Forton Extension
Draft Masterplan

December 2019
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1 Introduction

1.1 The Wyre Local Plan 2011 – 2031 allocates land east and south of Forton for the Forton Extension: a mixed-use development of at least 310 dwellings, 1ha of employment land and a neighbourhood centre comprising of a small local convenience store, community hall and health facility (the latter only if required).

1.2 Local Plan policy SA3/4 sets out a number of Key Development Considerations, the first of which states:

   This site is to be brought forward in line with a masterplan to be produced covering the whole of the site. The masterplan must be agreed by the local planning authority prior to the granting of planning permission for any part of the site.

1.3 The ‘Report on the Examination of the Wyre Local Plan’ (01 February 2019) stated “masterplans should be proportionate” and that “it is in the Council’s interest to ensure that the masterplan process does not unduly delay delivery of allocations” (para. 146).

1.4 Wyre Council published ‘Guidance on the Preparation of Masterplans’ (May 2019) that sets out what a masterplan should contain and how it should be produced. The guidance states that “masterplanning is about place making” and advises that “a good masterplan should tell a story about the place as it is now and how it will look in the future through the development of the site in question” (para. 3.2).

1.5 The purpose of this masterplan is to provide an overarching development strategy for the allocation as a whole. It establishes spatial principles relating to matters including land use, highways and movement, design and green infrastructure. This strategy, and the principles it embodies, will be a material planning consideration when the council assesses future planning applications for land within the allocation.

1.6 As explained overleaf, this Draft ‘Forton Extension Masterplan’ has been produced through collaborative working between Wyre Council, the Landowners Group and the Stakeholders Group. It is supported by a series of technical studies which provide a robust evidence base.

1.7 Overall, the aim of this ‘Forton Extension Masterplan’ is to facilitate the delivery of a sustainable “organic” extension to Forton.
2 Consultation

2.1 This Draft Masterplan is the subject of a consultation exercise involving the local community and key stakeholders. The final document will identify the key issues raised as a result of this consultation and how these issues have been addressed.

2.2 Details of the consultation on this Draft Masterplan, including how to make comments on the document and its evidence base, are available at:

https://www.wyre.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/1241/masterplans

How have we reached the Consultation stage?

2.3 The Draft Masterplan has reached this stage following an extensive collaborative working process between Wyre Council, the Landowners Group and the Stakeholders Group.

2.4 Wyre Council’s Planning Policy team has been responsible for facilitating the masterplanning process which has been led by Hollins Strategic Land as a land promoter with an interest in a significant part of the allocated site.

2.5 The Landowners Group, comprising of representatives of each Parcel of land within the Forton Extension (see page # for further detail), has since held several meetings to discuss the various elements of the Forton Extension, the first taking place in February 2018.

2.6 Wyre Council and the Landowners Group held a meeting with the Stakeholders Group in April 2019 to consider emerging proposals and identify key issues. The Stakeholders Group comprised of the following bodies and the meeting allowed them to offer input into the masterplanning process:

• Forton Parish Council;
• Lancashire County Council (LCC) Education;
• LCC Highways;
• Lead Local Flood Authority;
• LCC Public Health;
• Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group;
• Historic England;
• Environment Agency;
• Natural England;
• United Utilities;
• Health and Safety Executive;
• Wyre Council Drainage Officer; and,
• Wyre Council Parks and Open Space Officer.

2.7 The consultation on the Draft Masterplan will provide an opportunity for the local community, stakeholders, plus any statutory consultees not listed above, to comment on the Draft Masterplan.
3 Masterplan: Vision and Objectives

Objectives

3.1 The aim of the masterplan is to provide a framework for the delivery of a sustainable development that responds positively to the local context. In so doing, development within the masterplan area should positively respond to the following objectives:

1. To create a new sustainable extension to Forton that is integrated socially and physically with the existing village and promotes healthy and active communities, maximising opportunities to enhance the quality of life for future and existing residents in the village.

2. Build a range of homes of different types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs of different sections of the community and that contribute to the creation of a varied and attractive environment.

3. Create a movement network for pedestrians and cyclists that promotes safe connectivity within the village and with the surrounding countryside and takes the opportunity to enhance and improve access to existing Public Rights of Way.

4. To create a safe, desirable, healthy and inclusive place to live through the provision of accessible streets and open spaces with natural surveillance.

5. Ensure that the highway infrastructure is designed to provide for the safe movement of traffic and other road users, addresses connectivity to the A6 and is fully integrated into the movement network for pedestrians and cyclists.

6. Identify land suitable for an extension to the existing primary school and to identify land for the development of a new neighbourhood centre in line with Wyre Local Plan requirements that contribute towards creating sustainable development, whilst strengthening the local community through the provision of new employment opportunities.

7. Ensure the location of non-residential uses is compatible with neighbouring properties and that the non-residential uses are located, as far as is reasonable, to maximise accessibility to new and existing residents.

8. Create a development that respects and responds to its location with particular attention paid to the relationship to the existing built form, listed buildings and their setting, views through the site, and the nature and quality of boundary treatments.

9. To retain important ecological and landscape features with the aim of establishing and preserving functional ecological habitats and networks that facilitate the movement of species and populations and protect the Borough’s biodiversity and provide a net biodiversity gain.

10. Produce a high quality and safe public realm that includes landscaping, buffering to the A6, and green infrastructure. Deliver green infrastructure in a manner that contributes to a well-designed and healthy living and working environment, including physical and functional connections with neighbouring green infrastructure and countryside areas.

11. To ensure that the site is appropriately drained, including the management of residual surface water, through a co-ordinated network of sustainable drainage techniques which are integrated into, and enhance, the green infrastructure and biodiversity network.

12. Opportunities are taken to address any relevant issues arising from climate change and to minimise the use of resources, including energy consumption.

13. Avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of occupants and users of surrounding or nearby properties, whilst securing a good standard of amenity for the occupants and users of the proposed development.

14. To create a development that respects, and responds to, its location with particular attention paid to the relationship between the existing built form and wider landscape, which includes structures of heritage value, views into and out of the site, and the nature and quality of boundary treatments.

Vision

To create an “organic” extension to Forton that is integrated into the existing village fabric in terms of design and layout, including pedestrian and cycle connectivity to local services. The development will provide a mix of employment, retail and community uses to support the new growth and enhance the sustainability of the village. There will be a mix of integrated green spaces that will provide formal and informal recreation opportunities accessible to new and existing residents whilst creating a soft transition between the newly built development and surrounding countryside.
4 The Village of Forton

An introduction

4.1 Forton is a village and civil parish in Wyre which has a population of 365 (Local Land and Property Gazetteer derived population May 2016). It is located approximately 4km north of Garstang and 10km south of Lancaster. The A6 Preston Lancaster Road runs to the east of the village and connects with the M6 and M55.

4.2 The earliest part of the existing settlement is based around the junction of School Lane and Wallace Lane. Early mapping shows very limited built development in the nineteenth century. Forton was more akin to a small rural hamlet until the 1960s when a new primary school was built along with a number of housing estates off School Lane and Wallace Lane.

4.3 The village has since experienced further growth, with additional housing estates constructed off School Lane and Ribblesdale Drive in the early 21st century.

4.4 The residents of Forton benefit from a number of services and facilities within the village such as the Cricket Club, Village Hall, Primary School, Playing Field and Bowling Pavilion. The A6 provides excellent public transport connections with frequent bus services running north and south of the village to larger settlements including Garstang, Preston and Lancaster.
Local Vernacular

4.5 Forton comprises of a small historic village core which is surrounded by a number of housing estates.

4.6 The core, formed around the junction of School Lane and Wallace Lane, comprises of the Chapel, Village Hall and a number of attractive stone-built dwellings. It is dominated by seven residential areas, the majority of which are of limited architectural merit:

1. An area comprising of terraced two-storey housing with pebble dash elevations along Coronation Avenue turns its back on the village entrance from the A6;
2. Semi-detached and detached dormer bungalows of predominantly red brick construction are found off Troutbeck Avenue;
3. An area comprising of near identical 1.5 storey rendered dwellings dominate the street scenes south of School Lane and along Spring Vale/Winder Lane;
4. This is repeated to the north west of the village, along Lunesdale Drive and Ribblesdale Drive;
5. More recent residential development can be found west of Ribblesdale Drive, off Bowland Gardens;
6. A small red-bricked area of semi-detached housing is found off Willow Close; and,
7. A similar sized area, again comprising of semi-detached red brick housing is located off Chapel Close.

4.7 Forton is a relatively modern village with a small core. There is no dominant architectural form worthy of reflection in the Forton Extension.
‘Forton Extension’ site

4.8 The ‘Forton Extension’ site comprises of land east and south of the existing settlement. It can be split into four parcels:
   A. Land north and south of School Lane;
   B. Village Playing Field;
   C. Land off Winder Lane; and,
   D. Land south of Spring Vale/Primary School.

4.9 Parcel A comprises of the Forton Bank Farm farmstead and associated fields used for grazing purposes. Hollins Strategic Land has an interest in the majority of this Parcel, with the landowner retaining control of a portion of the farmstead. It is accessed from School Lane.

4.10 Parcel B comprises solely of the land associated with the village Playing Fields and Bowling Pavilion. This Parcel was included in the allocation as it was considered that it may be necessary for a road link to run through Parcel A and B to serve C and D.

4.11 Parcel C is an agricultural field in private ownership, used sporadically for grazing and is accessed from Winder Lane.

4.12 Parcel D is also agricultural land and its agricultural access point is via School Lane, west of the Church.

Image 11: Land Parcels within the ‘Forton Extension’ site
‘Forton Extension’ site – Planning History

4.13 HSL submitted an application (no. 18/00469/OULMAJ) for outline permission for the residential-led development of the majority of Parcel A (see image 12) in May 2018, as well as a portion of land to the north east of the allocation boundary (see image 1, Introduction).

4.14 The application proposals were initially for up to 210 dwellings and a Neighbourhood Centre comprising of a convenience store, village hall and satellite surgery.

4.15 Following adoption of the Local Plan in early 2019 and collaborative working between the Council, Landowners Group and Stakeholders Group, the description of development was recently amended. The application now proposes up to 195 dwellings, 1h of land for employment uses and a Neighbourhood Centre comprising of a convenience store and village hall.

4.16 The Council does not intend to issue a decision on this application until after the Forton Extension Masterplan has been adopted. The application documents can be accessed via: https://publicaccess.wyre.gov.uk/online-applications/

4.17 There is no relevant planning history for Parcels B - D. It is anticipated that applications for planning permission on Parcels C and D will be submitted following adoption of the Masterplan but the timescales are unknown at this stage.

Image 12: Parcel A – location plan for application 18/00469/OULMAJ
5 Technical Studies

5.1 The Masterplan is informed by technical studies on the following matters:
- Ecology;
- Flood Risk / Drainage;
- Heritage;
- Highways; and,
- Landscape.

5.2 These technical studies have been undertaken on behalf of the Landowners Group and the level of detail has been agreed with Wyre Council as being sufficient for the Masterplanning process. The studies are available to view as part of the consultation on the Draft Masterplan at:
https://www.wyre.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/1241/masterplans

5.3 Further technical evidence will be required for the planning applications for each Parcel. Indeed, the supporting documents for application 18/00469/OULMAJ provide further technical evidence, focusing on Parcel A.
Ecology

5.4 ERAP Ltd Consultant Ecologists have produced an Ecological Synopsis and Guidance Report for the Forton Extension.

5.5 The Synopsis provides the following:

- A data search and desktop study;
- A walkover survey of Parcels B, C and D and reference to the surveys completed for the application at Parcel A;
- Scope of survey required to facilitate a planning application(s); and
- An ecological constraints and opportunities plan.

5.6 The Results of the survey work can be summarised as follows:

Vegetation and habitats:

- The sites comprise of improved grassland, boundary trees, shrubs and hedgerows, with Indian balsam (invasive species) detected in Parcels C and D;

Badger:

- The habitats within the site and surrounding area are suitable for badger, but no evidence of badger was detected.

Bats:

- There are a number of trees across the site which support features suitable for use by roosting bats.

Bird species:

- No ground nesting birds were detected but the trees, shrubs and hedgerows are suitable or nesting passerine species;
- No evidence of Barn Owl was detected although an owl box was present on a tree at the southern boundary of Parcel D.

Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians:

- Adverse impact on great crested newts and other amphibians was reasonably discounted

Other species:

- The grassland is not suitable for reptile species;
- Watercourses affected by the development will need to be examined for the presence of water vole.
5.7 A Constraints and Opportunities Plan is presented within the report. The ecological recommendations described below and annotated on the COP aim to ensure a sympathetic scheme with minimal impacts on the existing habitats within the site and surrounding the site, provide opportunities to enhance the ecological interest at the site and seek a biodiversity net gain.

5.8 The following general recommendations are incorporated into the site masterplan for all parcels within the site:

a. Where removal of trees and hedgerows is necessary, i.e. to facilitate the creation of access roads and visibility splays, then areas of compensatory planting at an equal or greater length of hedgerow lost must be included within the site layout in suitable locations to provide habitat connectivity across the site;

b. Alignment of properties to create ‘pockets’ of contiguous gardens as stepping stones for wildlife through the site;

c. Where other features are necessary, such as a sustainable drainage scheme (SuDS), opportunities to enhance their biodiversity potential by use of appropriate grassland seed mixes and landscape planting, will be maximised;

d. Avoidance of concrete based garden boundary fencing and use of timber fencing with gaps of 0.15 metres beneath to permit passage of wildlife, e.g. hedgehog, a Priority Species, and amphibians between gardens;

e. Planting of a wildflower grassland seed mixes over significant areas of the sites will enhance opportunities for animal life and minimise the maintenance regime. The objectives of the grassland seeding will be to provide a habitat for wildlife such as invertebrates, small mammals and amphibians;

f. The use of native species and species known to be of value for the attraction of wildlife in the landscape planting schedule associated with the residential areas / built environment; and

g. The installation of bat and bird boxes at the new buildings and retained mature trees will enhance opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds at the developed sites.

5.9 ERAP also provide ecological recommendations specific to Parcels A, C and D (overleaf); it is suggested that a ‘Home Owner’s Pack’ is provided for each dwelling to raise awareness of ecological pressure; and, advice is given with regard further survey work required for planning applications.
Parcel A

5.1 The following ecological recommendations were provided to inform the masterplan for Site A:

a. Retention and protection of existing mature trees and the site and field boundary hedgerows, where possible. An undeveloped buffer should be retained around the trees covering the Root Protection Zone and at least a 2 metre buffer either side of the centre of the hedgerows should be retained;

b. A suitable location for new species rich hedgerow planting to compensate for the loss of hedgerows is along the northern boundary of the development area;

c. Protection of the pond on site with a vegetated and undeveloped buffer which provides connectivity to the open space and new wildlife pond in the north of the site and arrangement of properties to ensure that buildings and roads face onto the pond as opposed to residential gardens;

d. The creation of a new permanent wildlife pond in the undeveloped area in the north of the site will provide considerable enhancement in terms of biodiversity; and

e. Incorporation of a continuous area of open space in the north of the site to be enhanced and managed for the benefit of wildlife, namely via the creation of a new pond and wildflower grassland planting.

Parcels B, C and D

5.1 The following site masterplan recommendations are specific to Sites B, C and D:

a. Retention and protection of existing mature trees and the site and field boundary hedgerows, where possible, including the line of trees and shrubs through the centre of Site D which provides connectivity across the site. An undeveloped buffer should be retained around the trees covering the Root Protection Zone and at least a 2 metre buffer either side of the centre of the hedgerows should be retained;

b. Protection of Ponds 1 and 2 (within 5 metres of Site D) with a vegetated and undeveloped buffer of at least 15 metres and arrangement of properties to ensure that buildings and roads face onto the ponds as opposed to residential gardens. If great crested newt are detected during the further surveys at Pond 2, a larger buffer may be required;

c. The creation of a new permanent wildlife pond should be considered to provide considerable enhancement in terms of biodiversity. Any new pond should be connected to retained habitats within the site and in the wider area as opposed to isolated by the development; and

d. Incorporation of a continuous areas of open space to be enhanced and managed for the benefit of wildlife.
Flood Risk and Drainage

5.12A Sustainable Drainage Statement (SDS) has been undertaken by Betts Hydro Consulting Engineers. It has been prepared following consultation with the Council’s Drainage Officer and United Utilities (UU). The SDS confirms that the Forton Extension site is within Flood Zone 1 and identifies the potential options for surface water and foul water management.

5.13 The SDS should be considered in light of Local Plan policies CDMP2 Flood Risk and Surface Water Management and SA3/4 (Key Development Consideration 4 states residual surface water should drain to Morecambe Bay via the River Cocker).

5.14 It is understood that there have been instances of gardens flooding in the Spring Vale area. The Masterplan cannot resolve these existing issues.

Existing Drainage Situation of Development Parcels

Parcel A

5.15 At present, the existing farm and associated buildings and land in the northern land parcel are understood to drain either to the ground around them or via a piped system which directs beneath School Lane into the southern parcel. Run-off entering the southern parcel ultimately drained to a culverted watercourse to the east of Preston Lancaster Road via an onsite drain/grid within the lowest point in the southern parcel of Parcel A. Some of the existing northern land parcel would naturally drain in the opposite direction (to the north, towards Wallace Lane) due to the natural topography.

Parcel C

5.16 Review of the aerial imagery demonstrates that the ground levels onsite in the southern corner are partly raised relative to the neighbouring Winders Lane and therefore there would likely be the potential for run-off directing towards this low point to convey onto Winders Lane. Ground levels generally fall in a south-westerly direction across the agricultural land to the south of site, down to the Ordinary Watercourse located 240m to the south. Therefore, the run-off naturally generated by the agricultural land will either drain to ground (over an extended time) or discharge informally into the Ordinary Watercourse to the south.

Parcel D

5.17 The run-off generated naturally onsite would fall with the topography towards the lower lying areas, it is likely that some infiltration over time occurs within these parts of the agricultural land. There are two ponds located adjacent to the western boundary and northwestern boundary of the site, these may take some of the run-off generated by the site. Furthermore, ground levels are shown to continue to drop from the western boundary in a north-westerly direction, therefore it is possible that some existing flows generated on this site to flow overland and discharge into the Ordinary Watercourse to the north-west of the site.

Image 15: Existing Topography
Heritage

5.18 Kathryn Sather Associates have produced a heritage statement to support the Masterplan.

5.19 This notes that there are four Grade II listed structures within the vicinity of the development site allocated in the masterplan. These are:
- the United Reformed Church;
- the Tomb of James Aray, Southeast of the United Reformed Church;
- the Building to the Northwest of the United Reformed Church; and,
- the Mounting Block in the Courtyard Wall of the United Reformed Church.

5.20 The four heritage assets are primarily experienced from School Lane to the north and from within the immediate churchyard area. They are surrounded by development.

5.21 The impact of proposed development as set out in the masterplan upon the setting of the Grade II listed structures has been assessed using Historic England guidance and using a heritage impact assessment methodology based upon the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Guidance.

5.22 Under this guidance the listed structures have Medium level of significance. The magnitude of change on the setting of the heritage assets is assessed as Negligible.

5.23 Overall the impact on the setting and significance of the heritage assets has been assessed as Neutral.
Highways and Movement

5.24 An Access and Connectivity Statement (ACS) has been prepared by Croft Transport Planning and Design; it relates to access, capacity of the local road network and inter-connectivity between the existing village and Parcels A - D.

5.25 There is an obvious road hierarchy within Forton at present:

- The A6 has a 50mph limit and is part of the strategic road network. It provides convenient access to the M6 and Lancaster to the north. To the south, the A6 connects Forton to Garstang and the M55.
- The A6 forms a junction with School Lane, which is the primary point of access into Forton.
- School Lane runs east-west through the village providing access to individual dwellings, residential areas and services/facilities;
- School Lane also forms junctions with secondary vehicular routes to the north and south: Wallace Lane and Winder Lane respectively.
- Both Wallace Lane and Winder Lane provide alternative routes into/out of the village although both routes are along country lanes.

5.26 Footways run along School Lane and in part along Wallace Lane, Winder Lane and through the estates. Several Public Rights of Way run around Forton linking the village to the open countryside beyond.

5.27 The ACS finds that the Forton Extension is located close to good pedestrian links and public transport networks and is therefore ideally situated to encourage trips by sustainable modes of travel, which can be encouraged through the implementation of Travel Plans for each development.

5.28 The ACS also confirms that each land parcel would be required to prepare its own highways and transport report for submission to the local planning authority when an application for planning permission is submitted.
5.29 To gain an appreciation of the characteristics of the sites and surrounding areas, field studies have been carried out by Influence, chartered landscape architects.

5.30 This, alongside the topography work undertaken to inform the drainage strategy, has helped gain an understanding of how topography and existing vegetation patterns both limit visibility and help define a strong framework for the sites.
Landscape cont.

Parcel A

5.31 Located to the east of Forton and bound on the east by the A6 Preston Lancaster Road, Parcel A consists of two plots of land, divided by School Lane.

5.32 To the north, the larger plot consists of a series of medium-size semi-regular agricultural fields. This farmland rises generally to the north and the topography effectively truncates more distant views from lower vantage points throughout this landscape. Whilst several hedgerow lengths appear to have been lost on the site, remaining lengths are well maintained and consistent, with hedgerow and remnant hedgerow tree groups highly noticeable within the fields.

5.33 A small pond creates a natural feature towards the centre of the site and a public right of way runs almost contiguous with the sites northeast boundary. Settlement on the eastern side of Forton creates a visually hard edge to the southwest of this plot and buildings associated with Forton Bank Farm are prominent at lower ground levels. From higher ground on the eastern part of the site, there are expansive views looking towards Bleasdale Moors in the East.

5.34 The smaller, southern plot is generally more intimate in feel, with rising topography to the east of the A6 and an established tree belt to the south of the site effectively closing down more far reaching views.

5.35 Within the site, landform is often strongly undulating. Settlement edge, associated facilities and commercial development is noticeable at close range to the west of the site.
Landscape cont.

Parcel C

5.36 This smaller parcel sits to the west of Winder Lane and the south of Forton and is formed from a small group of irregular shaped fields.

5.37 The land is gently undulating, rising to the west. Running south from the village and along the eastern parcel boundary, Winder Lane soon takes on a more rural and intimate feel, influenced predominantly by high hedgerow borders.

5.38 Approaching the village from the south, low level settlement edge is visible beyond the parcel and a small grouping of buildings at high ground to the west of the site is surrounded by a prominent group of evergreen trees.

Parcel D

5.39 This is a large parcel of land formed by two agricultural fields located to the south of Forton village.

5.40 There are no PRoWs crossing the larger of the two fields so the parcel is generally viewed from nearby footpaths to the west as part of a well-treed, gently undulating and visibly layered landscape.

5.41 A hedgerow and strong tree belt partitions the small field to the north of the parcel, lending it a distinctly separate and intimate feel. A PRoW passes through this field joining the parcel with more ranging footpaths to the south and linking it with the village edge and House Field Pond, a small wildlife site adjacent to the north.

5.42 Buildings associated with Forton School are visible on the northern site boundary and to the larger eastern parcel residential built form the south of Forton runs contiguous with the parcel perimeter.
6 Constraints and Opportunities

Site Constraints

- Large area of development with potential impacts on local landscape features;
- Consideration of incorporation of existing hedgerows into future design solutions;
- Tree Preservation Orders;
- Sensitive residential and heritage receptors in close proximity;
- Adjacent Public Rights of Ways have views into the site;
- Ponds are located within and near to the site;
- Provision of access required through parcel B to serve land west of Winder Lane.

Site Opportunities

- Opportunity to design-in improved access to the existing Public Right of Way;
- Mature landscape provides character by creating a strong framework to inform the landscape strategies for the parcels;
- Opportunity to design-in long views of the Bleasdale Moors in the East;
- Opportunity to incorporate SUDs attenuation as the basis for a drainage strategy;
- Good access to public transport on the A6;
- Ponds & watercourses provide the potential for amenity & biodiversity enhancement;
- Removal of Indian Balsam on site;
- Retention of trees with bat roost potential
7 The Masterplan
8 Masterplan Framework

8.1 The Forton Extension Masterplan is informed by the technical studies, the identified constraints/opportunities and the nature of the surrounding settlement and countryside. It responds to the local topography and is informed by well-defined mature hedgerow and trees.

8.2 The development will be seen as an ‘organic’ extension of the existing settlement and importantly create a transition between the settlement edge and surrounding open countryside. An understanding of the relationship and key views between the two areas is fundamental in developing the masterplan.

8.3 A landscape and green infrastructure framework will incorporate structured tree planting and on-site open space to allow for formal and informal play and pedestrian and cycle connectivity linking with the wider area. The positioning of these spaces will respond to new countryside edges and existing mature trees.

8.4 These areas provide opportunity for sustainable drainage and the use of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers will help assimilate the development into the landscape and enhance biodiversity. Where possible, existing mature trees and hedgerow will be retained and protected.

8.5 Within the new residential development, various densities and consideration of surface materials will help create defined character areas. Hierarchy of roads will help define clear and natural movement through the site.

8.6 The various land uses will be apportioned as follows:

- Parcel A: approx. 195 dwellings, 1ha of employment land, public open space (POS) and possibly, a neighbourhood centre comprising of a village hall and convenience store;
- Parcel B: may accommodate the Village Hall;
- Parcel C: approx. 35 dwellings and POS; and,
- Parcel D: approx. 100 dwellings, POS and land for a school extension.

Design Principles

8.7 Development will be expected to be consistent with the relevant local planning policies as well as reflecting the Vision and Objectives of this Masterplan and the following design principles:

1. The site should be delivered in a manner that creates an organic structure of discreet, human scale development parcels in an attractively landscaped and naturalistic setting.

2. Development should achieve a high-quality environment taking advantage of and integrating with existing topography, views, landscape features and identified biodiversity habitats.

3. It is important that the design and layout of the development promotes healthy living, including through the provision of accessible high-quality green infrastructure together with cycle and pedestrian routes and linkages internal to the site and between the site and surrounding area. Where appropriate individual planning applications should contribute to the creation of a “Forton Trail” as detailed in the masterplan.

4. Planting and landscaping should be used to shape the location and character of the built form, streets and open spaces, and to soften the impact of new development in this rural setting. Place making will be further reinforced through the design of hard and soft landscape for individual plots and the creation of incidental green spaces / landscaping to break up the built form.

5. The structure of the development should preserve key views into the site and views out of the site towards the surrounding countryside utilising opportunities provided by the orientation and design of streets, green spaces, houses and other development types.

6. There should be a suitable landscape buffer along the A6 boundary to mitigate any visual impact arising from development in this location.

7. Where tree and hedgerow loss is necessary, at least an equivalent amount of new mitigation planting of suitable species should be proposed.

8. Residential development should be of a density suitable to the rural setting having regard to the most appropriate location of different dwelling types and densities across the site.

9. Dwellings for older people/mobility impaired should be appropriately located in terms of access to services, facilities and access routes.

10. There should be a highly legible structure of streets and where residents and visitors can intuitively find their way around the development with good connectivity onto surrounding roads and streets.

11. Particular regard should be had to providing linkages with and between the neighbourhood centre, the employment area and open space network.

12. The junction of the A6 and School Lane should be appropriately designed to ensure safe and appropriate access and egress and the design of development in this location should be suitable for a key gateway into the village.

13. Adequate car parking will need to be provided in line with planning policy, but this should be sufficiently well-integrated so as to not dominate the street and building frontages.

14. There should be clear demarcation between the public, semi-public and private land.

15. Building orientation and layout – including corner-turning and dual aspect houses at key intersections - should be used throughout the site to create active frontages and natural surveillance / security over the public spaces, streets and footpaths / cycle routes.

16. Whilst it is important that the neighbourhood has continuity and a definable sense of place, it is also important for there to be a complementary and, where appropriate, contrasting palette of building elements and architectural details to achieve variety in appearance across the Masterplan area.

17. Careful attention should be given to the design of the interface between non-residential and non-residential uses within the masterplan area and between new development and the existing village. Interface distances, building orientation, landscape screening should be used to ensure adequate privacy and amenity for the residents of new and existing housing.

18. Development should not adversely affect the significance of heritage assets.
8.8 The Local Plan requires the provision of at least 310 dwellings. The Masterplan demonstrates that approximately 330 dwellings can be accommodated on Parcels A, C and D.

8.9 Local building materials will be used to assimilate the buildings into the landscape, and the scale, mass and form will correspond with the existing development in the village.

8.10 The dwellings proposed for the School Lane frontage will be in the form of cottages set in loose terrace form. The building groups will be articulated to give varied roofscape and facade line. Building frontages will be turned slightly away from the road so as to give a softer built edge here. This approach will respond to the character of the Village Core, including the use of stone, and creates a new ‘gateway’ to the village.

8.11 The Village Core/‘gateway’ character will be reproduced at key nodes within Parcels A, C and D, to be identified during the full/reserved matters application processes. The wider residential development will be constructed from a variety of materials, dominated by red brick and render, with groupings of similar housetypes.

8.12 Each of the Parcels will be built to a density of approximately 30 dwellings per hectare. However, density will vary across each Parcel, with lower density housing forming an effective transition to the open countryside.

8.13 The housing mix will be decided during the planning application process for each Parcel. The Council will require applicants to give consideration to Local Plan policy HP2.
Employment

8.14 The Local Plan requires that 1ha of land is provided for employment uses on the southern part of Parcel A, east of Jesmond Dene.

8.15 The Masterplan shows that the employment land can be provided alongside the A6. A landscape buffer will be established but the employment uses will benefit from road-side frontage, enhancing the prospect of businesses moving into the village.

8.16 The employment units will not have an adverse impact on the Village Gateway. The employment land is set behind an area of Green and Blue Infrastructure that will soften the entrance to Forton.

8.17 The employment units will be separated from the residential development by the internal road network within Parcel A. The units will also act as a buffer to road traffic noise from the A6.

8.18 The Local Plan does not specify whether the employment should be B1 (business e.g. offices), B2 (general industrial) or B8 (storage or distribution) uses. This will be decided at the full/reserved matters application stages. It is anticipated that the land will be dominated by smaller units for B1 / B2 uses but market factors will influence this. All employment uses will need to be compatible with the residential-led development of the Forton Extension.

8.19 The design of the employment units will respond to the character of the village and the Forton Extension.
**Neighbourhood Centre**

The Local Plan requires that the ‘Forton Extension’ incorporates a Neighbourhood Centre, comprising of a community hall, convenience store and medical facility if necessary.

Through the collaborative working process with the Stakeholder Group, including the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group, it has been established that a medical facility is not necessary. The CCG priority is to focus on improving existing facilities in Garstang.

The community hall should have a floorspace of up to 450sqm. The hall will provide the village with a significantly improved community facility intended to accommodate a wider range of activities than may be possible in the current hall. It will be built to modern accessibility standards and is intended to promote inclusivity and community cohesion. The convenience store should have a floorspace of up to 500sqm. The operator (unknown at this stage) will make a commercial decision on the size of the store, but it will be no larger than 500sqm.

The Masterplans shows that the Neighbourhood Centre can be provided in Parcel A, east of Coronation Avenue and opposite the village Playing Field. Located at a key point between existing and new homes, this facility serves all of the community. It will combine with the sports and bowling facilities opposite to make this an important neighbourhood hub.

Low level buildings are arranged around a landscaped parking area. Local building materials will be used to assimilate the buildings into the landscape, and the scale, mass and form will correspond with the existing neighbourhood. The scheme will offer sheltered garden space connected to the community hall.

This neighbourhood area creates good pedestrian connectivity with School Lane and the new housing development. It offers attractive frontage to its surroundings, with the existing native hedgerow to School Lane gapped up and enhanced.
Primary School Extension

8.27 The Local Plan requires that the Forton Extension incorporates land for an extension to the primary school in order to enable it to become a 1-Form Entry school in the future.

8.28 It is clear that this land, if necessary, must be provided adjacent to the existing school grounds and as such, it is shown within Parcel D on the Masterplan.

8.29 The exact location and extent of this land can be established by the Council when an application is submitted for full planning permission or reserved matters approval for the development of Parcel D. Lancashire County Council Education Department will need to know the number of bedrooms that will be provided across the entire Forton Extension in order to predict the yield of primary school age children.

8.30 At this stage, 0.8ha is reserved but if less is required, it may be appropriate to provide additional residential development.

8.31 Also, Lancashire County Council Highways Department will advise on whether the existing vehicular access off School Lane will suffice for the extended school, or if a new access is necessary from within Parcel D. It is anticipated that a pedestrian link can be provided from Parcel D to the school.
Highways and Movement

Vehicular Movement

8.32 The Access and Connectivity Statement (ACS) provides access proposals for the A6 / School Lane junction and access into Parcel A from School Lane. Two options are provided for the A6/School Lane junction. LCC Highways has confirmed support for Option 1 and has suggested that a left turn lane, as shown in Option 2, could be achievable.

8.33 Both options for the A6/School Lane junction will be subject to detailed discussions with LCC Highways officers at planning application stage (including the potential for a left turn lane onto the A6).

8.34 There is potential for a road link to be provided through the southern portion of Parcel A, across Parcel B, Winder Lane, Parcel C and into Parcel D. This link may be necessary to allow Parcel D including the school extension, to be developed unless alternative access arrangements can be identified.

8.35 The road link would be considered at detailed planning stages for each Parcel; the road link would be designed to:

- Ensure minimum loss of hedgerow (retaining the character of the area);
- Reduce the attractiveness of Winder Lane as a vehicle route;
- Enhance the northern section of Winder Lane to promote walking/cycling further discouraging through traffic; and,
- Consider the alignment of the new link road / Winder Lane junction to encourage the use of the new link road rather than Winder Lane so that it becomes an off-set cross road rather than a straight through cross road.

8.36 Development in Parcel C could be accessed via Winder Lane depending on the number of dwellings proposed. Accesses to Parcels C and D will be considered in detail by LCC Highways at such time as planning applications are submitted for their development.
Pedestrian Access and Movement

8.37 The Masterplan shows that pedestrian movement is at the forefront of the Forton Extension.

8.38 Designed to support a healthy living environment, the ‘Forton Trail’ will circulate the village, providing existing and future residents with an attractive pedestrian/cycle network (subject to detailed design) that links up with the Green Infrastructure, PROWs, enabling easy access to the countryside beyond.

8.39 The network will also be designed to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Pedestrian permeability will encourage residents to walk to the facilities and services on offer in Forton, including the proposed Neighbourhood Centre and the new bus stops along the A6.

8.40 The ACS concludes that:

- the proposed points of access will comply with current design standards and provide suitable infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists;
- such access junctions would not give rise to any highway or safety issues;
- through careful and complementary design, the infrastructure associated with the Forton Masterplan will provide a well-integrated and sustainable development and provide a high standard of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity throughout; and,
- each land parcel would be required to prepare its own highways and transport report for submission to the local planning authority when an application for planning permission is submitted.

8.41 The proposals will provide a sustainable development and the impact would not be severe, as is the test in the National Policy.
Blue Infrastructure

Surface water and foul water drainage options have been identified in accordance with planning policy. Further technical details will be provided for any subsequent planning applications.

Surface water

Surface water management has been proposed to mimic the existing situations on each parcel, thus not increasing flood risk downstream. Suggestions for SUDs/attenuation ponds have been provided with ponds in lower lying parts of A, C and D.

Parcel A

It is proposed to discharge surface water run-off generated by Site A predominantly to the Ordinary Watercourse (Potters Brook, which connects to the River Cocker) to the north-east. Two connections are proposed to comply with the current onsite ground levels, one connection will be via the existing culverted watercourse from the southern part of the site and a new connection will be made directly to Potters Brook from the northern part of the site.

Parcel C

The proposals are to discharge surface water run-off to the Ordinary Watercourse to the south. The existing ground levels onsite mean that natural run-off onsite would already direct towards the watercourse unrestricted and unmanaged. The proposals will be to mimic the predevelopment situation, however with a formal onsite network and outfall.

Parcel D

It is proposed mimic the existing situation and discharge surface water run-off from the site to the Ordinary Watercourse to the north-west via a new formal connection.

Foul drainage

Parcels A and C will be drained via two pumping stations (one on Parcel A and one in Parcel C) connecting to the public sewer network along School Lane. Parcel D will be drained by gravity to School Lane.
Green Infrastructure

8.48 The approach to Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) is closely related to the movement network with the aim to create an attractive, well-designed open space network.

8.49 The strategy of this Masterplan is also to ensure that full regard is had to the integration and improvement of existing ecological systems and natural habitats found within the site, including trees, hedgerows and water features. The local landscape can also play a key role in setting the context for the development and in particular, the identification and protection of key views. The Betts Hydro drainage recommendations can also be incorporated, with SuDS proposed throughout. The Masterplan shows how these three elements – GBI, ecology and landscape - can work together to inform and be a part of the overall development.

8.50 Local Plan policies HP9 ‘Green Infrastructure’ and CDMP4 ‘Environmental Assets’ require residential development proposals to make appropriate provision of sufficient high-quality GI and to contribute towards restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats through the provision of this GI. The policies also require new development to consider the site’s landscape setting including local and long distance views and to incorporate existing trees and hedgerows into design and layout where possible. The GI, biodiversity and landscape strategy for the masterplan establishes the basis for delivering these key policy requirements and the objectives of this masterplan.

8.51 The total amount of GI to be delivered will be based on the requirements set out in policy HP9 of the Local Plan. At this stage, it is estimated to be 2.73ha but the Masterplan shows approx. 4.31ha of GI. The actual figure will be established at the relevant planning application stage(s) and will depend on the total dwellings proposed and the housing mix.

8.52 Provided the total amount of GI provision referred in the policy is secured, there is flexibility as to the typology of that provision. This Masterplan proposes GI in the form of amenity green space, natural/semi-natural space and play areas for children to be delivered in the form of a connected network of green corridors – the ‘Forton Trail’.
An aim of the masterplan is to produce a high quality and safe public realm with GI provided in a manner that contributes to a well-designed and healthy living and working environment. The GI, landscape and biodiversity strategy will be delivered by:

- Creating a series of linked green spaces, providing off-road opportunities for existing and future residents, whilst enhancing permeability and connectivity with the adjacent countryside and urban area;
- Retaining existing ponds, trees and hedgerows as appropriate;
- Recognising the importance of increasing the amount of tree cover to assist with the healthy living and climate change agendas;
- Providing multifunctional areas of amenity green space which create an attractive setting for the development as well as areas for people to socialise and to enjoy;
- Developing appropriate children’s play facilities which are suitably located and of a type and size appropriate to the scale of the development.
- It is expected that children’s play facilities will be located in different parts of the site commensurate with the scale of development proposed and not confined to a single location.
- The masterplan indicates the approximate location of these facilities within the main masterplan area. They could be sited to form play areas at regular intervals along the ‘Forton Trail’.
- The exact location, design and type of children’s play provision will be determined at planning application stage. However, Children’s play facilities should be designed to be suitable for a range of age groups and may be based on, but not confined to, standard definitions of play space such as a Local Area for Play (LAP) and a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP);
- Creating areas of open space throughout the development which enhances the setting and provides an attractive outlook;
- Utilising new and existing water features and bodies that function both as semi-natural greenspace and as part of the sustainable drainage strategy;
- Using strategic landscaping which softens the development edges and provides a successful transition between the built form and adjacent countryside, provides biodiversity enhancement and creates an attractive setting for the development.
Hard landscaping palette

8.54A hard landscape palette of natural materials that weather well will help to connect the new development with the existing settlement and provide legibility to the spaces.

- Hierarchy of materials defines access routes through site;
- Gravel driveways/ tegula paving and cobble thresholds define various character areas with the site and help imply degrees of privacy;
- Local vernacular dressed stone is utilised to assimilate the development into the surrounding area;
- Post and rail fencing is indicative of the area;
- Amenity areas utilise natural timber play equipment;
- Permeable materials to be utilised where possible.
Soft landscaping palette

8.55A soft landscaping palette will also be developed through the planning applications. It will incorporate:

- Well established, existing mature hedgerows and trees help define landscape framework;
- Existing mature trees incorporated within new public open spaces offer character and shade;
- Soft landscaping to road junctions create green nodes throughout the development;
- Attenuation ponds and swales offer potential landscape amenity and enhanced biodiversity;
- Proposed use of native hedgerow and trees and use of native wildflowers and marginal species enhance biodiversity on the site and help assimilate the development into the surrounding area;
- Incorporation of native hedgerow trees helps soften views of the development from open countryside.

Image 37: Illustrative soft landscaping palette
9 Delivery

9.1 The delivery of the Forton Extension will be influenced by the timings of the submission and determination of planning applications for each Parcel.

Parcel A

9.2 An application (no. 18/00469/OULMAJ) for outline permission is pending for the development of the majority of Parcel A. It is anticipated that the application will be considered as soon as possible following the adoption of the Masterplan. A Reserved Matters application will then follow. Development could start on Parcel A in early 2021 and the housing could be delivered at 30 – 40 dwellings per annum (dpa). LCC Highways will establish the point at which the A6/School Lane junction works are required.

Employment

9.3 The employment units will be delivered following a marketing period, if interest is secured. The marketing will be undertaken on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land.

Convenience store

9.4 The convenience store will be delivered when an operator is identified. Again, the marketing will be undertaken on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land.

Village Hall

9.5 The Local Plan states that the development should include a village hall as part of a neighbourhood centre.

9.6 The Draft Masterplan shows the proposed new village hall located on reserved land within Parcel A and gives the option of Parcel B as an alternative location. If alternative arrangements for the delivery of the new hall are agreed and the land on parcel A is no longer required then alternative uses, including residential development, can be considered.

9.7 The delivery of the new hall will be the responsibility of the owners of the existing hall and/or the Parish Council and financed from contributions made under s106 agreements secured against residential development that comes forward within the masterplan area.

9.8 As such it is difficult to predict the timescale involved in delivering the new hall as this will depend on sufficient development coming forward to generate the funds for its construction. The level of contributions, and hence timing of delivery, will also be a function of the building specification, the land cost and the build cost.

9.9 In considering the matter of using s106 monies to construct the hall, the council will need to ensure that the appropriate legal agreements and planning permissions are in place such that the new hall is appropriately delivered.

9.10 Alternatively, it may be that the s106 contributions accruing from development are spent on upgrading the existing hall, if this is demonstrated to be practically appropriate.

9.11 These matters, and any alternative options to deliver a new hall, will require ongoing discussions with the relevant parties.

Parcel C

9.12 It is anticipated than an application for full permission will be submitted following adoption of the Masterplan and that development will commence in late 2020/early 2021.

Parcel D

9.13 An application for the development of this site will come forward once an access is secured. This could be via the road link across Parcel B. The Council will require that Parcels A and C provide the road link by imposing conditions on planning permissions requiring unfettered access points, in compliance with policy SA3/4.