


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>EP</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>01/08/2025</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1/8/25</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	2024/0864			 <b>Ribble Valley Borough Council</b> <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>				
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	18/03/2025	<b>Site Notice:</b>	18/03/2025					
<b>Officer:</b>	EP							
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>					<b>APPROVAL</b>			

<b>Development Description:</b>	Change of use from day nursery (Use Class E (f)) to a mixed-use including day nursery and education facility (sui generis).
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	<b>Conkers Day Nursery Dewhurst Road Langho BB6 8AF.</b>

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
<b>No comment received.</b>	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	<b>No objection.</b>

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
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8 Letters of representation have been received and are summarised below.

- The proposal is ambiguous.
- Lack of parking.
- Loss of greenspace.
- The location plan does not correctly outline the site.
- Increase in traffic.
- Concerns over future changes to the exterior of the site, such as new fencing.
- Change in demographic and potential impact.
- Loss of play area.
- Support for the more diverse education facility.
- Incorrect plans.
- Concerns over increased operation hours to include weekends.

Amended plans/details, including a corrected location plan have been submitted since many of the above representations were made.

The proposal does not include the erection of new fencing, the loss of the play area, a new car park or changes to hours of operation. These are therefore not a consideration of the application, and the council can only assess what is presented before them. Future work at the site would likely be subject to a separate planning application and would be assessed on its own merits at that time.

The remainder of the planning concerns raised have been addressed below.

**RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy  
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development  
Key Statement EC2: Development of Retail, Shops and Community Facilities

Policy DMG1: General Considerations  
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations  
Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility  
Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Relevant Planning History:**

No recent planning history.

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application relates to an existing nursery located on Dewhurst Road, access via Longsight Road in Langho. The application site falls within the designated open countryside but does not benefit from any other designations. The surrounding area is mixed, comprising both residential and commercial uses.

**Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

Consent is sought for the change of use of the existing nursery (use class E) to accommodate a higher-level education facility (use class F1) (resulting in mixed use-sui generis). The existing nursery currently occupies pre-school ages 0-4yrs with the proposal increasing this to include students up to age 16yrs.

There are no external alterations proposed, and the proposal relates solely to the change of use.

**Principle of Development:**

The application site does fall within the open countryside. Within the tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well being of the area.*
- 2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
- 3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
- 4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
- 5. The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
- 6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.*

*Within the open 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. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.*

The application site is an existing nursery, with the proposed change of use to expand to higher education primarily being to provide a more varied educational option for the area. The change of use will allow the facility to provide education to those who require higher support or whose learning has been disrupted and

those who will benefit from an alternative learning environment. In addition to this, it will allow the facility some security from a financial perspective by allowing them to broaden their services. As such, it can be argued that the proposal is essential to the local economy and social well-being of the area, therefore satisfying criterion 1 of policy DMG2 in this respect.

As such, the principle of the development is acceptable subject to other material planning consideration.

**Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

Policy DMG1 of the CS states that development must

- 1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*
- 2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*
- 3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.*
- 4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.*

The application site is located in close proximity to a number of residential properties, with the main access to the site off Longsight Road being shared with said residential properties. As such, consideration must be given to the impact of the proposal on residential amenity, primarily in regard to any subsequent increase in activity resultant of the proposal.

The existing nursery has capacity for up to 74 preschool children, the proposed mixed-use arrangement will continue to have a maximum occupancy of 74, so there is no increase in activity in this respect. However given the nature of the site will change, it is important to assess and consider how the general comings and goings will change, and how any associated noise and traffic implications, may impact neighbouring receptors.

Typically for school education you could expect operating hours to be between 9am and 3.30pm, with associated drop off and pick up of students being close to those times. The existing nursery operates between the hours of 7.30am and 6pm and the proposed education facility would also fall within that timeframe, with no increase in operating hours proposed. It has been noted within the supporting statement that the maximum occupancy of students utilising the formal/higher education service will be 50, around two thirds of the total occupancy level. Whilst there may be an influx of traffic around the school drop off/pick up times, it is not considered that this would be to a degree that would warrant refusal. Particularly taking into consideration the existing use of the site, for which there are no restrictions to when drop off and pick up can take place within the operating hours. The arrival time of students would still be staggered to a degree by virtue of the mixed use of the site. Furthermore, drop-off and pick-up times is not something the council could reasonably control/monitor, as is the case with the existing use.

As such, given the maximum number of students to occupy the site will remain at 74, as existing, it is not considered there would be any significant increase in activity, or associated noise implications, when compared with the existing arrangement, that would warrant refusal in this instance.

**Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

Given there are no external alterations proposed, the proposal does not raise any concerns in respect of visual amenity.

**Highways and Parking:**

In respect to access policy DMG1 stipulates development must

- 1. consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.*

2. ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.
3. consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access.

LCC Highways were consulted in relation to the proposal. In their initial consultation response, they requested further information in relation to the proposed use and number of children expected to use the nursery and higher education facilities along with further detail of the proposed parking arrangements. Without this additional information LCC suggested they would object to the proposal on the basis that school parking can often generate more required parking than the standard suggests and that a shortfall in parking would likely be of harm/disruptive to neighbouring property.

Further information was provided by the applicant and LCC were reconsulted.

It was highlighted by LCC that the existing nursery, being for 74 students with 14 staff, should have approximately 28 parking spaces. The existing site only has 6, which is a shortfall. For a school use, the parking requirements changes to 1 space per classroom/activity area, which would be 9. They have also advised that the use of neighbouring Langho FC car park is welcomed to mitigate some of the car parking concerns.

Based on the above, in theory, the proposed school use would require a fewer number of parking spaces. As such, reducing the parking implications in this respect. It is recognised that LCC suggest the higher education facility would generate more condensed vehicular activity requiring more parking, however given there is already a shortfall in parking, it is not considered there is justification to refuse the application on these grounds, particularly taking into consideration the fact the number of required parking spaces will reduce as a result of the proposed development due to the change in nature of the site. The site will be accessed in the same way that it is now.

LCC do not object to the proposal subject to the following being monitored to minimise the impact of the traffic on the adjoining highway network.

1. Staggered start and finish times for the nursery and school children.
2. Staff and pupils parents/carers/taxi drivers dropping off/collection are advised to park on the Langho Football Club car park in accordance with the existing agreement.
3. The sites own car park for 6 cars adjacent to the site is allocated for disabled badge holders/minibuses/car share and for those requiring close access to the school based upon a criteria to be set out by the business.

It would not be reasonable or enforceable for the council to monitor the times at which pupils are collected/dropped off. Whilst the use of additional parking, such as Langho FC car park, is beneficial to mitigate the car parking shortfall and is generally supported, this is a private agreement between the applicant and football club and is not something that planning could control. The 6 car parking spaces are currently not controlled, and it is not considered reasonable or enforceable to control their future use. Therefore, the above cannot be secured by condition. However, as outlined above, there is already a shortfall in parking at this site and the development is not considered to exacerbate the current situation, therefore the fact that this condition cannot be imposed is not considered to make the development unacceptable from a highways perspective.

As such, based on the above observations, it is not considered there are any significant highway amenity/safety concerns that would justify refusal in this instance.

**Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.