RE: CONSULTATION ON THE BURSCOUGH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Thank you for consulting Lancashire County Council on the above development plan. I provide some officer level comments below.

Education Strategy

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 dictates that Lancashire County Council's statutory obligation is to ensure that every child living in Lancashire is able to access a mainstream school place in Lancashire. Some children have Special Educational Needs for which they access school provision outside of Lancashire. Special Educational Needs provision is managed by LCC’s SEND Team and is not covered by this response. The Strategy for the provision of school places and school’s capital investment 17/18 to 19/20 provides the context and policy for school place provision and schools capital strategy in Lancashire. Over the coming years, Lancashire County Council and its local authority partners will need to address a range of issues around school organisation in order to maintain a coherent system that is fit for purpose, stable, and delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Pressure for additional school places can be created by an increase in the birth rate, new housing developments, greater inward migration and parental choice of one school over another. If local schools are unable to meet the demand of a new development there is the potential to have an adverse impact on the infrastructure of its local community, with children having to travel greater distances to access a school place.

In a letter from the DfE to all Chief Executives, the Minister of State for Housing and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools jointly stated that 'where major new housing developments create an additional need for school places, then the local authority should expect a substantial contribution from the developer towards the cost of meeting this requirement.'
The SPT produces an Education Contribution Methodology document which outlines the Lancashire County Council methodology for assessing the likely impact of new housing developments on school places, where necessary mitigating the impact, by securing education contributions from developers.

In order to assess the impact of a development the School Planning Team consider demand for places against the capacity of primary schools within 2 miles and secondary schools within 3 miles. These distances are in line with DfE travel to school guidance and Lancashire County Councils Home to School Transport Policy.

Planning obligations will be sought for education places where Lancashire primary schools within 2 miles and/or Lancashire secondary schools within 3 miles of the development are:

- Already over-subscribed,
- Projected to become over-subscribed within 5 years, or
- A development results in demand for a school site to be provided.

**Need for school places**

The School Planning Team monitor and assess new housing to be delivered over the term of the West Lancashire local plan. Understanding the level, and the phasing of new homes across the planning areas enables us to forecast the impact on mainstream primary, and secondary education places.

Information from the West Lancashire Housing Land Supply annually provides the number of new homes and the phasing, and provides a certain level of accuracy up to a five year period. Forecasting beyond this makes assumptions the new homes will be delivered and the birth rates remain the same. However, the information is under constant review with regular updates provided by West Lancashire Borough Council planning officers.

The School Planning Team recently engaged with planning officers as part of the district Councils Local Plan Review (LPR), recently responding to the LPR Preferred Option consultation December 2018. Information supplied set out the capacity within the primary schools including the Burscough area.

West Lancashire is divided over 7 primary school planning areas. Burscough is categorised as its own planning area for education. Currently there are 6 primary schools and one secondary school in the area. The table below indicates the capacity across the primary schools in Burscough, this information is based on the latest forecasts conducted late 2018.

The district as a whole is used when assessing secondary schools. It is recognised that secondary pupils have greater freedom to travel to specific schools. Currently there is capacity in Burscough Academy and within the secondary schools across the district. It should be noted that some primary and secondary schools may be closer to capacity than others reflecting the performance of the school and parental preference which the Council has no control over.
### Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>October 18 Number on Roll</th>
<th>School Net Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burscough Bridge St John's Church of England Primary School</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burscough Bridge Methodist Voluntary Controlled Primary School</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John's Catholic Primary School. Burscough</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormskirk Lathom Park Church of England Primary School</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burscough Lordsgate Township Church of England Primary School</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burscough Village Primary School</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>735</strong></td>
<td><strong>925</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Secondary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burscough Priory Academy</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The WLBC Local Plan outlines Yew Tree Farm in the Burscough planning area as one of their strategic sites for housing delivery across the district. The projected delivery has been included in the current forecast 2018. School Planning advised WLBC planning officers at the early stage of planning for the Yew Tree site the need to provide suitable land for the delivery of a new primary school. Based on current capacities across the planning area, the need for a new primary school does not present going forward.

It should be noted, although the primary planning may show no immediate need, housing assessments focusing on 2 and 3 miles may identify the need for contributions, this in accordance with The School Planning Education Contribution Methodology.

The Strategy for the Provision of School Places indicates expansion of existing school is a preferred option to meet the increase demand. Expanding established schools ensures the school maximises its potential. The Council seeks to provide additional places in existing schools wherever possible to maintain stability in the existing school system, provide places in a timely fashion and to achieve best value for money, it may not always be feasible to expand one or more existing schools. In such circumstances, a new school may be required to address the shortfall of places.

Successful expansion relies on a number of factors, including the school and governors are willing and express an interest in expansion, the site has the capacity for additional classrooms and facilities defined by the DfE Section 77 guidance and the school standard is classed as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

**Specific Neighbourhood Policies**
Policy BPEV1

It should be noted that none of the school sites proposed for Neighbourhood Green Space designation are currently open to wider public use beyond their function as a sports and recreation space, primarily for the benefit of the school's pupils, and with the exception of their open appearance and character do not demonstrate the other qualities normally associated with designated Local Green Space – namely those of beauty, historic significance, tranquillity or richness of wildlife.

I would therefore wish to emphasise that Neighbourhood Green Space designation of the various school playing field sites does not necessarily confer the right or expectation of wider public access or enjoyment of the land in question.

In respect of St John's Catholic Primary School playing fields, I query whether there is any practical benefit in adding a Neighbourhood Green Space designation to this land when Green Belt status already affords substantial protection. This is acknowledged in the published Green Space Reasoning Statement of the draft Neighbourhood Plan under the Planning Practice Guidance Section.

Burscough Priory Science College NGS01; Burscough Lordsgate Township Primary School NGS02; Burscough Village Primary School NGS03

The space in question is the school playing field under the ownership of Lancashire County Council and used by the school for outside recreation. We appreciate that the local authority/parish council may wish to identify school playing fields as green/open space within its plan. However, it must be recognised that this should not limit Lancashire County Council's ability to provide future school expansion on this land should additional places be identified.

School playing fields are protected from development under Department of Education Section 77 Guidance for removal/sale of all or part of a school playing field.

Burscough St John's Catholic Primary School NGS05

The neighbourhood plan indicating the area of the school playing field exceeds the allocation of playing field in ownership of LCC, I would seek clarification of the site layout to provide further comment. However, as with the previous green space applications, future expansion must not be limited if pupil places are identified.

Figure 6.7 of the plan sets out a larger site than recorded by LCC, part of the school site and playing is in the ownership of the Liverpool Catholic Diocese and would suggest the Diocese to provide further comment as part of this consultation.

Burscough St John's Church of England Primary School NGS04

Lancashire County Council does not have any ownership of land across this school site. The ownership and responsibility sits within Liverpool Church of England Diocese and advise that the Diocese provides further comment. Despite no ownership of the land Lancashire County Council take the same approach in protecting the land for future expansion.
In conclusion

The Council recognises the impact new housing has on local communities and its infrastructure, and appreciate the guidance and influence Parish Councils provide in shaping their communities for existing and future residents. I will continue to liaise with officers from WLBC as they review their Local Plan and provide support for communities undertaking a neighbourhood plan.

Yours faithfully

Head of Planning