



PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

7th July 2021

Change of use from agriculture to the siting of three camping pods - Farm Diversification



Burnhouse Farm, Back Lane, Slaidburn, BB7 3EE

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on behalf of Mr Stuart Hartley

CONTENTS

1.	The Application Site & Background	Page 3
2.	Planning History	Page 6
3.	The Proposal	Page 7
4.	Planning Policy	Page 10
5.	Planning Analysis	Page 11
6.	Trees, drainage & ecology	Page 15
7.	Conclusion	Page 16

1. THE APPLICATION SITE & BACKGROUND

- 1.1. 'The site', known as land and woodland associated with Burnhouse Farm, Back Lane, Slaidburn, BB7 3EE is shown edged red on the submitted plan. An extract of the site layout is also displayed below. The blue area is a residential property not owned by the applicant or his family. .



- 1.2. Burn House Farm is a working farm supporting the applicant and family members. The Applicant and his family own 365 acres of agricultural land. The land consists of grassland, woodland and yard area.
- 1.3. Farming income is derived from the following sources:
- 1.3.1. 250 head of cattle - black and white bulls provided from McDonalds
 - 1.3.2. 6 native Highland suckler cows and calves kept for conservation purposes and to comply with stewardship schemes
 - 1.3.3. 950 extensive lambing sheep
 - 1.3.4. Shearing (on and off site) and belly clipping undertaken by the applicant
 - 1.3.5. Entry Level & Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (currently extended only until 2022)

- 1.3.6. Basic Payment Scheme - the government's direct payment scheme for landowners/tenants
- 1.4. The primary objectives of the stewardship scheme are:
 - 1.4.1. Wildlife conservation
 - 1.4.2. Maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
 - 1.4.3. Natural resource protection
 - 1.4.4. Protection of the historic environment
 - 1.4.5. Promotion of public access and understanding of the countryside
- 1.5. From 2021 until 2027, the government is reducing the amount of BPS subsidy until it becomes nothing in 2027. The replacement scheme has been announced, however the details have yet to be finalised and we do not know what each farm will be capable of delivering, both in line with the scheme requirements and the financial rewards.
- 1.6. In addition, the applicant will have to come out of the higher level scheme and into another environmental scheme, again the details are unknown for this. However, it is likely the amount of funding across the subsidies will be reduced and they will have a shortfall in income to replace.
- 1.7. The overheads for the farm will continue to run at the same level and accounts show it will not make a profit without the subsidies. Therefore there is a need to develop alternative income streams to make up the serious shortfall in the future. In addition, the existing three employees are at risk of losing their employment on the farm and the upkeep of the farm will be affected. The current proposal will help towards meeting this shortfall in income.
- 1.8. The site is located in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the open countryside. The site lies approximately 2.2 miles north west of the village of Newton and approximately 2.7 miles west from the settlement of Slaidburn where local facilities are found.
- 1.9. Slaidburn and its surrounding areas are popular with ramblers and tourists alike. It is close to the Hodder River, with its network of paths leading to ancient moorland and the Bowland fells that also adjoin the site. Here panoramic views and waterfalls are found. There are more than 500 listed buildings and 18 scheduled monuments with the AONB.
- 1.10. Local attractions include:
 - 1.10.1. Gisburn Forest & Stocks;

- 1.10.2. Bowland Wild Boar Park;
- 1.10.3. The Clitheroe Mystery Treasure Trail;
- 1.10.4. Clitheroe Castle Museum;
- 1.10.5. Pendle Hill;
- 1.10.6. Ingleborough Cave;
- 1.10.7. Pendle Witches mystery Treasure Trail.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1. The following planning applications relating to Burnhouse Farm were obtained from the Council's online portal:
- 2.1.1. **3/1989/0436** - The Erection Of Three Self-catering Chalets Of Wood Construction. Withdrawn 31/10/1989
 - 2.1.2. **3/1990/0063** - Erection Of 4 Chalet Type Self Catering Holiday Units. Refused 24/05/1990
 - 2.1.3. **3/1999/0788** - Change Of Use Of Barn Attached To Dwelling To Form 2 No. Dwellings. Approved 30/12/1999
 - 2.1.4. **3/2009/0424** - Extension to existing agricultural building to form covered midden. Approved 29/07/2009
 - 2.1.5. **3/2020/0787** - Prior notification for an agricultural access road. Prior approval not required 12/10/2020
 - 2.1.6. **3/2020/0942** - Change of use from agricultural to the siting of a camping pod and decking. Access track to camping pod - Refused 22nd December 2020.
 - 2.1.7. A pre-application request was submitted earlier this year (reference RV/2021/ENQ/00031) and reference will be made to the response within this statement.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The application proposal is for the change of use from agriculture to the siting of three camping pods to be used as short term holiday lets. The proposal also includes provision of a small car park consisting of four spaces to be located at the southern end of the site close to the lane. Therefore the visitors will not drive up the field up to the pods. A pedestrian path will lead from the car park to the pods. The location of the pods is to be in a linear form with all three pods located in the northern half of the site next to existing woodland which is located to the east of the site.
- 3.2. The proposal also includes a landscaping scheme which will involve planting of trees close to the western boundary of the site and in between the pods, so that in time the proposal will be partially screened and be integrated with the woodland to the east of the site.
- 3.3. Elevation and layout plans for each proposed camping pod have been submitted. The pods are 6.2m x 3.4m with an eaves height of 2.3m and a ridge height of 2.7m. The pod offers temporary holiday accommodation for 2 individuals with a double bed, smaller kitchen/living area and a shower room. The pods can be made by the applicant, reducing the build costs and ensuring more profit can be ploughed back in the farm.
- 3.4. There will be no decking or hot tubs outside them. Electric will be via a generator and the proposal will be served by a communal septic tank located close to the proposed car park which will be regularly emptied by the applicant. A water pipe will be extended into this area from the field to provide a water supply for each one. Accordingly, each pod will be capable of being moved around on site, being a completely mobile structure. An example of a pod on a tractor and trailer are shown below.



- 3.5. An existing pod on site has been operational from 1st August 2020. This structure will be relocated to form pod 1 of this proposal. The existing pod has proven popular with tourists and many want to rebook for next year. This shows the proposal is sustainable in the long term.

3.6. The proposed site plan is shown below.



3.7. The proposal will replace some of the income due to be lost in coming years from subsidies. It will futureproof the farm and the 3 employees and ensure it is not reliant on one income source. As a direct consequence, the area will also benefit from the increased local expenditure and will provide countryside access to more people.

3.8. The planning submission includes the following plans and documents:

- Location Plan
- Site Plan
- Elevations for the pods
- Landscape Visual Analysis Report
- Landscaping Plan

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1. The following policies are relevant to the proposal.
- 4.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - February 2019
- 4.3. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- 4.4. Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies:
 - 4.4.1. DS1 Development Strategy;
 - 4.4.2. DS2 Sustainable Development;
 - 4.4.3. EN2 Landscape;
 - 4.4.4. EC1 Business and Employment Development;
 - 4.4.5. EC3 Visitor Economy;
 - 4.4.6. DMG1 General Considerations;
 - 4.4.7. DMG2 Strategic Considerations;
 - 4.4.8. DMG3 Transport and Mobility;
 - 4.4.9. DME2 Landscape and Townscape Protection;
 - 4.4.10. DME3 Site and Species Protection and Conservation;
 - 4.4.11. DMB1 Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy;
 - 4.4.12. DMB3 Recreation and Tourism Development.

5. PLANNING ANALYSIS

- 5.1. It is considered the proposal raises the following main matters:
- 5.1.1. The principle of the development;
 - 5.1.2. The impact of the development on the character and visual appearance of the area;
 - 5.1.3. Impacts on residential amenities;
 - 5.1.4. Effects on the highway network.
 - 5.1.5. Diversification
- 5.2. **The principle of development** - Core strategy Policy DMG2 seeks to direct development towards the settlement boundaries except in certain limited circumstances. One of these is small scale leisure or tourism developments appropriate to a rural area. However, it stipulates that these developments must be in keeping with the special character of the landscape and special consideration will be had to preserving and enhancing this, especially in the AONB. The issue of whether the proposal is in keeping with the character of the area is dealt with in the next section. Given the proposal is for only 3 one bedroom pods and a small car park, the proposal is of a small scale tourism development and complies with the provisions of Policy DMG2.
- 5.3. Policy EC3 refers to the visitors economy and states that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities. The proposal will deliver an improvement to the environment, with significant landscape proposals, it will provide security for three jobs and will benefit the local community in that visitors will use local services. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy EC3.
- 5.4. Overall the proposal complies with Policies DMG2 and EC3 and on that basis it is considered to be acceptable in principle.
- 5.5. **Impact of the development on the character and visual appearance of the area** - Policy DMB3 sets out the Council's aims specifically with regard to recreation and tourism development. It is broadly supportive of new developments which improve the range of tourist facilities however it stresses that developments must meet certain criteria and must not conflict with other policies.

- 5.6. Criterion one states that the proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village. The siting of the camping pods have been carefully considered to have minimal impact on the landscape. Their positioning adjacent to the existing woodland offers both protection from the weather for occupants, whilst utilising the existing wooded area as a backdrop to the proposal. There will only be a narrow pedestrian track leading from the access to the pods. A parking area for four cars will be created at the entrance to the field. The proposal also includes a landscaping scheme which shows the planting of native trees in and around the site and to partially conceal the proposal when viewed from the west. The pods are positioned to the north of the farmhouse and the agricultural yard area, close to this cluster of development. It is not possible to site the pod adjoining the main farm buildings as it is a busy working farm and would not be safe from a health and safety perspective. Occupants also have the ability to walk out to the local settlements and fells right from the pod, minimising travel on and off site whilst in occupation.
- 5.7. The planning officer in the pre-application response stated that *the proposed location of the camping pods is as close as practical to the main farm complex without compromising health and safety due to conflicts with farming activities. This in turn reduces the distance that holidaymakers would need to travel from the road. The submission suggests two potential locations, one within an existing woodland area and one directly adjacent to it. It is noted that the pods will be freestanding with no decking or hot tubs etc which will further reduce their visual impact and permanence. The proposed site(s) are considered to be well related to existing buildings and small scale and as such are considered to broadly satisfy DMB3 and DMG2 in terms of the principle.*
- 5.8. Policy EN2: refers to landscape and states the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials
- 5.9. At the pre-application stage the proposal comprised two alternative site's, one within the woodland and one adjacent to the woodland. The proposal in this planning application is for one on the edge of the woodland. The planning officer in the pre-application response considered that *the location on the edge of the woodland would be more attractive for guests whilst the pods would still be sited against a backdrop of trees and the rising land which would screen them from a number of vantage points. As discussed, trees could then be strategically planted around the pods to screen them in long distance views whilst still allowing visitors to enjoy a more open position. A landscaping scheme and landscaping visual impact assessment should be submitted in support of a planning application.*
- 5.10. The applicant has provided a landscaping scheme to accompany this planning application. Furthermore, a landscape and visual statement has been provided and also is included within the

planning application. The statement identified four viewpoints from public vantage points towards the site. The statement considered that the site assessment found that the scale of the Forest of Bowland AONB landscape is vast, with expansive open skyline views, panoramic upland moorland and large skies across the upland landscape. The vernacular buildings associated with scattered farmsteads are often sited within or adjacent to mature woodland vegetation and the mosaic of herb-rich pasture, dissected and defined by a network of drystone walls is a characteristic feature. The scale of the landscape is able to absorb certain types of development and the addition of the 3no. Camping pods at Burnhouse Farm are anticipated to be respectful of the existing character and local vernacular.

- 5.11. The statement concluded that the location of the camping pods has been carefully chosen to minimise any landscape or visual sensitivities and their construction from timber recognises and respects local character. Sensitive soft landscape planting with native species of local provenance, aims to root the camping pods into the landscape scene, ensuring that the key characteristics and special qualities of the Forest of Bowland AONB are protected and enhanced.
- 5.12. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy EN2.
- 5.13. **Impacts on residential amenities** - There will be no negative impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties as they are located far enough away not to cause a disturbance.
- 5.14. The planning officer noted in the pre-application response that *there are a few other dwellings located in the vicinity of the development. As noted in the previous planning application, additional use of the lane by visitors may cause some minor disruption to other dwellings who share this access however given the distance to nearby properties it is not considered that the proposal raises any significant residential amenity issues to warrant a refusal on these grounds. Furthermore, the distance travelled along the lane is reduced from that on the previous application by resisting to the location closer to the farm.*
- 5.15. **Effects on the highway network** - Policy DMB3 requires that developments are well related to the existing highway. They should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Furthermore the site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas.
- 5.16. The application is 0.8miles from Back Lane that leads to Slaidburn and Newton-In Bowland. The small-scale nature of the development will only require one car per pod to travel to and from the site. There is no capacity within each pod for more than one couple. Accordingly, the proposal will not create any problems or disturbance on the highway network. The proposal includes a small car park to serve four vehicles which would be located adjacent to the road.
- 5.17. The planning officer in the pre-application response stated *the proposal would not be likely to result in a material increase in volumes of traffic on surrounding roads but would result in a slight increase on the lane due to the proposed 3 pods which will accommodate two persons each and likely to generate no more than one car per pod.*

- 5.18. Given the proposal is small scale in nature it is considered the proposal accords with Policy DMB3.
- 5.19. **Diversification** - It has been explained that there is a desperate need for the farm to find alternative income streams in the very near future. The farm needs to diversify to be able to make up the future subsidy shortfall. The NPPF paragraph 83(b) supports diversification and states planning policies and decisions should enable: *'the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;'*
- 5.20. Policy EC1 of the Core Strategy Policy refers to business and employment development and states that developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle. The proposal is for a farm diversification scheme and will strengthen the wider rural economy.
- 5.21. The current farming enterprises and income streams have been set out above (current and proposed farm plan). The proposed diversification will help replace some of the subsidy that will be lost. This year, the subsidy has already been reduced by 10% less than it was last year. There is a desperate need to act now to save the farm and ensure it continues forward in a sustainable, positive manner.
- 5.22. The planning officer in the pre-app response stated *that there is some justification for the development. In that Mr Hartley constructs the pods himself and this in turn also helps to generate an income for the business as well as removing any need for pods to be transported to the site. The existing pod has been very popular and also has numerous upcoming bookings confirmed. The expansion of the holiday accommodation will provide ongoing employment for existing staff and this diversification will help to mitigate against the continued loss of income from grant funding.*
- 5.23. Overall it is considered the proposal provides a sustainable diversification scheme and will accord with the Framework and Policy EC1.

6. TREES, DRAINAGE, & ECOLOGY

- 6.1. **Trees** - No trees are impacted by the proposal as the pods will be positioned adjacent to the existing woodland and new trees will be planted around them in an open area.
- 6.2. **Drainage** - Existing surface water drains and watercourses drain the site. Water flows into the lower valleys, away from residences via the watercourses. The pedestrian track will be about 1m wide and permeable (compacted hardcore). No hardstanding around the pods are proposed. Surface water from the roofs will be diverted into the watercourses via the land drains. There will be no adverse impacts to the surrounding watercourses. In terms of foul drainage the proposal includes a septic tank to be located close to the road.
- 6.3. **Ecology** - It is considered that the proposal will not have any adverse impacts on protected species or habitats as no trees will be removed, nor are any buildings being affected.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The proposed diversification project seeks to provide an alternative income stream to replace future subsidy loss. This will help futureproof the farm and is genuinely needed by the farm business to sustain it. The existing pod shows how much demand there is for the accommodation locally and the applicant is constantly receiving enquiries for more. It will open up further access to the countryside for more people.
- 7.2. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle, it will not be harmful in the rural landscape or the AONB, it will not be harmful to highway safety and the site is located some distance from neighbouring residents.
- 7.3. The proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of the Framework and the Councils Core Strategy policies and therefore the Council are respectfully requested to approve the planning application.

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