


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

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| Signed: | Officer: | LW | Date: | 23/04/26 | Manager: | LH | Date: | 24/4/26 |
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| Application Ref: | 3/2025/0067 | | |  Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk |
| Date Inspected: | 29/01/26 | Site Notice: | 29/01/26 | |
| Officer: | LW | | | |
| DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT: | | | | APPROVAL |

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| Development Description: | Change of use of land from an equestrian field (sui generis) to a dog exercise area (sui generis) including retrospective consent for an existing mesh fencing boundary treatment. |
| Site Address/Location: | Shaw House Farm, Clitheroe Road, Whalley, BB7 9AD. |

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| CONSULTATIONS: | Parish/Town Council |
| No comments received with respect to the proposed development. | |

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| CONSULTATIONS: | Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies |
| LCC Highways: | No objection subject to conditions. |

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| CONSULTATIONS: | Additional Representations. |
| No representations received. | |

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
 Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
 Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development
 Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2021/0055: Retrospective change of use from Storage and Distribution (B8) to Plant Nursery (Sui Generis) (Approved).

3/2018/0913: Installation of a backup electrical generation hub together with security fencing, access, substations, gas kiosk and associated plant and equipment (Approved).

3/2018/0143: Change of use from agricultural to B8 storage and distribution (Approved).

3/2016/0404: Retention of unauthorised use of former agricultural building as a stables for personal and livery use, and associated horse turnout area (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a field situated to the north of Shaw House Farm and accessed off Clitheroe Road, Whalley. The site to which the proposal relates is located outside of a defined settlement area and on land which benefits from an Open Countryside designation.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the change of use of land from an equestrian field to a dog exercise area to be used by a private, professional dog walking business, including retrospective consent for an existing 1.8m high boundary fence with privacy mesh.

It is proposed that the business will operate on a pick-up basis only with dogs being picked up from the client's home by operatives of the business rather than drop-off by the client. It is understood that the business will operate from the site between 10.30 and 15.00 Monday to Saturday, as confirmed by the Agent via email on 21st April 2026.

Principle of Development:

The proposal seeks to change the use of an existing equestrian field located with the Open Countryside to a dog exercise area. Applications which support the local economy in the Borough are generally supported in principle by Policies EC1 and DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy; however, this must not conflict with other policies of the plan.

In this respect, Policy EC1 of the Core Strategy states that '*proposals that strengthen the wider rural and village economies will be supported in principle*' whilst Policy DMB1 states '*proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle*'.

Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy also requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six exceptions, one of which allows for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated. The Core Strategy does not specifically define 'small scale uses' with respect to developments within rural areas, therefore a judgement must be made with respect to what constitutes a 'small scale use'.

In this instance, the Applicant has confirmed that the proposal is for dog exercise field only, and not a dog daycare facility, with the maximum number of dogs on site being 30 at any one time. It is understood that the business will operate on a pick-up basis only with dogs being picked up from the client's home by operatives of the business and other than the proposed 1.8m boundary fence, planning consent is sought for no other built form as part of this application. With this in mind, no direct conflict with Policy DMG2 is identified with respect to the development constituting a 'small scale use' in a rural area and therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of the other material planning considerations.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Consideration must be given towards the implications of the proposal with respect to impact upon neighbouring amenity.

The nearest residential receptor is located approximately 160m to the south-west of the proposal site. A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application, which has been subject to review by the Council's Environmental Health Team. The Environmental Health Officer has raised no issues with respect to noise disturbance given the noise levels resulting from the use of the site as a dog exercise field for up to 30 dogs is lower than background noise levels due to the close proximity of the site to the A59 bypass.

As such, it is not considered that the proposed use of the site as a dog exercise field would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents by way of noise disturbance.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The proposed development includes the installation of 1.8m high boundary fencing with privacy mesh in order to enclose the dog exercise area. However, this is not considered to result in any significant detrimental harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding landscape that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission. The development would be read in context with the existing nearby built form, and a review of historic aerial photography shows the proposal site has featured similar boundary fencing for several years in association with its previous use as an equestrian field.

Taking account of the above, the proposed development would not appear an overly anomalous or unsympathetic addition to the landscape and is therefore considered acceptable with respect to visual amenity and external appearance.

Highways and Parking:

The application has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways and comments have been provided.

An initial consultation response was received on 11th February 2026 stating that the Local Highway Authority (LHA) did not consider that the application as submitted fully assessed the highway impact of the proposed development and requesting the submission of an Operating Statement to clarify how the site will operate and for the LHA to understand the traffic impacts related to the site.

An Operating Statement was provided on 13th March 2026 stating the following:

[...]

There are usually one or two non-driving members of staff on site at any one time. We also have staff who travel as passengers and supervise the dogs while our vans collect and drop off the next session of dogs.

[...]

Although the company owns and operates four vans in total, only one or two vans will generally be on site at any one time, as all four are not used every day.

[...]

Typically, two or three vehicles arrive in the morning between 10:00 and 10:30. One or two vehicles leave at around 13:00 to undertake dog swaps, before returning. At the end of the day, all two or three vehicles leave the site at around 15:00 and do not return.

This was reviewed by the LHA who advised that more than one parking space was required on site in order to address any conflicting movements occurring, with three parking spaces being ideal alongside turning provision to allow enter and exit in a forward gear.

Following this, an amended site plan was received on 15th April 2026 showing four parking spaces provided within an existing hardstanding area. The LHA have confirmed that this would meet the demands for the site, considering the information provided within the operating statement.

Taking this into account, and given the proposal would generate predictable, off-peak vehicle movements, the LHA are of the opinion that the site will not have a significant highway impact, especially when compared to the existing vehicle movements already associated with the wider site, subject to the imposition of conditions.

Landscape/Ecology:

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as it is a retrospective application.

Other Matters:

Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The Assessment notes that the proposal site will retain its existing natural topography and permeability, with no proposed changes to ground levels, surfacing, or drainage characteristics. As a result, there will be little to no change to current site conditions, and the proposal will not alter established drainage patterns or increase surface water runoff to surrounding land. As such, no concerns are raised with respect to flood risk.

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.