

Bolton Fold Farm, Alston Lane, Preston, PR3 3BN

Full planning application for the erection of 2no. rural workers dwellings and associated works.

PLANNING STATEMENT

July 2024



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[REDACTED]



/1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. PWA Planning is retained by S Forshaw & Sons ('The Applicant') to progress a full application for the erection of 2 no. rural workers dwelling and associated works ('The Proposal') at Bolton Fold Farm, Alston Lane, Preston, PR3 3BN ('The Application Site'). The planning application is made to Ribbles Valley Borough Council ('The Local Planning Authority') as a full planning application, relating to the red edge application site boundary defined by the Location Plan.
- 1.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Planning Statement will look to demonstrate that the proposals accord with the provisions of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and moreover that there are other significant material considerations which indicate that planning permission ought to be granted. In addition, the statement will seek to demonstrate that there are no technical reasons which could hinder the grant of planning permission.
- 1.3. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted application package, which includes the following documents: -
- 1 Application Form, relevant certificates and notices;
 - Drawn information: -
 - LP001 – Location Plan
 - ESP001 – Existing Site Plan
 - PSP001 – Proposed Site Plan
 - PRO001 – Proposed Plan and Elevations Dwelling 01
 - PRO002 – Proposed Plan and Elevations Dwelling 02
 - LSS001 – Proposed Landscaping Scheme
- Planning Statement (this document);
- Preliminary Appraisal;
 - Phase 1 Red Land Assessment;
 - Agricultural Land Use Statement;
 - Agricultural Land Use Statement;
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.



/3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. A search of the Ribble Valley Borough Council online planning register has been carried out in order to understand the planning history relevant to the site and the proposed development. The relevant applications are discussed in turn below.

3.2. The following applications have been identified on site:

- **Ref. 3/2023/0200:** Proposed single storey side extension, approved with conditions, 11th April 2023.
- **Ref. 3/2022/0208:** Proposed new buildings Unit 1 and Unit 3 to provide storage of animal feed to include hay/straw and machinery. Permission Required, 18th March 2022.
- **Ref. 3/2022/0094:** Proposed new buildings Unit 1 and Unit 3 to provide storage of animal feed to include hay/straw and machinery. Refused, 16th February 2022.
- **Ref. 3/2021/0090:** Proposed new building to provide storage of animal feed to include hay/straw and also machinery storage. Permission Not Required, 19th March 2021.
- **Ref. 3/2016/1084:** Phase 2 additional cattle housing building. (Resubmission of application 3/2015/0621). Approved With Conditions, 14th July 2017
- **Ref. 3/2016/0896:** Phase 2 extension of roof covering and walls to existing earth banked silo pit. Approved With Conditions, 18th April 2017
- **Ref.3/2016/1083:** Phase 1 extension to existing cattle housing and reconfiguration of orientation of existing building. Resubmission of planning application 3/2015/0616. Approved With Conditions, 6th March 2017.
- **Ref. 3/2016/0897:** Phase 1 roof covering and walls to existing earth banked silo pit. Approved With Conditions, 5th December 2016.

3.3. The following recently determined applications have been found in the Ribble Valley relating to agricultural workers dwellings and are considered relevant to the determination of this application:

- **Ref. 3/2022/1002:** Proposed agricultural workers dwelling and farm office over detached garage. Approved, 1st June 2023.



- **Ref. 3/2022/0265:** *Proposed erection of a [REDACTED] ng and the creation of a new access off the public highway. Approved, 6th April 2023.*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



/4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT [REDACTED]

4.1 The proposal involves the construction of 2no. agricultural workers dwellings with associated landscaping, access works and parking. The dwellings will be occupied by the [REDACTED] of the farm who currently manage the operation of the farm to ensure that it is effectively run and who deal with out of hours emergencies. [REDACTED]

4.2 The dwellings will comprise 2no. detached, two storey houses with 2no. parking spaces per property. The ground floor will be the main living areas, with 3 bedrooms and bathrooms provided at first floor. [REDACTED]

4.3 The proposed materials as demonstrated in the submitted elevation drawings include the use of natural slate, timber and stone which is highly representative of development in the surrounding area. Aluminium windows and the use of render breaks up the more traditional design to add interest into the scheme and which can be seen in many existing dwellings within the locale.

4.4 The existing access point off Alston Lane, which currently serves Bolton Fold Farm, will be utilised to serve the properties. There is an existing gate with access into the application site which is currently used as an agricultural field. The access will be formalised to allow for safe access and egress into the site for the occupiers.

4.5 There is a demonstrable need for the 2no. agricultural workers dwellings on site to support the operation of the business. Bolton Fold Farm extends to approximately 31.71 hectares (78.36 acres) of owner/occupied grassland and is the main farmstead where the dairy farming business is operated from. The applicant does however also farm land in the surrounding area totalling 195.49ha (483.1 acres) as set out in the accompanying Agricultural Appraisal. [REDACTED]

4.6 Bolton Fold Farm is a dairy farm and the livestock comprise the following:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



4.7 The dairy cows calve all year round and frequently re [REDACTED] particularly first-time calves. Dairy cows often calve during the night/early morning as this is a quiet time when the dairy cows feel settled.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

4.8 There are no dwellings situated at Bolton Fold Farm; the original farmhouse [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who have no involvement in the applicant's farming business. [REDACTED] and the farm is run [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] would ensure they can continue to run the dairy fa [REDACTED] and remain employed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The supporting Agricultural Need Assessment provides further clarification in the respect of the need for the permanent on-site presence.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



/5 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that:

"Where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the Development Plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

5.2 The Development Plan for the site comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (2014). Key policy documents that comprise 'material considerations' include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), and any local supplementary planning guidance documents considered relevant to the proposal, which are considered below.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

5.3 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014 and therefore can broadly be regarded as containing relevant and up to date policies in the consideration of this application. The relevant policies of the Core Strategy are considered below:

- Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
- Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DMG1: General Considerations
- Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
- Policy DMG3: Transport Mobility
- Policy DMH3: Dwellings in The Open Countryside and AONB
- Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscapes Protection
- Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation

5.4 **Policy DS1:** **Strategy** states that the majority of new housing will be concentrated in settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. The policy goes on to state that identified local needs will be considered in all the boroughs.



- 5.5 **Policy DS2: Presumption in Favour Of Sustainable Development** states that the council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.6 **Policy DMG1: General Considerations** assists in ensuring that developments are in keeping with the quality of the area. The policy covers Designated Areas and Others.
- 5.7 **Policy DMG2: Open Countryside** Development Strategy and underpins the settlement purposes of delivering a high quality environment. 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.
- 5.8 **Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility** outlines that in making decisions on proposals, the Council will attach considerable weight to the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from the development.
- 5.9 **Policy DMI2: Transport Considerations** outlines that new developments should be located to minimise the need for travel. Developments should also incorporate convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car. Schemes offering opportunities for more sustainable means of transport will be supported.
- 5.10 **Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB** states that development in open countryside areas will be limited to agricultural or residential development that meets an identified local need, or an appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings that is in keeping with their surroundings, and finally, for the rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings.
- 5.11 The policy states that development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development with an identified local need will be accepted. In assessing any proposal for agricultural or residential dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.



5.12 **Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection** [redacted] developments should not harm important landscape or landscape features including traditional stone walls, ponds, characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures, woodlands and copses.

[redacted]
5.13 **Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation** states that [redacted] [redacted] measures to enhance biodiversity where appropriate.

N [redacted] Po [redacted]

5.14 The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions as per Paragraph 2 of the Framework and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

5.15 The NPPF broadly defines sustainable development in Paragraph 8 as having three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.16 Additionally, Paragraph 81 states that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless there is an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at their place of work in the countryside.



5.17 Similarly, Paragraph 88 states that planning decisions [REDACTED] sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, which includes well designed new buildings.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



/6 PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The application site is located within the designated Open Countryside and the scheme proposes the creation of two residential dwellings, therefore the key policy of relevance is Policy DMH3 of the Ribbles Valley Core Strategy. Although development is not generally supported in the Open Countryside, the policy allows for development needed for the purposes of agriculture or other uses appropriate to a rural area including the erection of agricultural workers dwellings where there is a demonstrable need. The proposed development will provide accommodation for the two managers of an existing rural business, which has been proven as necessary to support the business by the submitted Agricultural Appraisal.
- 6.2 The nature of the business is a dairy farm which is intrinsically connected with the rural area, meaning that any development to support the operation of this business must by its nature, be compliant with planning policy. The Agricultural Appraisal states that the proposed dwellings will allow two agricultural workers of the farm to be in immediate proximity which will allow for them to properly run the family farm and deal with any issues that arise out of typical operating hours.
- 6.3 Policy DMH3 states that in assessing proposals for essential workers dwellings, a functional and financial test will need to be provided. The supporting Agricultural Appraisal submitted as part of this application provides clear evidence of need of the two agricultural workers to reside on site to ensure the business is run safely and effectively. The Appraisal goes on to state that the dairy business requires a high level of 24-hour supervision to ensure proper and continuing functioning as a viable farm business. The applicants who work full time at Bolton Fold Farm. As such, it can be concluded that the business will benefit from having the two workers on site to properly manage and supervise the large number of livestock at the farm.
- 6.4 The following questions are to be considered when assessing if a proposal meets the functional and financial test, namely:



- o Is there a clearly established existing functional need?
- o Does the need relate to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed rather than a part time requirement?
- o Have the unit and the agricultural activity concerned been established for at least 3 years, been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so?
- o Could the functional need be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit?

6.5 These points are assessed below:

Established Functional Need

6.6 There is a clearly established functional need for the dwellings. A dairy business requires a high level of 24-hour supervision to ensure its proper and continuing functioning as a viable farming business. A high standard of animal welfare, stockmanship and supervision is required to ensure that the farming business operates effectively in terms of its financial viability and its health and safety. Further details are included in the supporting Agricultural Need Appraisal including a breakdown of all of the relevant tasks undertaken by Stuart and Andrew at the farm on a day-to-day basis, alongside problems that may arise out of hours that would need to be dealt with as a matter of urgency to avoid detrimental impacts to the farming business.

6.7 Both of the proposed occupants of the dwellings are now responsible for the management of the farm, and therefore their need to reside on site has become increasingly important. As such, there is a clear and demonstrable need for the managers to reside on site to ensure that the business can operate successfully and without any issues arising that could negatively impact the overall business. Given the size of the operation and the family nature of the business, there is a need for 2no. dwellings in this circumstance to facilitate the safe and viable operation of the business, given that a number of issues could require more than one person, or to cover periods when one of the brothers is not available. It is proving almost impossible for [redacted] to provide the level of supervision the livestock need whilst [redacted]. Both are currently having to sacrifice a great deal of their personal life to allow for their management of the farmstead, which cannot continue indefinitely.



farm is not a long-term or viable option for either [REDACTED] or an agricultural business of this nature.

6.13 It is considered that the proposed dwellings are in a [REDACTED] y are within close proximity to the farmstead and existing agricultural buildings, mea [REDACTED] o [REDACTED] p the farm to allow them quick access. Alongside this, the site fro [REDACTED] wellings opposite an [REDACTED] th [REDACTED] is [REDACTED] a [REDACTED] test as set out in the Agricultural Assessment, and the [REDACTED] posed properties is ad [REDACTED] s [REDACTED] s considered to accord with the provisions of Policy DMH3 of the Core Strategy.

6.14 According to Policy DMG2, development outside the designated settlement area must satisfy at least one criterion listed. In this instance, the proposed development complies with the *development required for forestry or agriculture* clause. In principle then, the proposed development aligns with this policy.

6.15 Key Statement DS1 states that the majority of new housing development will be concentrated in the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. However, the policy goes on to state that development that is for identified local needs will be considered in all settlements. The local need development has been demonstrated through the Agricultural Appraisal which shows the need for the proposal in this location which cannot be satisfied anywhere else within the Borough, thus this policy is complied with.

6.16 Considering the Framework as a whole, it is important to note that Paragraph 7 of the NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At Paragraph 8 it is stated that: "*Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken t [REDACTED] s across each of the different objectives)*".

6.17 [REDACTED] here the planning system should help to build a s [REDACTED] itive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is av [REDACTED] g places at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. The second objective is a social objective whereby the planning



system should help to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect our communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing. Finally, an environment that contributes to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment of land, helping to improve the quality of life for all.

6.18 Firstly, in terms of economic benefit, the proposed development would, during construction and operation, make a valuable contribution to the local economy, both directly through the employment of local people and companies and indirectly through the supply chain. The proposed dwelling would also enable the two agricultural workers to live on site 24 hours a day, ensuring they are able to support the business on site and enable it to grow. This will provide a valuable contribution to the local rural economy.

6.19 In terms of social benefit, the proposed development would result in the creation of a high-quality environment for the applicant. The proposal would also allow for the two workers to live on site and ensure the business is kept safe and overcome issues that they are currently having with the management of the business affecting their ability to enjoy their personal lives which cannot continue indefinitely.

6.20 The third objective relates to the environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, mitigating and adapting to climate change and minimising waste and pollution. The supporting ecological surveys demonstrate that the proposal will provide a biodiversity net gain. The proposed development therefore meets the environmental aims of sustainable development.

6.21 Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would constitute sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the above analysis would also suggest the proposals can be viewed positively in relation to the principle of development.



Design and Technical Considerations

Design

6.22 Policy DMG1 states that all developments must be of a [REDACTED] n, be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses and use sustainable construction [REDACTED] w [REDACTED]

6.23 The [REDACTED] be [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] a. The layout of the proposal has been designed for [REDACTED] to both create a family [REDACTED] a [REDACTED] which can support the dairy business. The choice of materials is reflective of the area, and the orientation of the proposed properties facing onto the adjacent existing properties is representative of comparable development in the area. The scheme has been carefully designed to ensure it respects the rural character of the area whilst providing high quality family homes for the brothers. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will comply with Policy DMG1.

Tress and Ecology

6.24 Policy DME2 and DME3 states that development proposals should seek to enhance the local landscape and protect the existing landscape features such as woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees. Additionally, Policy DME3 states that developers are encouraged to consider incorporating measures to enhance biodiversity where appropriate.

6.25 The scheme has been assessed in terms of ecological impacts through the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which concluded that further surveys should be undertaken with respect to Great Crested Newts. Further surveys were undertaken, which resulted in a negative result, confirming the absence of GCN. On that basis, there is not considered to be any negative impacts on protected species as a result of the proposed development. [REDACTED]

6.26 With respect to the [REDACTED] to provide at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on site, the application is [REDACTED] the basis that the development is exempt from the obligation [REDACTED] self-build development. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 defines self-build dwellings as:

"The building or completion by—



- (a) individuals, [REDACTED]
- (b) associations of individuals, or
- (c) persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6.27 It is understood [REDACTED] that is applied for as a [REDACTED]
by [REDACTED] the [REDACTED]
and [REDACTED] applicant's to go
through that process. This is on the basis [REDACTED] that is evident in that [REDACTED]
the [REDACTED] business from the site and equally there is no need to be on the self build register
as the case put forward is that the applicants need to reside on site and hence sites elsewhere
would not be considered suitable.

6.28 Consequently, not only are the proposals exempt from the aforementioned BNG requirements
but moreover the submission constitutes self-build development, which the LPA have a duty
to grant sufficient consents to meet demand.

Highways

6.29 Key Statement DMI2 is in relation to traffic and highways safety. The policy requires that all
development should be located to minimise the need for travel and that it should also
incorporate good access by foot and cycle.

6.30 The proposal involves the construction of two agricultural workers dwellings. As a result,
occupants will not have to commute to work because they will be living on-site. There will be
limited trips associated with general comings and goings for personal reasons, as there would
be with any dwelling. Therefore, it is expected that the proposed development will have little
impact on the local roadway network. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The Planning Balance Summary

6.31 The principle of residential development is deemed acceptable, with supporting information,
particularly the Agricultural Appraisal, demonstrating an identified need for 2no. agricultural
workers dwellings at [REDACTED] to ensure the business can continue to operate. The
criteria relating to the functional and financial tests used to assess the need for agricultural
workers dwellings have been met as such, the development accords with DMH3 and DMG2.



[REDACTED]

6.32 The development would utilise an existing safe access point onto Alston Lane. The supporting plans demonstrate the dwellings can be sited and designed appropriately as to respect the character and appearance of the local area, whilst providing [REDACTED]ty for future residents in with the Core Strategy. [REDACTED]

6.33 Taking the [REDACTED]e of the proposed de [REDACTED]
is [REDACTED] re [REDACTED]
it [REDACTED] technical matters
which would preclude the granting [REDACTED]ssion. The social, e [REDACTED]
e [REDACTED]hental benefits of the proposals in terms of sustaining an existing farming business
weigh further in favour of the proposal.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



17 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 PWA Planning is retained by S Forshaw & Sons to progress a full planning application on land associated with Bolton Fold Farm, Alston Lane, Preston, PR3 3BN for the erection of 2no. rural workers dwellings and associated works.
- 7.2 The site represents an appropriate location for 2no. rural workers dwellings. The submitted evidence, particularly the Agricultural Assessment has demonstrated the need for the dwellings to ensure the safe and efficient running of the farm into the future in line with the requirements of the Core Strategy. There are no material considerations which would preclude the granting of planning permission, whilst the social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme weigh in favour in the planning balance.
- 7.3 There are also no technical constraints which would preclude the development of this site for residential use. Given the above, the proposed development is considered acceptable and should be approved without delay to support the successful continued operation of Bolton Fold Farm.



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