Infrastructure, School Extension and Road Infrastructure.
1.3 There are some very creative opportunities here that, if applied, will actively promote community building and ensure future sustainability.

1.4 The options under consideration must take cognisance of the existing community resources. How will the new work with the existing?

1.5 Options that include new structures, like the Neighbourhood Centre, should state clearly the ownership and maintenance plans, as well as what point in the phasing of the development they will be available to the community.

2. Design-led approach

2.1 The Forton masterplan must be design-led and constructed with the capacity to be applied to all future planning applications where a masterplan is a requirement.

3. Masterplan framework

3.1 A masterplan framework needs to be produced for the development.

3.2 The framework provides a spatial representation of how the area will be developed and a physical illustration of how the character areas, streets, green spaces, land uses and transport could be arranged in order to be appropriate and acceptable.

3.2 The plan demonstrates the key principles for the layout of the development. In particular, it provides an indication of how the density of the development should vary throughout the development and that there should be a focus on the village green and the neighbourhood centre, which will form a natural focal point.

4. Duplication of village amenities

4.1 The proposed new neighbourhood centre does not reference Forton’s existing village hall. Is this a duplication of resources or is this intended as a replacement?

4.2 Social cohesion will not be achieved unless there is some rationality behind adding a new hall in the proposed Neighbourhood Centre. In the village there are numerous community, social and recreational centres including an existing village hall, cricket club, bowling pavilion, several church halls and a scout hut.
4.3 Recreation and play facilities should be easily accessible by the community (not just a community sub section eg. new housing) and seek to build upon existing provision within the village. Where completely new facilities are offered as part of the Forton Extension these should be grouped in a single location rather than dispersed throughout the development. For safety reasons they should be kept in open public view.

5. **Green space analysis**

5.1 The distribution and grouping of green infrastructure (GI) to peripheral areas of the development is not acceptable and goes against a more balanced distribution that retains the village 'look and feel'.

5.2 The 5ha allowance (LP) is for **new** GI allocation. parcel B and existing GI should not be included.

5.3 The SuDS attenuation ponds (green/blue infrastructure) are not in themselves GI. We would need to see a justification if they are included in the GI allowance.

5.4 In general, more work needs to be done on GI - we need to understand what types will be offered, the location and the size.

5.5 The provision of allotments should be considered as this has been raised with the parish council. The location would need further consultation.

6. **Sensitive boundaries**

6.1 There is little reference in the document to the actual treatment of sensitive boundaries.

6.2 We require a more considered treatment of any development boundary adjacent to existing housing. At the very least it should be garden to garden with hedges/tree boundaries as per existing properties in the village (see Bowland Gardens example).

6.3 We require that boundaries to open countryside have reduced housing densities.

6.4 Existing mature holly hedging (which is a key characteristic of the locality) should be retained to form a natural boundary.

6.5 Special consideration must be given to boundaries adjacent to the A6 and the entry from the A6 into the village along School Lane. This is the primary entry route into the village and we need to retain the
7. Traffic and Transportation analysis

7.1 This is a major concern for existing and future residents which the Croft Transport analysis does not comprehensively address. Does their analysis take into account the rate of increase in housing and industrial development along the A6 corridor or the proposed housing development to the south of Lancaster? While the A6 has been modelled by Highways for capacity we would need to see how this modelling takes into account the ease of flow of both east-west crossing traffic as well as traffic access/exit from the A6 corridor developments.

7.2 The A6/School Lane junction is classified as a priority junction; as in vehicular traffic flowing north-south which will create a bottle neck affect for villagers trying to use this junction unless a managed flow solution is implemented, especially at peak times. This affect will be further exacerbated by the single points of access onto School Lane from the development proposed in parcel A (north and south) and the additional traffic generated by the industrial area which Croft has not factored in.

7.3 We want Highways to implement a traffic light controlled junction to effectively allow the additional 700 plus vehicles a day to use this exit/entrance as their preferred route.

7.4 To ease the vehicular pressure points on School Lane at the entry to the village from traffic entering/exiting the new developments further consideration should be given to the proposed staggered give-way junctions proposed by Croft.

7.5 Consideration should also be given to providing a dual lane exit from the village to facilitate the free flow of traffic turning left to Lancaster. Currently, it backs up if more than two vehicles are turning right to Garstang.

7.6 If the School Lane exit to the A6 becomes restricted then alternative routes will be taken along School Lane/Cockerham Road (west), Winder Lane/Ratcliffe Wharf Lane (south) and Wallace Lane/Cockerham Road (north). The majority of these lanes have narrow restrictions, and/or very difficult exit junctions and the additional problem of poorly maintained narrow canal bridges. They are also multi-user with extensive mixed recreational use for links to PROWS. As one resident described them ‘they are Forton’s lungs’.

rural lane/village profile rather than an urbanised estate entrance. This can be achieved through the gradation of housing density, a varied profile of housing type and effective use of GI.
7.7 If the A6 junction is only improved to the Croft standards then all of the lanes, junctions and bridges in 7.6 above will need to be improved, because that will be where a lot of the traffic will be heading to get round the A6 junction bottle neck.

7.8 The village requires a safe pedestrian crossing of the A6, preferably linked to PROW’s to encourage inter-community pedestrian links to services. There is also a requirement for safe student access to bus services. The preferred solution is a single Puffin crossing to the south of the A6/School Lane junction or linked into traffic lights at the junction.

7.9 Depending upon the junction solution adopted by LCC Highways then we agree with the Croft analysis that the bus shelters/stops will need to be relocated. We require any alterations to favour elderly, disabled and safe student access to these essential public services. Consideration should be given to providing direct pedestrian access from the new developments as an alternative to pedestrian access from the A6/School Lane junction.

7.10 More information is required for the type of junction that will be implemented on Winder Lane to provide access to parcel C and D.

7.11 To alleviate the pressure on School Lane between the pavilion and the A6 junction, consideration should be given to adopting a permeable road structure that allows for more than one exit/entrance from each of the development parcels.

7.12 The proposed link road across parcel B requires further consideration and is tied with the optional playing field consolidation in parcel D and whether the Neighbourhood Centre is located in parcel A or is relocated to parcel B (also accommodating a replacement bowling pavilion).

8. The Site

8.1 A good masterplan should tell a story about the place as it is now and how it will be in the future through the development of the site in question. Both aspects require more work to achieve this and in particular the ‘place as it is now’ does not adequately describe Forton or its context/history.

8.2 The opportunities to connect new and existing communities is not explored in enough detail. Creating a functional and attractive village centre that would become the focal point of the village, developing additional sports facilities linked to existing provision, blending the new with the existing residential area through walkways are but a few examples.
8.3 The aspiration should be to create an organic extension, which reflects and blends with the green leafy character of the existing village.

9. Vision

9.1 To create a high quality sustainable neighbourhood that is integrated socially and physically with the existing village.

9.2 It will be characterised by attractive well-designed buildings and spaces and will comprise of a number of distinctive areas with their own unique character, which respond to that particular part of the site.

9.3 It will contain a mix of integrated green spaces that will provide formal and informal recreation opportunities whilst creating a soft transition between the new development and surrounding countryside.

9.4 The development will provide at least 310 new homes in the plan period to 2031, including a mix of larger family housing, starter homes, elderly housing (20%), a primary school extension, 1ha of employment land, a neighbourhood centre and a village green which forms the natural focal point of the site.

9.5 The development sites will be well connected to existing facilities and services, with a permeable layout that maximises linkages and integration within the sites and the wider area.

9.6 The result will be an enlarged settlement that still retains the look and feel of a village.

10. Objectives

10.1 To deliver a high quality scheme, which consists of well-designed attractive houses, buildings and spaces with a rural form.

10.2 To provide distinctive character areas within each of the development parcels.

10.3 To provide a high impact rural village form and function on entry from the A6.

10.4 To provide a mix of housing throughout the different character areas.

10.5 Elderly/disabled housing should be located within easy access to transport facilities and be integrated into the housing mix.
10.6 To provide a clear and permeable street hierarchy with tree lined routes on secondary road networks.

10.7 Traffic speeds to be set at 20 mph throughout the development areas.

10.8 To provide a network of footpaths and cycleways linked, where possible, to adjacent PROW’s.

10.9 To maximise linkages and integration between the development areas and existing communities.

10.10 To ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is provided alongside the new development at the right time and in the right place.

10.11 To provide a woodland recreation area on the high land to the north of parcel A that would enhance the biodiversity of the area.

10.12 To manage surface water run-off through a coordinated network of sustainable drainage (SuDS) techniques, which are integrated into and enhance the green infrastructure network.

10.13 To protect and enhance the green lanes that radiate from the village centre – Winder Lane, Wallace Lane, School Lane as these are extensively used as a recreational resource and provide links to a wider network of PROW’s.

10.14 To protect mature trees and long established holly hedging, which is a distinctive feature of the Forton area. If small sections are removed by agreement they will be transferred to an alternative location within the development so that there is no overall loss of habitat.

11. Education requirements

11.1 This is clearly a matter for LCC Education Authority to determine how the 0.8 ha school extension provided for in the Local Plan will be allocated.

11.2 There is an opportunity for the school to be accessed via a road link from parcel D, relieving the pressure on School Lane and improving pupil safety at pick up/drop off times.

11.3 There is an opportunity to use recreational GI allowance to combine with the 0.8 ha extension to provide additional sports facilities such as a MUGA, tennis court, football pitch etc.
11.4 Where recreational GI is provided in parcel D this should be owned by the community with shared access by the school.

12. Housing requirements

12.1 20% of the overall housing allocation should be designed for elderly/disabled use.

12.2 This elderly/disable allocation should be a mixture of housing types including a proportion that are starter homes for disabled use and affordable for elderly use.

12.3 A significant proportion of the existing population of Forton are elderly and provision is required to give them the option to remain in Forton while releasing larger properties back onto the housing market.

12.4 To deliver a minimum of 10% affordable home ownership products (owned/part owned/rented).

12.5 Housing delivered on the site will be well-designed and good quality homes inspired by the semi-rural nature of the village and be arranged in perimeter blocks of varying character. The BREEAM standard should be applied across the development.

12.6 The layout must allow residents to have a good quality of life and should protect the amenity of the existing community and future residents.

12.7 Housing will be expected to be laid in a series of development blocks, which will provide the neighbourhood with a clearly defined structure and a permeable street layout.

12.8 The blocks should be designed to ensure that buildings front onto streets, have a private rear garden and that there is a clear distinction between public and private spaces. The appropriate use of variety in building lines is however encouraged in order to create visual interest. Block size should be considered alongside the need to maximise the permeability of the development and encourage walking and cycling.

12.9 Adequate off street parking will be provided for a minimum of two vehicles per dwelling to reduce the need for parking on pedestrian pavements.
13. Housing Density

13.1 Housing density on average should be set at approximately 20 dwellings per ha.

13.2 Housing density should vary across individual development parcels to create visual interest and break up the built form. These changes in density are important structuring elements that reinforce the sense of place of character areas across the site and will also ensure that there is a variety and balance of house types.

13.3 The need for densities to respond to the setting of the site, together with the aspiration to retain a green leafy village look and feel, means that no part of the development areas will be characterised by high housing densities.

13.4 Housing density should be reduced towards the countryside edge and the School Lane entrance to the village.

13.5 The density of the housing must also reflect the character of the surrounding area.

13.6 The aspiration should be to create an organic extension, which reflects and blends with the green leafy character of the existing village.

13.7 Provision of housing suitable for families with associated areas of private amenity space, means that no parts of the sites are likely to be characterised by higher densities than 30 dwellings per ha.

14. Housing mix

14.1 A high proportion of dwellings should be suitable for families with 3 – 4 bedrooms.

14.2 20% of the dwellings should be suitable for elderly/disabled occupation. These should be carefully sited to provide ease of access to public transport and community facilities.

14.3 It’s difficult to predict future market demand over the period of the masterplan so we expect that precise details of the mix will instead be negotiated on a phase-by-phase basis by the Council.

14.4 Development should have a range of different dwelling types and sizes to create choice, a varied building form and to support the creation of a mixed community.
14.5 Affordable housing should be provided closer to the school provision.

15. Character areas

15.1 The masterplan needs to be subdivided into distinct character areas to take into account the existing landscape, ecological and topographical characteristics of the development parcels.

15.2 These character areas will need to be identified on a map.

15.3 The character areas will demonstrate different building typologies and housing densities with lower densities graduating up the slope to the northern portion of parcel A and on areas adjacent to open countryside. Higher densities will be towards the central areas of the development parcels.

15.4 Each character area should be individually described to include

* General characteristics
* Amount and land use
* Scale and form
* Streets, spaces and landscape
* Boundary treatments and enclosure
* Detail of built form

15.5 In no instance should there be left over green space. It must be planned and designed as an integral and meaningful part of the layout for each character area.

16. General design principles

16.1 The development parcels should create a place inspired by the defining characteristics of small rural communities and hamlets on the western edge of the Bowland Fells with the aim of achieving a high quality environment.

16.2 The developments should take advantage of and integrate with existing topography, views, landscape features, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate.

16.3 New buildings should be designed and positioned with landscaping to define streets and spaces.

16.4 The developments should be designed with visual referencing to make it easy to find your way around.
16.5 Resident and visitor car parking should be sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street and building frontages.

16.6 Building design should take inspiration from the local area to create distinct place as well as create innovative sustainable homes.

16.7 The development should adopt the safe places principles.

17. Design Approach

17.1 To create a unified and cohesive layout, with the natural features forming the key structural elements and a clear overall structure to streets and spaces.

17.2 While it is important that the development has continuity and a definable sense of place, the character areas have their own characteristics that respond in different ways to their role and location within the Forton extension.

17.3 The landscape structure will be a dominant element and will further reinforce place making providing a connected green infrastructure network.

17.4 Existing woodlands and hedgerows should be retained and enhanced to soften transition areas to open countryside.

17.5 Place making will be further reinforced through the design of hard and soft landscape for individual dwellings and the creation of incidental green spaces to break up the built form.

Blocks

17.6 The area will be laid out in a series of development blocks which support a connected network of streets and footpaths.

17.7 Blocks should be designed as perimeter blocks where the buildings from the street or public space and there is a clear distinction between public and private realm. This will ensure each dwelling has a private rear garden and will provide eyes on the street thus creating a safer and more secure environment.

Gateways

17.8 A number of entrances are proposed into the individual development sites from the surrounding roads and these should create attractive and distinct gateways. This can be achieved by building orientation, architectural expression or landscape features.
Landmarks

17.9 Landmarks (key feature buildings, open spaces, mature trees etc) should be used to create a sense of place and identity as well as help people to orientate themselves around the development.

Focal Points

17.10 The main focal point for the development will be a new village green and associated neighbourhood centre. The exact location is yet to be determined.

Important Views

17.11 There are important views from outside the site, particularly from footpaths in the open countryside to the north of parcel A.

17.12 There is an opportunity to provide a range of formal and informal views from within the development areas to the nearby Bowland Fells.

17.13 The ridge line to the north of parcel A should not be dominated by development. Buildings should be viewed as nestled and integrated into the landscape.

Public Space

17.14 Public spaces should be safe, visually interesting, engage community use and include natural surveillance.

18. Flood risk assessment / SuDS

18.1 The information provided by Betts Hydro is ‘merely illustrative’ and ‘desk-based’ so we would require more information before making a detailed assessment.

18.2 The surface water management scheme adopted for parcel A is a crucial consideration for the village as within the last two years both fields have flooded at the lowest points adjacent to School Lane and on one occasion the lane itself was under approximately 0.4m of water in the dip that naturally occurs in the School Lane and that is with approximately 6% of the site under hard standing/buildings.

18.3 We appreciate that Betts Hydro proposal is to ‘mimic a pre-development greenfield situation’ but taking into account that School Lane is the primary exit/entrance to the village we would require a solution that exceeds pre-development and ensures that there is no risk to surface flooding of School Lane.
18.4 We require more information about the effectiveness, maintenance, ownership and safety of the proposed attenuation ponds.

18.5 We can only make comment on the discharge to watercourses once more detail assessment has taken place.

19. Services and utilities

Sewage

19.1 There is no information about how foul water will be transferred from the site.

19.2 We reserve comment until plans are in place that provide a detailed assessment as to how the existing sewage system will be developed.

Gas/Electricity

19.3 No information about how these services will be provided.

Telecommunications

19.4 In terms of telecommunications all new developments should be fibre linked to the dwellings and not linked by copper from the roadside cabinet (existing provision). This is essential for a sustainable development.

19.5 For the scale of the proposed development there is an opportunity to extend the fibre provision to other existing residential and social sites within the village.

20. Biodiversity

20.1 Measures should be taken to mitigate the impact of the development.

20.2 Mature trees and hedgerows should be retained.

20.3 Where there is a strong construction reason for removal of hedgerows they should be relocated at another appropriate place so that there is no net loss of habitat.

20.4 Green corridors should be used to link areas of green infrastructure to facilitate wildlife movement across the development.
20.5 Where there is an appropriate opportunity attenuation ponds should be enhanced to provide wetland and pond habitats.

20.6 Trees and soft landscaping should be added to garden areas to support wildlife and birdlife.

20.7 Key views into and out of the site should be maintained and a sensitive design response to wildlife and birdlife achieved by varying heights, scale, massing and landscape.

20.8 The topography of the northern section of parcel A might lend itself to a ridge parkland area with an opportunity to protect the biodiversity of the area while providing access for recreation use linked to exiting PROW’s.

21. **Recreational opportunities**

21.1 There are numerous design options for the allocation of recreational facilities which we would like to further explore.

21.2 An opportunity exists to reorganise the recreational facilities within the village and create a shared area as part of the new school extension in parcel D. This would include a MUGA, sports pitches and a tennis court (all dependant upon the amount of the general GI allocation and the amount of the 0.8 ha school extension allowance available for green infrastructure).

21.3 The existing bowling green and associated pavilion would be retained in its current position. As the bowling club is in a key area of disruption developers of parcel A would be required to upgrade the bowling pavilion and provide discrete floodlighting of the playing area to enable matches and practices to take place in an evening at the beginning and end of the season.

21.4 The children’s play area would remain and be further developed to include more modern play equipment, trim trails etc. It is envisaged (subject to Council agreement) that 106 monies from the recent Bowland Garden development could be used to support this provision along with associated landscaping.

21.5 Provision should be made to provide an integrated pedestrian network that links to existing PROW’s and promotes non-vehicular access to community resources eg. Post Office on Hollins Lane.
22. Delivery strategy / phasing

22.1 Considerate contractor status will need to operate during all phases of the development (operating hours/means of piling/mud control/noise pollution).

22.2 No information has been provided with regard to delivery strategy and phasing so we reserve the right to be able to comment on this as the masterplan is further developed.

22.3 In principle we require that all the appropriate infrastructure is provided alongside the new development at the right time and in the right place.

22.4 The improvements to the A6/School Lane junction must be completed before any construction work is started.

22.5 Alternative temporary access points should be considered for the sites construction traffic to avoiding adding further weighting to the School Lane/A6 junction.

22.6 Careful consideration must be given to the phased development of parcel A to keep School Lane functional as the primary exit/entrance point to the village.

22.7 Consideration must be given to ensure that the additional education provision is operational in time to take up the demand from the phasing of the new housing development.

23. Industrial development

23.1 The allowance of 1ha of industrial land in parcel A south needs further work as the current document does not allow for this.

23.2 If the industrial development is a single discrete character block it should be placed to the rear (south) of Jesmond Dene adjacent to the border of parcel B.

23.3 The industrial units should be served by a separate access road (to School Lane) avoiding dual use through residential areas.

23.4 Careful consideration should be given to the landscaping and built form of any industrial units placed on land fronting School Lane.

23.5 If the industrial units are dispersed they should be placed to the rear of parcel A.
23.6 Special design attention must be given to the boundaries between these industrial units and residential homes.

24. Planning application requirements

24.1 Due to the scale of the Forton Extension it is envisaged that the development will take place over a phased programme agreed with the planning authority.

24.2 Developers will be expected to engage in pre-application discussions with the Council prior to submitting a planning application for any part of the extension.

24.3 The Council’s preferred approach is for an outline planning application to be submitted for the whole development. However, due to the site being in multiple land ownerships, it is recognised that separate planning applications are likely to come forward for different areas of the site.

24.4 Planning applications will be expected to be supported by appropriate documentation, such as Design and Access Statements, Transport Assessments, Ecological Surveys, Land Contamination Assessments, Flood Risk Assessments and Drainage Assessments.

24.5 In order to avoid a piecemeal and poorly integrated development, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the proposed development would contribute to the vision and objectives for the site and that the development would not prejudice the overall proposals and principles of the masterplan.

24.6 Applicants should therefore use their Design and Access Statements to not only demonstrate how they have incorporated high standards of design but also to explain how the proposed development would fit together with, and help deliver, the wider masterplan; including necessary infrastructure.

24.7 Applications for individual phases/parcels of land will need to demonstrate how they integrate with the wider site and in particular how they would enable the specific requirements of the masterplan to be met, such as the provision of primary and secondary routes. This could be achieved by the submission of a Proving Layout Plan at a scale of 1:1000.

24.8 A Landscape Masterplan at 1:1000 should also be submitted to provide details on the proposed SuDS network, planting to be retained, new planting and green spaces, soft landscaping, boundary treatments and footpath enhancement/creation.
24.9 A Drainage Strategy for the whole site will also need to be submitted and agreed with the Council.

25. **Neighbourhood Centre and Services**

25.1 The provision of neighbourhood centre and associated village green will provide a natural focal point for the village.

25.2 The Neighbourhood Centre should be provided during the first phase of the development to facilitate the integration of both new and existing communities.

25.3 The costs associated with the provision of the Neighbourhood Centre will be proportionally shared across the developers.

25.4 A ten year maintenance plan will also need to be provided.

25.5 There is a potential opportunity to make this a more sustainable resource by providing rental income from the community shop and health outreach facilities.

25.6 If the building allocated as a health outreach centre was not taken up by the Health Authority its provision would still be required for use by local community groups.

26. **Need to add**

26.1 **Strategic vision** for the site and series of development objectives.

26.2 **Masterplan framework** - guide the quantum and layout of the site and address matters such as residential density.

26.3 **Development principles** which will guide development relating to for example transport, green infrastructure, design including built form and public realm.

26.4 **Framework for delivery** including infrastructure requirements.

26.5 A phasing plan.

26.6 A map showing the physical area of the development and its context.
27. Need to change

27.1 Constraints and opportunity plans. They are too cluttered to see information clearly and also contain inaccuracies.

27.2 Do 'the sites provide a central point for the primary school' as it is located to the west of the village?

28. Need to remove

28.1 All viewpoint photographs. What purpose do they serve?

28.2 Established commercial/industrial development adjacent to parcel E - from site opportunities.

28.3 Parcel B reference to a community hall.

28.4 All of the persuasion points as to why the industrial allocation of 1ha should not be in parcel A. This has been ruled on by the Inspectorate and a masterplan is not the place for this argument.