

EDEN

James Hall & Co. Ltd - Alston Dairy, Preston  
Planning Statement



## Summary

Alston Dairy is a successful local business located to the immediate south of Longridge and north east of Grimsargh owned and run by James Hall & Co. Ltd (the Applicant). The size of the dairy has grown reflective of its success since opening in 1983.

The proposed development provides the local community with the opportunity to purchase fresh local produce, from the new farm shop as well as increading production capabilities at the dairy and introducing a storage building on the north west corner of the site.

The farm shop concept, will be operated by SPAR, the first of its kind, the high quality design reflects the importance of this project both locally, nationally and globally.



## Summary

In addition to making local produce available for the community to purchase, the proposal will also enable additional locally sourced products provided by James Hall & Co. Ltd to be available for purchase.

This submission demonstrates the proposal accords with the Development Plan, delivering investment, supporting rural diversification and growth of a thriving local business, creating 70 (direct) much needed local jobs.



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# 01 Submission



# The Submission

This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of the Applicant, James Hall & Co. Ltd, in support of a full planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council for works to extend the dairy, provide a new farm shop and cafe and storage building at Alston Dairy, Alston Lane, Longridge, Preston, PR3 3BN [the Site].

The proposed submission is multifaceted, with three key elements presented together to ensure all relevant planning policies can be considered cumulatively. These include:

1. Extension to the existing dairy and associated parking area.
2. Provision of a farm shop and café on the site and associated parking.
3. New storage building and associated access to Pinfold Lane.

## Description of Development

The description of development is:

*“Development of a new farm shop with car parking and service yard; extension to the dairy and installation of solar panels; new staff car parking; and storage building with associated access, landscaping across the whole site and all associated works”.*

This statement demonstrates how the proposal satisfies the key policy tests and summarises the technical reports for officers.

The planning submission is accompanied by the following plans and documents:

- Existing and proposed plans and drawings – Harry Walters & Livesey Ltd
- Design and Access Statement – Eden Planning
- CGIs - DeMaterial
- Landscape Impact Assessment – Trevor Bridge Associates
- Landscape Plan – Trevor Bridge Associates
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement – Trevor Bridge Associates
- Ecological Assessment – ERAP
- Geo Environmental Report – Geo2 Remediation Ltd
- Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment – Pluviam
- Noise Impact Assessment – E3P
- Transport Statement – SLR
- Site Waste Management Plan – Eden Planning

## Submission Plans and Documents



View of the site from Preston Road

## 02 Context



## Context

The dairy at Alston has a long history as a robust family run business. Since 1966 the business has grown specifically due to popularity of the Ann Forshaw yoghurt brand.

Sustainability is at the heart of the operation, the dairy uses some milk from the adjacent farm for production of the yogurts, which are sold nationally through various supermarkets and local public services including hospitals and schools. The dairy and land to the north (the application site) was acquired by the James Hall and Co. Ltd company in 2023.

Opportunities for diversification are a crucial part of the long term and successful running of the business. An extension to the existing dairy, a new storage building and the provision of a new farm shop are seen as integral to this.

The opportunity and desire to sell produce from the site and the need for improved production facilities has resulted in this application.

The dairy extension is required as the existing production plant is insufficient for current output, with limited capacity to produce a greater range of products including ice cream, milkshakes and chilled desserts. It is envisaged these new products will be manufactured largely using milk from the dairy herd on site, delivering extremely sustainable local products.

The new farm shop would stock the full range of Ann Forshaw products and other locally produced goods. The inclusion of a cafe will constitute a community asset as well as generating local employment. Although a 'Shop' is currently advertised at the site access, this is purely a counter for local residents to purchase yogurts in bulk and the proposal represents a significant enhancement to the offer.

A new building is also proposed on the northern part of the site for the storage of machinery and logs that would be used by the wider business.

*Ann Farber's*

**Alston Dairy**

Farmhouse Yogurt

Shop

Sunday - Friday  
10am - 3pm



# 03 Site



## Site

The site has an area of 2.9 hectares and is located to the east of Preston Road (B6243), south of Pinfold Lane, and north of Alston Lane, just south of Longridge. Longridge is allocated as both a Key Service Centre and Principal Settlement within the Core Strategy.

The application site, edged in red, includes only those parts of the site that will accommodate development. This includes the buildings associated with the dairy, its service yard, access road, and the grassland to the north.

The south of the site is occupied by the dairy, including a variety of single-story agricultural 'shed' style buildings clustered towards Preston Road. Servicing for the site is located on the eastern side of the buildings facing Preston Road. There is informal car parking and heavy goods vehicle maneuvering areas in this part of the site as well.

Additionally, there is an electrical substation on the southwest corner of the site, and the remnants of a small stone cross within the northern field towards Pinfold Lane.

The remainder of the site is amenity grassland with low hedges and scattered trees, including around the site's boundary.

The main vehicular access to the site is from Preston Road. There are two secondary access points from Alston Lane to the west and southwest of the dairy buildings.

Ground levels are generally flat, with a gentle slope southwards across the site.

## Surrounding Area

The main dairy site is situated on the northern edge of the village of Alston.

To the south west/south of the dairy, there are three dwellings: Bolton Fold Cottage, Rose Villa, and 249 Preston Road. Fair View is located to the north east of the northern part of the application site, off Pinfold Lane. Opposite the site on the west side of Preston Road is an Italian restaurant and further residential properties.

The area possesses a rural character, characterised by open spaces interspersed with existing built development. To the north, the established settlement of Longridge has expanded with recent planning permissions for residential-led development at Alston Grange.

# Site



## Site Stats

Flood Zone	Flood Zone 1 with a low probability for flooding from rivers and the sea. Within the site there are small areas which are at a medium and high level risk – no development is proposed here.
Site Area	2.9ha
Ecological or landscape designations	Open Countryside
Heritage Designations	The site does not include any listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments within or close to the site. Not within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.
Public Footpaths	Footpath 0302069 crosses through the dairy complex east/west from Alston Lane. Bridleway BW0302119 runs along Pinfold Lane to the north of the application site.
Tree Preservation Orders	It is understood there are no TPOs within the application site.

# 04 Proposal

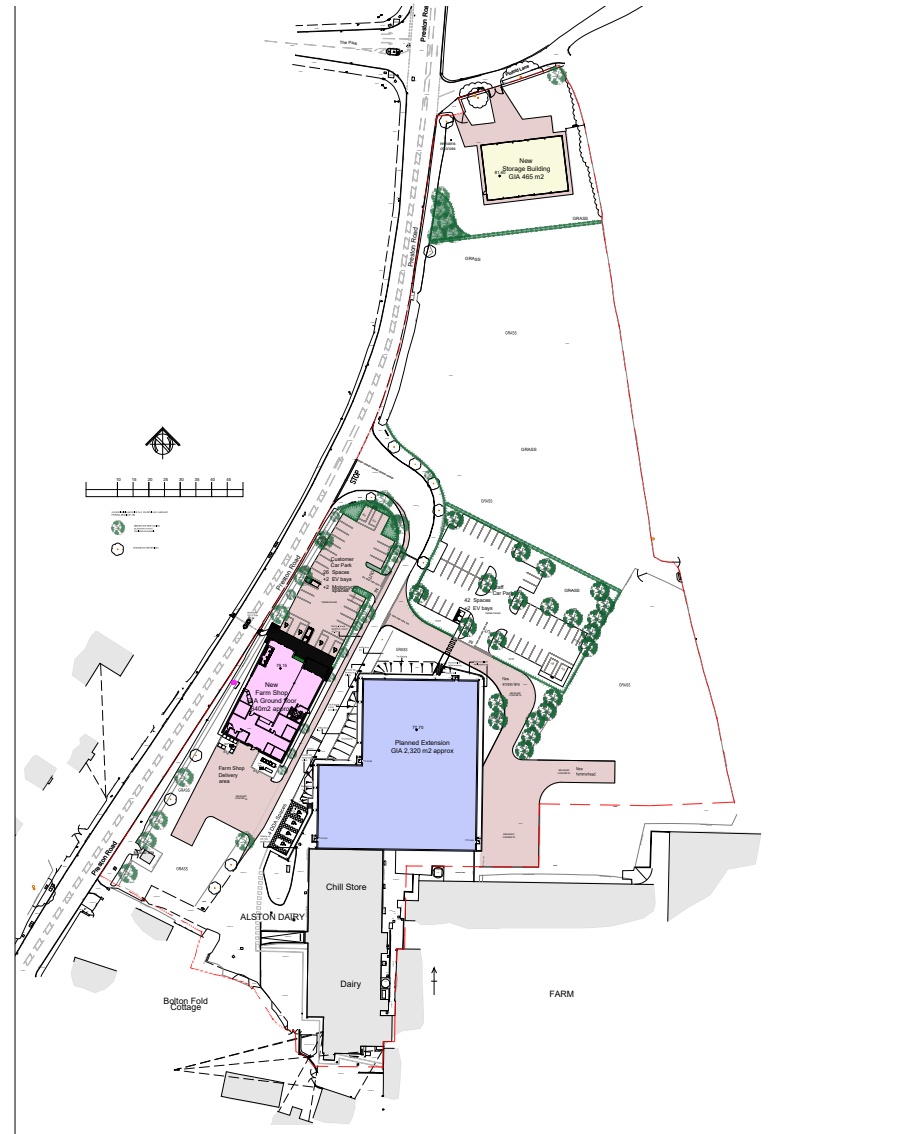


# Proposal

The proposed development comprises the extension of the existing Alston Dairy, a new storage building, and the provision of a farm shop and café, together with car parking and servicing arrangements. The application incorporates both hard and soft landscaping and includes the creation of a new access to the storage building.

Full details are provided within the Design and Access Statement and are illustrated on the submitted plans:

- Extension to the dairy to enhance production capabilities and consumer offerings.
- The development of a new flag ship farm shop.
- A new building and access to the north to provide increased storage.
- The existing main site access from Preston Road is unchanged with additional capacity confirmed.
- Space for improved and extended parking arrangements, including accessible spaces and an EV charging station.
- Installation of Photo Voltaic cells.



# Proposal

## Dairy Extension

The extension to the dairy is required to facilitate an increased production area, with the submitted plans showing an extended Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 2,322 sqm.

There are currently 39 employees, demonstrating how the success of the dairy has thrived to deliver jobs in excess of that anticipated in a previous application from 2017 (reference: 3/2017/0500). We understand from the Applicant that the production plant can no longer cope with the current output, and this is why the proposal is essential to the dairy's operation.

The extension is proposed to adjoin the existing dairy building, matching the existing shape, height (max 6.3m ridge), and agricultural style of the building. The proposed extension will be linked via the existing chill store.

The detailed materials proposed are illustrated on the submitted plans. In summary, they will provide elements of brickwork, metal sheeting, and cladding to match the existing building.

The Solar panels are proposed to be located on the south-facing slopes of the roof.

## Farm Shop/ Cafe

The new shop provides a facility, visible and accessible to the local community and visitors. The addition of a café, along with the farm shop, introduces a new concept for the Applicant, it will be the first SPAR Farm Shop in the UK.

The Gross Internal Floor Area is 645 sq m, encompassing a stock area, staff and office space, and produce preparation areas. The retail area, as indicated on the submitted plans, is 380 sqm. A mezzanine floor is proposed to house a café for selling farm and local produce, covering approximately 280 sqm and featuring small terrace areas.

The design of the proposed building, characterised by stepped elevations, is a response to the site's context, minimising height where necessary and adding visual interest to the rural and agricultural appearance. This design incorporates large timber sliding doors, cedar cladding on the elevations, and natural stone. The roof is slated with natural grey slate. Glazed areas at the front of the farm shop ensure the building is easily recognizable, with a clearly defined entrance.

The proposed building's height is only slightly greater than the existing dairy buildings, with the first floor situated within the roof space and a maximum ridge height of 8.2m and eaves of 5.3m.

# Proposal

## Storage Building

The proposed storage building would provide approximately 465 sqm of storage. It is planned for the northern part of the site and would have a modest, more utilitarian feel compared to the existing dairy and its proposed extension.

Various locations on the site were considered for the placement of this building during the design evolution. This option was preferred in design terms (rather than extending the main dairy complex of buildings) as it allows the building to be discretely positioned towards the boundary of the site, close to existing stone walls with natural screening.

The building will be single storey, featuring an aluminium door, a red brickwork base, closed Yorkshire boarding, and a grey metal roof.

A new access is proposed to Pinfold Lane and this is considered beneficial to the wider site, allowing the separation of different types of movements.

## Sustainability

The site is within a sustainable location and, with the growth of Longridge marked by the expansion to the south of Alston Grange, the application site is now immediately adjacent to the built-up area of Longridge.

In terms of sustainable development, the existing dairy buildings are accessible by means other than the private car.

The site is within c.275m of a bus route served by regular daily services to Preston City Centre and Longridge which also links to Grimsargh, Grange and Ribbleton.

The road through Alston is wide enough to accommodate cycles safely, confirmed within the Transport Statement which also identifies a wide cycle catchment which includes Longridge, Grimsargh and Red Scar Business Park.

The Transport Statement also confirms the site has a strong walking catchment being on the northern edge of the Alston settlement close to Longridge and the new residential properties, which are also within a 2km walking distance.

# Proposal

## Landscaping

Landscaping forms an important part of the proposed development.

At present the site has a combination of well maintained amenity grass with small trees lining the access road and a low lying hedge on the edge of the site fronting Preston Road. The current landscaping is in keeping with its context.

It is proposed to maintain the current feel and appearance of the site whilst also providing additional tree and shrub planting.

The proposed development is accompanied a Landscape Plan which provides full details of the proposal. In total 40 trees will be planted, which is considerably more than would be removed to facilitate the development.

## Access and Parking

The main access is unchanged. Two additional parking areas are proposed. One will serve the farm shop and café contained within the existing verge area to the north west of the dairy complex. This will accommodate 28 car parking spaces, including 4 accessible spaces and two electric vehicle charging spaces. Two motorcycle spaces are also proposed on this part of the site.

A second car parking area is proposed to the immediate north of the dairy extension. This will extend the existing staff car parking area to provide 42 car parking spaces, including two electric vehicle charging spaces.

We understand from the dairy operator that additional car parking is required to meet existing need.

The increased car parking for staff serving the extension to the dairy would help to address this, as well as providing space for the increase in staff numbers resulting from the proposed investment.

No car parking area is proposed near the new storage building, but access is provided to enable cars to enter and exit in a forward gear.

The Proposed Site Layout plan demonstrates the heavy goods vehicle tracking to demonstrate how the proposal can be accessed and serviced safely.

Existing hours of operation are not proposed to change.

# 05 Policy spotlight



## Policy spotlight

In accordance with Section 70(2) of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the planning application must be determined in line with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications that align with the Development Plan should be approved without delay.

The adopted Local Plan comprises the Local Development Framework (LDF), including the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2008 – 2028) (Adopted December 2014), the Housing and Economic Development DPD (2019), and the Longridge 2028 Neighbourhood Plan (2019)

### Development Plan

Within the Development Plan the site is shown to be located outside any settlement boundary and within Open Countryside. It is within a mineral safeguarding area.

Most relevant policies:

- Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
- Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development

- Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development
- Key Statement EN2 – Landscape
- Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy
- Key Statement EN3 – Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
- Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
- Policy DMR3 – Retail Outside the Main Settlements
- Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility
- Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth
- Policy DME2 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands
- Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation
- Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
- Policy DME6 – Water Management

A summary of all the relevant Development Plan policies is provided in **Appendix 2**.

## Policy spotlight

### Housing and Economic Development DPD

As part of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) the Housing and Economic Development DPD provides land allocations and detailed policies that form part of the development plan. Relevant to the proposal, it highlights the need for new development to be focussed towards principal settlements such as Longridge.

### Longridge Neighbourhood Plan

The site has no specific allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, it confirms at Policy LNPD14 – Protecting Local Employment Sites – that proposals for businesses uses will be supported, and that visitors are welcomed and encouraged to spend in the community.

### Emerging Local Plan

The Council is in the process of preparing an updated local plan which will update the Local Development Framework (LDF) to establish a new vision, underlying objectives and key principles that will guide the development of the Ribble Valley to 2038. Preparation of a new Local Plan has started and in May 2022, the Council reached the first regulation stage of the plan-making process. At this early stage, only very limited weight can be attributed to the emerging plan.

### Key Planning Policy Considerations

Examination of the site characteristics, the Development Plan and material considerations has led us to establish that open countryside, retail uses outside of settlement boundaries and residential amenity are key considerations.

These are examined alongside other matters, within the next section where we demonstrate acceptability in planning terms.

# 06 Assessment



# Assessment

Key matters for this application include:

- Principle of the Development.
- Open Countryside location and Landscape Character.
- Retail uses outside a settlement.
- Economic support to the Dairy as a local business.
- Design considerations, inc. assessment of impacts on amenity.

The proposed development is considered against each of these matters and the requirements of the development plan. Technical considerations are examined within Section 7.

## Principle of the Development

The existing dairy site has been in situ since the 1980s, and, due to the growth and success of this local business, has expanded at an organic rate over the years. The proposal represent a further incremental increase in operations, supported by an extended dairy building, the new farm shop, and café, together with a new storage building.

The development plan includes Key Statement EC1, Business and Employment Development, this policy specifically supports the expansion of existing businesses, including where they support the rural economy.

Policy DME6, Supporting Business Growth, supports the expansion of established firms on land outside settlements provided they are essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated into the local landscape. The extension of the dairy together with the new storage building is required to support the expansion of Alston Dairy.

The farm shop concept is new to the SPAR family of companies. This new venture, which focuses on the sale of local produce both from Alston Dairy itself and other local Lancashire businesses. This will directly support the site as a local source of employment and deliver new opportunities, including sales staff and catering jobs in the new farm shop, as well as those already established through the main operations of the dairy.

The plan also seeks to focus development on principal towns, including Longridge through Key Statement 1, Development Strategy. While the application site sits outside the defined urban area, it is very close to its southern boundary. The expansion of the town southwards has emphasised this proximity, with new development only 75m to the north of the dairy site.

This location is sustainable, being located on a bus route, with bus stops situated to the south of the site on Preston Road outside the White Bull. There is a footpath on Preston Road that gives safe access to Alston village and north to Longridge. Lastly, Preston Road is speed restricted to 40mph and wide enough to accommodate cycles.

## Assessment

Further, the proposal will provide a boost to the visitor economy, with the café and shop attracting tourists as well as serving the local community. Key Statement EC3, Visitor Economy recognises the importance of strengthening the visitor economy, particularly where benefits to local communities and employment opportunities are boosted. The café and farm shop will support this Key Statement.

### Open Countryside and Landscape Character

According to Core Strategy Policy DMG2, Strategic Considerations, development outside defined settlement areas must meet at least one of six criteria. An extract of the policy is at Appendix 2, and these include the following criteria, both of which are relevant to the proposed development:

- 'The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being of the area';
- 'The development is for small-scale uses and is appropriate to the rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.'

There is also a requirement for development in the open countryside to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area 'by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping, and siting.'

The design of the proposed extension and buildings are presented in detail within the Design and Access Statement, and the detailed plans submitted with the application.

In summary, the scale proposed is appropriate within the area and set within the context of the wider dairy site, and will be essential to the local economy, with existing jobs secured and 70 new jobs created.



## Assessment

Longridge and Core Strategy Key Statement EC1, Business and Employment Development and Policy DMB1, Supporting Business Growth of the Core Strategy, particularly developments that strengthen the rural economy. This is emphasised by Paragraph 84 of the NPPF requires planning decision to enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based businesses.

Development for employment generating purposes at the site is acceptable in principle subject to a suitable design. The proposal is of exceptional quality is supported by a strong landscaping scheme. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and a Design and Access Statement demonstrate the proposals are inkeeping satisfying the second prong of this policy test.

### Retail Uses outside a Settlement

National and local planning policy, which is reflected through Core Strategy Policy DMR1, Retail Development in Clitheroe, directs major retail development to Clitheroe, followed by edge of centre locations and then only if these are not available should out of centre locations be considered. Policy DMR1 also requires a retail impact assessment to be submitted for proposals for retail floorspace over 1,000sqm. The farm shop proposed is well below this threshold. It is not therefore considered that a retail impact assessment is required in this instance.

This policy is accompanied by Core Strategy Policy DMR3, Retail Outside the Main Settlements says that farm shops will be approved which are linked to genuine farm diversification proposals, subject to specified criteria. In direct response to this policy:

- New buildings proposed are minimal and are well related to the existing buildings. They reflect the landscape character in terms of material and design.
- The proposals are well related to the primary transport route system, and will not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance.
- The site is large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscape areas.
- Some of the goods sold will be manufactured using milk from the adjacent farm. The policy justification notes that the sale of produce other than that produced at the farm can be permitted where additional information is provided, noting that often farm shops are ancillary and do not require planning permission. In this instance, permission is required.
- Existing buildings would be unable to accommodate the farm shop, so a new sensitively designed building for the farm shop and café is proposed.

## Assessment

Policy DMR3, Retail Outside Main Settlements continues to state that such farm shops should ensure there is no unacceptable disturbance to neighbours and that, in considering such proposals, the potential impact on nearby village shops will be taken into account.

The Longridge Neighbourhood Plan includes Objective 4, which seeks to maintain and enhance local shops and services.

Accordingly, the proposal is site-specific and seeks to secure a farm shop which is linked to the dairy because some of the products sold will be manufactured there using milk from the adjacent farm. It cannot be located within a town centre, with the proposed location is the most sustainable. The site is very close to the existing settlement limits to the south of Longridge.

The produce to be sold on the site will include the yoghurt and dairy products from Alston Dairy together with other local produce including those made by James Hall & Co's Clayton Park Bakery and Graham Eyes Quality Butchers brands at their Longridge facility.

### Economic Support to the Dairy as a Local Business

As noted within the Principle of Development section above, the development plan seeks to support existing businesses, including expansion plans. This is identified through Policy DMB1, Supporting Business Growth, and further considered within the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan, notably Objective 6, which seeks to protect and enhance employment opportunities within Longridge, and Policy LNNDP16, Protecting Local Employment Sites.

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states the planning decision should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. This is further emphasised by Paragraph 84, which states that the expansion of all types of business in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings should be enabled. Alston Dairy has become a significant local employer, and with the expansion and diversification as proposed, will provide further jobs, increasing from 39 employees by 30 to a total of 69 as well as a further 40 jobs created by the shop and cafe.

With a strong policy emphasis on supporting existing local businesses, significant weight is attached to this element of the proposal.

# Assessment

## Design

Key Statement EN2, Landscape, explains within its justification that:

*'developers should adopt a non-standardised approach to design which recognises and enhances local distinctiveness, landscape character, the quality of the built fabric, historic patterns and landscape tranquillity.'*

The Longridge Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy LDNP5, Longridge Design Principles. These policies should also be considered with Chapter 12, Achieving well-designed places. The detailed design evolution and description is available within the Design and Access Statement and the submitted plans and elevations.

The extension reflects the existing dairy building in terms of height, scale and materials. The farm shop and café have a rural design to reflect the agricultural character of the site and include glazing areas to aid legibility and provide a modern attractive appearance to the new building.

The proposed solar panels have been specifically located on the southern elevation to not only receive maximum light but also be located away from sensitive views. The southern slope of the extended building faces the existing dairy building and is adjacent to large farm buildings. The built up nature of this part of the site means that the solar panels will not be an incongruous feature on the site in accordance with Policy DEM5 which requires renewable energy schemes to not cause unacceptable harm to the local environment.

The proposed storage building is very simple and traditional in its appearance, with brick and timber cladding below a grey roof. It is designed to assimilate with its open countryside setting and not be an obstructive feature in the landscape.

# Assessment

## Landscape

Core Strategy Key Statement EN2, Landscape emphasises the importance of new development being in keeping with the character of the local landscape. This is supported Policy DME2, Landscape and Townscape Protection which protects landscape features including stone walls, ponds, meadows or pastures, woodland, hedgerows and trees. The Longridge Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy LNPD8, Landscape, which requires conservation and enhancement of local character in terms of landform, geodiversity, landscaping and screening as well as use of local materials and styles.

A detailed Landscape Impact Assessment and Landscape Plan is submitted with the application. It demonstrates how the proposed built form will be wholly in keeping with the landscape in this part of Longridge. The low heights proposed will ensure the perception of the built form's scale is minimised. It is also material that the proposed new buildings will be viewed within the context of the existing dairy. The material palette of the buildings and the proposed landscaping treatment reflect the existing agricultural character of the site and therefore are considered to be appropriate.

In summary, all elements of the proposal are sympathetic to the existing character of the site and its surroundings. They are of a scale that is in keeping with the existing operational dairy site and include significant areas of landscaping to soften the proposal and maintain the site's current agricultural feel.

The proposed development will cumulatively reflect the existing built form and respect its Open Countryside setting.

## Amenity

The nearest neighbours include dwellings to the south, 8m from the site boundary at the closes point, and one to the northeast, 30m from the site boundary at its closes point. The amenity of existing residents is protected by Core Strategy Policy DMG1, General Considerations and LNPD 5, Longridge Design Principles.

It is important to recognise that the existing site already accommodates significant vehicle movements including service vehicles. In particular, the existing turning head for vehicles delivering to and from the dairy is located adjacent to a residential property (249 Preston Road). The land use for commercial dairy floorspace is well-established and the proposed development is unlikely to represent a significant intensification of the use.

To demonstrate that the amenity of existing neighbours is protected, technical information including a Noise Assessment and Transport Statement are submitted for consideration with the planning application. More detail of how residential amenity is protected is outlined by the Acoustic Assessment which is summarised in Section 7 below. In addition to acoustic measures, low level lighting will be used to minimise spill to the surrounding area.

The visual amenity of the home immediately to the north west of the proposed storage building has also been carefully considered. The proposed storage building is set off the site boundary to increase the separation distance between the residential curtilage and the building and to ensure that the existing trees on that site boundary (not within the applicant's ownership) can be safely maintained.

# 07 Technical



# Technical

In this section of the Planning Statement the findings of submitted technical assessments are summarised and compared against relevant planning policy to demonstrate compliance with the Development Plan and national policy.

## Trees

Policy DME1, Protecting Trees and Woodlands requires development to consider impacts on trees and hedgerows. To address this, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement prepared by Trevor Bridge Associates has been submitted with the application, and full details of proposed works to trees are within these documents.

In summary, trees that can be retained will be protected during the construction process with fencing, and root protection areas are identified, with development set at an acceptable distance from these.

Where this cannot be achieved or the tree is of a poor quality and is recommended for removal, this is identified on the Tree Protection Plan (7274.02). This includes partial removal of three groups, four individual trees, and two groups of trees. This impact will be assessed against the proposed landscaping which includes mitigation for the loss of these trees and the planting of replacement trees. No hedgerows will be affected by the proposals. In conclusion, the proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DME1, Protecting Trees and Woodlands.

Reference – Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, Trevor Bridge Associates

## Ecology

Key Statement EN4, Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Policy DME3, Site and Species Protection and Conservation requires new development to fully assess any impact on statutorily protected species and other species, with mitigation measures included where needed.

To meet the requirements of these policies and Section 15 of the NPPF, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, an Ecological Assessment has been prepared by ERAP. Based on desktop research and site survey, it confirms that there are no protected species on the site, no invasive species and no further ecological surveys are recommended to inform the application.

In conclusion, the Assessment notes that the proposed development provides the opportunity for enhancement for wildlife associated with the wider area. This will be delivered through the proposed landscape planting, bat roost boxes and bird boxes detailed within the Assessment.

Reference – Ecological Assessment, ERAP

# Technical

## Flood Risk

Key Statement EN3, Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Policy DME6, Water Management and Section 14, Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, of the NPPF requires new development to consider flood risk to ensure that new proposals do not increase flood risk. The site is within Environment Agency Flood Zone 1, which is at a low risk of flooding. As the site exceeds 1ha, a flood risk assessment (FRA) has been provided, and this assessment confirms that neither a sequential test nor an Exception Test are required.

The FRA confirms that fluvial, tidal, pluvial and groundwater flood risks are 'low and acceptable'. Risks from reservoirs, canals and other artificial sources are 'very low risk but a medium to high risk to life', and flooding from the development is assessed as 'low and acceptable'.

The FRA also includes an assessment of whether sustainable drainage systems (SUDs) can be utilised. Based on the SUDs checklist, the assessment confirms that infiltration is not possible on this site, but discharge via the watercourse/ditch to the north west of the site is possible.

Reference – Flood Risk Assessment, Pluviam Environmental

## Ground Conditions

Key Statement EN4, Biodiversity and Geodiversity requires new development to work with existing geodiversity, and conserve and enhance this wherever possible. A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment has been prepared by Geo2 Remediation Ltd and is submitted with the application. This confirms that there is a low risk to receptors, noting plant and made ground associated with the dairy evident on the site. With the existing dairy use continuing, it is concluded that there are no contamination issues that would affect the proposed development, and it meets the requirements of Key Statement EN4, Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Reference – Phase 1 Environmental Assessment, Geo2 Remediation Ltd

# Technical

## Highways and Transport

Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility attaches considerable weight to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from new development. This includes the primary and strategic road network, pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility, proposals which promote development within existing developed areas or extension to them at locations which are highly accessible by means other than the private car. This supports Section 9 of the NPPF, Promoting Sustainable Transport.

The proposed extension will provide for an additional shift to be accommodated at the dairy. Whilst production will therefore be able to increase, this will not result in any increase in traffic movement at peak times. The shift is anticipated to run between 2pm and 10pm.

Reference – Transport Statement, SLR

## Acoustics

Policy DMG1, General Considerations requires new development to consider noise and acoustics in relation to amenity. To meet this requirement, a Noise Impact Assessment was undertaken by EP3. This assessment measured day and nighttime noise levels towards the north of the site close to Pinfold Lane, and full details are within the Assessment.

In summary, worst case scenarios are presented and assessed for the proposed extension, farm shop, car parking areas and storage building. The Assessment concludes that minor mitigation is proposed for day time noise only. This comprises an acoustic barrier 2.1m high to protect garden areas to 'Fair View' from the proposed storage building. With this mitigation in place, the Assessment confirms there would be no undue impact in terms of acoustics associated with the proposed development.

The Assessment includes recommendations regarding the location of fixed plant within the site, which will be followed by the applicant and can be ensured via a suitably worded condition.

With these measures in place, the proposal meets the requirements of Policy DMG1, General Considerations with regard to protecting amenity and noise.

Reference – Noise Impact Assessment, E3P

# Technical

## Drainage

Policy DME6, Water Management requires new development to consider sustainable drainage systems. A Drainage Strategy Report prepared by Pluviam Environmental is submitted with the application. It confirms the existing site is served by a foul a surface water drainage system and a treatment/septic tank.

The Strategy identifies the methods used to consider potential drainage solutions, noting the sustainable drainage system (SUDs) checklist requirements. Borehole investigations confirmed that surface clays mean that infiltration is not suitable at the site, and surface water will be drained via the existing culvert. The Strategy details the proposed drainage on site, which will include a commercial treatment plant and collectively will treat and attenuation water runoff, together with details of the ongoing maintenance of the system.

Reference – Drainage Strategy Report, Pluviam Environmental

# 08 Conclusion



## Conclusion

This statement illustrates how the proposed development aligns with Development Plan requirements and would deliver enhancements to allow a successful local business and employer to thrive.

- The dairy extension seamlessly integrates with existing structures, enhances sustainable performance, and is crucial for the long-term security of the business.
- The innovative farm shop and café concept, focusing on local produce, is a flagship project of substantial economic importance.
- The discreetly located new storage building complements its surroundings with a traditional agricultural style.

Aligned with the Development Plan's goal of fostering economic growth for local businesses and the visitor economy, this development will significantly benefit Alston Dairy, providing 70 new jobs as well as securing existing jobs for the long term. This is also a key theme in the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan.

The high-quality, bespoke design responds specifically to the site, with a cohesive approach and palette of materials tying the elements together.

Technical issues have been assessed, and potential impacts can be mitigated through physical measures or by appropriately worded conditions (to be discussed and agreed).

In light of our assessment against relevant policies, we believe the proposals are acceptable. We trust officers will be able to proceed with a positive recommendation, and our team is ready to provide clarification or respond to comments proactively and constructively.



Appendix 1 Planning History

Appendix 2 Planning Policy Summary

## Appendix 1

There is extensive planning history for the site, the most relevant planning history includes:

- 3/2022/0800 – Removal of condition 7 (origin of the milk to be processed) from planning permission 3/1993/0009P to allow milk from other farms to be imported for business use. Approved 20/09/2022
- 3/2017/0500 – Proposed extension and relocated parking (parking started under planning permission 3/2016/0994). Approved 20/09/2022
- 3/2016/0994 – Proposed extension to existing dairy to provide new chill store and extension to loading ramp, new car park for 16 vehicles. Approved 13/12/2016.
- 3/2008/0227 – Construction of building to house farm shop, café, education room and bakery, laying out of parking area and creation of small animal enclosures. Approved 31/07/2008.
- 3/19998/0696 – Erection of three internally illuminated signs. Approved 04/12/1998.
- 3/1993/0009 – Processing and distribution building. Approved 07/04/1993.

Appendix 1 Planning History

Appendix 2 Planning Policy Summary

## Appendix 2

### Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014)

#### *Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy*

Identifies Longridge as a Principal Settlement. The policy states that the majority of development should be directed towards with these principal centres.

#### *Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development*

Notes that the Council will take a positive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, working proactively with applicants to find solutions that can be approved Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development wherever possible.

This statement requires new development to be directed towards the main settlements, including Longridge as preferred locations for growth. It states, “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”.

#### *Key Statement EN2 – Landscape*

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.

#### *Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy*

This key statement requires new development to strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley, including benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.

#### *Key Statement EN3 – Sustainable Development and Climate Change*

All development needs to meet sustainable design and construction where viable.

#### *Policy DMG1 – General Considerations.*

This criteria based policy requires new development to consider design, access, amenity, environment, infrastructure and other considerations.

#### *Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations.*

Development must accord with the spatial vision of principal settlements, including Longridge, to consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement.

The policy states that within the countryside, development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.

#### *Policy DMR1 – Retail Development in Clitheroe*

This policy identifies Clitheroe as the main retail area where major retail proposals should be focussed. It identifies the requirements for proposed retail development outside these areas, and is supported by Policy DMR2, Shopping in Longridge and Whalley, which seeks to location retail uses close to similar uses.

## Appendix 2

### *Policy DMR3 – Retail Outside the Main Settlements.*

This policy states, *“The Borough Council will approve the development of farm shops which are linked to genuine farm diversification proposals, subject to the following criteria:*

- 1. Any new building should be minimal, well related to existing farm buildings and reflect the landscape character of the area in terms of materials and design.*
- 2. The proposal should be well related to the primary transport route system. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance.*
- 3. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas.*
- 4. The range of goods sold must be linked to the farming nature of the enterprise.*
- 5. Where possible the proposal should incorporate the use of existing farm buildings. These should:*
  - Have a genuine history of use for agriculture or other rural enterprise; and*
  - Be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for major alterations which would adversely affect the character of the building. The proposed use will not cause unacceptable disturbance to neighbours in any way. In considering such proposals the desirability for the farmer of providing a service throughout the year and the potential impact on nearby village shops will be taken into account”.*

Proposals which include the sale of produce other than that produced at the farm are required to submit a farm or business plan so that the LPA can fully consider the proposals.

The policy states that proposed retail uses outside of settlements must not cause unacceptable disturbance, the desirability of farmers to provide a year round shop will be considered as will any potential impact on nearby village shops.

### *Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility*

The policy attaches considerable weight to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from new development. This includes the primary and strategic road network, pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility, proposals which promote development within existing developed areas or extension to them at locations which are highly accessible by means other than the private car.

### *Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth*

This policy supports proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy. It notes that the expansion of established firms on land outside settlements will be allowed provided that it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape.

## Appendix 2

### *Policy DME6 – Water Management*

The policy precludes development that would have an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. Appropriate measures for the conservation, protection and management of water should consider preventing pollution, consumption and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs).

### *Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands*

The policy includes a presumption against clearance of broad leaved woodland for development, and requires the submission of an Arboricultural Survey where trees are affected by development.

### *Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection*

States that development will be refused where significant harm to important landscape or landscape features including stone walls, ponds, characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures, woodlands, copses, hedgerows and individual trees, townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the area, upland landscapes and habitats and botanically rich roadside verges.

### *Policy DME3 – Site and Species Protection and Conservation*

This policy protects biodiversity, and encourages developers to incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity where appropriate.

### *Housing and Economic Development DPD (HED DPD)*

As part of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) the Housing and Economic Development DPD provides land allocations and detailed policies that form part of the development plan. Relevant to the proposal, it highlights the need for new development to be focussed towards principal settlements such as Longridge.

### **Longridge Neighbourhood Plan**

The NP states in the introduction, “We should press for space to allow local people to run businesses in Longridge and to encourage the employment of local people in them...Planning policy should encourage economic activity and provide for the potential for more space for expansion as business grows”. (p.13).

Objective 6 is to protect and enhance local employment opportunities, noting the importance of ensuring Longridge provides employment opportunities and does not become a dormitory town.

## Appendix 2

The Longridge Neighbourhood Plan confirms at Policy LNNDP16 – Protecting Local Employment Sites where proposals for alternative uses will only be permitted if they meet the requirements of Core Strategy Policy DMB1, Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy.

Policy LNNDP5 – Longridge Design Principles is a criteria based policy that requires new development to consider a full range of design issues, including character and appearance.

a) Conserve and enhance the locally distinctive built, historic and natural environment; b) Are designed to take account of site characteristics and surroundings, including:

i. Layout – the predominantly green appearance of the area to be maintained with appropriate green space and planting of trees and shrubs;

ii. Siting;

iii. Scale;

iv. Height;

v. Proportions and massing;

vi. Fuel efficiency;

vii. Architectural detailing;

viii. Landscaping;

ix. Materials; and

x. For domestic extensions these should be designed to appear an integral part of the original design of the house.

c) Have no significant adverse impact on residential amenity for existing and future residents;

d) Do not contribute to, or suffer from, adverse impacts arising from noise, light or air contamination, land instability or cause ground water pollution;

e) Utilise sustainable construction methods, minimising the use of non-renewable resources and maximising the use of recycled and sustainably sourced materials;

f) Minimise resource use towards a zero carbon dioxide emissions; g) Provide easy access for all members of the community;

h) Create safe environments that minimise opportunities for crime; Longridge

i) Incorporate adaptable designs that can accommodate changing lifestyles/life stages and technologies; and

j) they positively address any other design issues that have been identified as having a significant adverse impact on local character and distinctiveness

Policy LNNDP8, Landscape, requires new development to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the town by paying particular regard to its townscape and landscape setting and by having regard to protection of the landform, conservation of geodiversity, landscaping and screening, use of local materials and styles, retention of existing field patterns, restoration of landscape features, taking account of archaeology.

Objective 4 seeks to maintain and enhance local shops and services.

E D E N

## Get in touch

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