


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	03/12/2025	Manager:	LH	Date:	09/12/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0141			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>
Date Inspected:	31/07/2025	Site Notice:	28/08/2025	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Regularisation of erection of three commercial buildings (10 commercial units Use Class B2, B8 and sui generis) and associated works.
Site Address/Location:	Bolton Fold Farm, Alston Lane, Longridge, PR3 3BN

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Longridge Town Council have offered the following observations: Providing that the neighbour's concerns about noise are taken into consideration and that adequate parking is provided, Longridge Town Council have no further comments to make regarding this planning application.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
United Utilities:	United Utilities note that the sustainable management of surface water must be thoroughly investigated before any surface water connections would be accepted. Recommend a condition be added to any grant of permission for details of surface water drainage and foul water to be secured prior to the commencement of development.
LCC LLFA:	Further information was requested by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in relation to sustainable drainage calculations, final sustainable drainage plans, evidence of the condition and capacity of the existing ordinary watercourse, a site specific Operational and Maintenance Manual for the lifetime of the development and a site-specific verification report. Additional information has been submitted and the LLFA now do not object to the scheme subject to conditions. Advice is also provided in relation to Ordinary Watercourse Consent.
RVBC Environmental Health:	The EH Officer recommends conditions restricting the hours of operation, construction/delivery hours and control of construction noise/dust/fumes/vibration. Following further information and calculations run by the EH Officer, the lighting is likely acceptable.
Health & Safety Executive:	HSE does not advise against, on safety grounds the granting of this planning permission.
Cadent Gas:	No objection
LCC Highways:	Following the submission of additional information the Local Highway Authority (LHA) raise no objection the development subject to conditions relating to the off-site highway works, the provision and retention of car

	parking and turning areas, the provision of EV charging points and the provision of cycle storage.
RVBC Countryside Officer:	The Countryside Officer considers that the lighting details submitted should include details on the type and intensity of lighting and how its impact on the natural roosting and foraging activity of protected/species of conservation concern shall be mitigated.
Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service:	Information provided in relation to satisfying Building Regulations.
CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
One letter of representation has been received objecting on the following grounds:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal would result in increased traffic on roads which are unsuitable for the anticipated volume and types of vehicles • Increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists 	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
<p>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</p> <p>Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development Key Statement EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p> <p>Policy DMB1 -Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy Policy DMG1 – General Considerations Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3 – Transport & Mobility Policy DME2 – Landscape & Townscape Protection Policy DME6 – Water Management</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p> <p>Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan</p>
Relevant Planning History:
<p>3/2024/1029 Proposed construction of two agricultural workers dwellings with access and parking. Refused</p> <p>3/2024/0199 Prior notification of a roof over an existing agricultural block waste building. Permission not required</p> <p>3/2024/0055 Prior approval of a roof over an existing slurry store. Permission not required</p>

3/2023/0650

Erection of new agricultural building for cow cubicle.
Approved with Conditions

3/2023/0206

Proposed single storey side extension.
Approved with Conditions

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

3/2022/0094

Proposed new buildings Unit 1 and Unit 3 to provide storage of animal feed to include hay/straw and machinery.
Refused

3/2021/0090

Proposed new building to provide storage of animal feed to include hay/straw and also machinery storage.
Permission not required

3/2016/1084

Phase 2 additional cattle housing building. (Resubmission of application 3/2015/0621).
Approved with Conditions

3/2016/0896

Phase 2 extension of roof covering and walls to existing earth banked silo pit.
Approved with Conditions

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

3/2014/0107

Erection of a new two-storey house with a basement on land to the rear of Bolton Fold Cottage.
Approved with Conditions

3/2013/0707

Outline application for proposed erection of a single dwelling
Approved with Conditions

3/2013/0268

Outline application for the erection of one two-bedroom detached single storey dwelling with new access onto Preston Road with parking space for two cars in land adjacent Bolton Fold Cottage.
Approved with Conditions

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application site relates to an existing vehicular access, three commercial buildings and parking area at Bolton Fold Farm. The site is accessed off Alston Lane and is separate from the existing farm, located to the south of the agricultural buildings.

The site is located within the Open Countryside, approximately 0.7km from the settlement boundary of Longridge and is located within the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Plan Area. In addition, the site is located in Flood Zone 1, however the part of the site and access is located within an area at risk of Surface Water Flooding.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

This application relates to the regularisation of the erection of three commercial buildings (10 commercial units).

The supporting information indicates that the units are occupied by a range of businesses (these have been updated prior to those outlined in the 'Economic Benefits and Commercial Market Review' document). The occupants are as below:

- 1 SMS valeting – Car Valeting
- 2 APN Events LTD - alcohol free beer - stores the van etc for events
- 3 Microwave antenna ltd – Antenna/communications installations
- 4 Lucas wane – Football Coaching
- 5 Fab & Funky - Vintage furniture sales
- 6 Adrian harper - engineering small fabricator
- 7 Adam hill - car detailing
- 8 GMP cars Ltd – Used Car sales
- 9 RJ woodworking Ltd - Woodworking machinery and equipment suppliers
- 10 EMB woodworking Ltd - Repair and Installation of industrial machinery and equipment

The applicant originally applied for Use Class E. However, the applicant has agreed to update the description of development to refer to B2, B8 and Sui Generis uses to reflect the business operations in situ.

Building 1 no. is split into 7 units (units 2-7 - 51.51sqm and unit 1 - 46.02sqm), Building 2 is split into two units (Units 8 and 9 - 241sqm) and Building 3 houses 1 no. unit (Unit 10 - 729.93sqm).

Each building has a dual pitched roof with a pedestrian door and a roller shutter door to the front elevation. The external materials of construction include concrete to the lower wall levels and green corrugated sheet metal cladding to the upper walls and roof. The access road and parking areas is constructed of concrete.

The measurements for each unit are as follows (approximately):

- Building 1: 42.6m in length, 9.1m in depth and 6m in height
- Building 2: 36.5m in length, 13.7m in depth and 7m in height
- Building 3: 27.4m in length, 13.6m in depth and 7m in height

Prior to the determination of this application, additional information/amended plans have also been provided in relation to highways/parking, as well as the submission of an updated lighting assessment.

Principle of Development:

Key Statement DS1 of the Core Strategy states:

Strategic employment opportunities will be promoted through the development of:

- the Barrow Enterprise Site as a main location for employment;
- the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone

In addition, Key Statement EC1 states:

'Employment development will be directed towards the main settlement of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge as the preferred locations to accommodate employment growth together with land at Barrow Enterprise Site, the Lancashire Enterprise Zone at Samlesbury and locations well related to the A59 corridor.'

Key Statements DS1 and EC1 of the RV Core Strategy direct new employment development to the Borough's strategic employment sites and the defined settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge. As the site is not a strategic site or within the settlement boundary of Longridge, the principle of locating new development in this location is contrary to these Key Statements. To supplement the Core Strategy the Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development DPD was adopted which allocates non-strategic employment (and housing) sites to meet the Borough's needs over the plan period. One site at Higher College Farm, Longridge was allocated in this DPD, which has an extant planning permission for employment development. The application site was not allocated for such development.

Being outside a settlement boundary and outside of an allocation for development, the site is located within the Open Countryside wherein Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy is of particular relevance.

Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy makes exception for development outside of the Borough's defined settlement areas where that development meets at least one of the following criteria:

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.*

Due to the size of the units (being over 1000sqm in total), the development cannot be considered to comply with Criterion 5 of Policy DMG2 as it would not constitute a small-scale use. Criteria 2-4 and 6 do not apply.

The application has been supported by a Commercial Market & Economic Benefits Assessment in an attempt to demonstrate that the retention of the units are essential to the local economy and therefore satisfy criteria 1. The assessment notes that the new industrial units at Bolton Fold Farm have found occupiers, demonstrating that they are both the right type for local businesses and in the right location, where there is an unmet need, as well as being built at the right time to support growth of small and local businesses. The assessment also states that the units provide economic benefits in the form of 12 direct jobs on site, employing local people. The report estimates that a further 9 FTE jobs are estimated to be indirectly supported by the activities on the site.

The Council considers that taking into consideration current site allocations and extant planning permissions / committed developments, there is sufficient land available to meet the current employment needs for the remainder of the plan period until 2028. As such there is not considered to be a shortage of sites to meet the current local plan requirements and so this policy is not considered out-of-date. This includes the allocated employment site in Longridge (Higher College Farm) which has an extant planning permission.

Having regard to the 'local area' identified in the applicant's submitted Commercial Market & Economic Benefits Assessment, there is no evidence to suggest that the supply of sites and premises in this 'local area' justifies taking a different stance in Longridge (i.e. allowing sites for development in advance of a new Local Plan) compared to the wider Borough. Whilst the economic benefits of development have been taken into account, the policy test is that the development must be *essential to the local economy*, and with other site

options available within Longridge and the surrounding area until 2028 (after which time new sites will be identified in the next plan period) it is not considered that this development satisfies the requirement of being essential to the local economy.

Therefore, it cannot be considered that the proposal would meet any of the exception criterion contained within Policy DMG2 in relation to new development outside of defined settlement limits, in which case there is no explicit policy support for new employment development in the location proposed.

Having regard to the sustainability of the site location, Key Statement DMI2 of the Core Strategy states that *'new development should be located to minimise the need to travel and incorporate good access by foot and cycle.'*

In addition, Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy states:

'In making decisions on development proposals the local planning authority will, attach considerable weight to the provision made for access to the development by pedestrian, cyclists and those with reduced mobility [and] proposals which locate development in areas which maintain and improve choice for people to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than drive between homes and facilities which they need to visit regularly.'

In this instance, the accessibility and connectivity of the application site means that it is not within walking distance to the main settlement of Longridge. Whilst it is located within reasonably close proximity to bus services on Preston Road, pedestrian access from the nearby bus stops to the application site is via Alston Lane which is an unlit road with limited footways. In addition, there are no footways or lighting on the access track leading into the application site from Alston Lane. As such, pedestrian access to and from the site is considered to be substandard resulting in an increased reliance on the private motor vehicle.

The LHA note that there are localised constraints associated with the location of nearby bus stops on Preston Road which prevent any improvements from being made. Therefore, given the intensification of the site and to encourage sustainable transport use the LHA require these bus stops to be relocated adjacent to and opposite the dwelling named Rose Villa and upgraded with bus border kerbing. This would need to be secured by condition (and delivered by a Section 278 agreement).

Notwithstanding these recommended improvements, as previously noted, the site is not considered to be within easy access to the proposed amended bus stop and users would still have to navigate walking along Alston Lane which is unlit with no pathway and users would still be reliant on private motor vehicle. Accordingly, the proposal fails to accord with the aims and objectives Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy 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.*

Policy LNPD3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan also states that proposals should have no significant adverse impact on residential amenity for existing and future residents.

The closest neighbouring residential property (Otley) is approximately 31 metres from the site access and approximately 151 metres from the closest barn. In addition, the residential farm property known as 'Bolton Fold Farm' which is not within the ownership of the applicant is approximately 100m to the northwest of the application site.

With regards to the potential impact on noise pollution, a noise assessment has been submitted. The Environmental Health Officer has provided comments on the scheme. They recommend that the hours of use are restricted to of 08:00-17:00 Monday to Saturday, 11:00- 17:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Subject to this, no adverse noise concerns are raised.

With regards to the potential impact on light pollution, an updated lighting assessment has been provided following comments received from the Environmental Health Officer. The Environmental Health Officer is now satisfied that the lighting is an acceptable level and the proposal is considered to accord with the above policies.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 (C) of the NPPF states:

'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'.

Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building material...particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.'

Policy DMG2 also states that:

'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.'

Policy LNDP3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan states:

'All new development proposals will only be supported when they are of good design that responds positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the surroundings'.

The buildings are substantial in size, occupying a total floorspace of approximately 1568sqm, with an industrial appearance including roller shutter doors. The buildings are sited adjacent to the existing farm buildings which are mainly timber clad. Whilst the buildings are mostly screened from road users by the existing hedgerow which runs adjacent to Alston Lane, the hedge cannot be solely relied upon for adequate screening as in the winter months, the buildings are more visible within the landscape.

The buildings cumulatively are of a significant footprint and are considered to be visually incongruous when compared to the agricultural buildings which form part of the existing farmstead. For example, the conversion of one of the agricultural barns granted under planning ref: 3/2024/0618 included timber external doors and walls to ensure they were appropriate to the locality.

The industrial units which have been constructed appear incongruous with, and unsympathetic to, the farmstead by reason of their size, footprint and external materials and are not considered to constitute good design that responds positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the surroundings, contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy LNDP3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Plan.

Highways and Parking:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3 states that:

'all development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards'.

In addition, Policy DMG1 states that all 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'.*

Following a request for further information from the Local Highway Authority (LHA), further information has been provided by the applicant. The has reviewed the proposed location plan, drawing number 00C and noted that the proposal would utilise an existing access from Alston Lane, which is an unclassified road subject to a 60mph speed limit. The access was also considered as part of a previous application, 3/2024/0618 for an industrial storage unit. The access is an appropriate width and depth to serve the proposed commercial units. They note that whilst the internal access track leading from the access to the units is single track width, visibility over the internal track from within the access is good and there is adequate space to give way.

The LHA have reviewed the internal layout and the further information regarding the vehicles which are expected to travel to and from site as well as detailed tracking shown on the plan titled Proposed Site Layout Swept Path Analysis 10m Rigid, drawing DTP/3707323/ATR001 Rev C, which shows a 10m Rigid Vehicle turning within the site which shows ingress and egress is possible in forward gear.

The LHA are satisfied that the amendment addresses the previous concerns regarding conflict with vehicle parking areas. The proposal will ensure that the turning area does not conflict with vehicle parking within the site and that this area remains clear for servicing.

The agent has provided further details on the use of each commercial unit within the site. Units 1-7 measure a total of 387m², requiring a ratio of 1 parking space per 45m² which is a total of 9 spaces. Units 8-9 measure a total of 505m², requiring a ratio of 1 parking space per 45m², which is a total of 12 spaces. Resulting in a total of 21 spaces. They note that Unit 10 measures 745m², requiring a ratio of 1 parking space per 200m², which is a total of 4 spaces. The LHA has reviewed the updated site plan, drawing number 0 7 D, which shows a total of 26 parking spaces situated along the north edge of the site. As such, they consider that there is an appropriate and sufficient parking for the site.

The applicant has provided a visual traffic survey undertaken between the hours of 8:00am and 9:00am, as well as between the hours of 4:30pm and 5:30pm which is presented within the Transport Statement. As the applicant has submitted their own visual assessment of the site, the LHA has also conducted a TRICS assessment which demonstrates the approximate level of trips the proposed development as a whole could generate.

The LHA deem the above data provides an accurate reflection of the likely number of trips a proposal such as this could generate and is satisfied that the additional trips associated with the proposal would be unlikely to lead to an unacceptable impact on the external road network.

The LHA note that a dedicated cycle store has been provided within the site next to unit 7. Additionally, charging points for electric vehicles are included in the development to promote sustainable modes of transport.

As such, the LHA raise no objection the development subject to conditions relating to the off-site highway works, the provision and retention of car parking and turning areas, the provision of EV charging points and the provision of cycle storage.

Other matters:

Landscape/ Ecology

The works are retrospective and as such, no ecology survey has been submitted with the application and the application is exempt from providing mandatory BNG as the development is retrospective.

Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that proposals that are likely to adversely affect wildlife species protected by law will not be granted planning permission and exceptions will only be made where it can clearly be demonstrated that the benefits of a development at a site outweigh both the local and wider impacts. Policy DME3 also states that:

'Planning conditions or agreements will be used to secure protection or, in the case of any exceptional development as defined above, to mitigate any harm, unless arrangements can be made through planning conditions or agreements to secure their protection.'

The Countryside Officer has provided comments on the lighting scheme and concludes that the lighting scheme has been designed to mitigate any impact on foraging bats. As such, if planning permission were to be granted, a condition should be attached to any grant of permission to ensure that the lighting is implemented in accordance with the approved scheme. Subject to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Flood Risk

Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

'Development will not be permitted where the proposal would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flooding elsewhere.'

Applications for development should include appropriate measures for the conservation, protection and management of water such that development contributes to:

- 1. Preventing pollution of surface and / or groundwater*
- 2. Reducing water consumption*
- 3. Reducing the risk of surface water flooding (for example the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS))*

As a part of the consideration of water management issues, and in parallel with flood management objectives, the authority will also seek the protection of the borough's water courses for their biodiversity value.

All applications for planning permission should include details for surface water drainage and means of disposal based on sustainable drainage principles. The use of the public sewerage system is the least sustainable form of surface water drainage and therefore development proposals will be expected to investigate and identify more sustainable alternatives to help reduce the risk of surface water flooding and environmental impact.'

Following the submission of additional information, the LLFA have removed their objection subject to conditions, relating to the submission of a detailed final sustainable drainage strategy, the submission of a Construction Surface Water Management Plan, a site-specific Operation and Maintenance Manual and a Verification Report. These conditions are pre-commencement conditions, however as the construction of the buildings have already taken place, these would need to be amended so that details are submitted within an agreed timeframe from the date of any grant of permission.

Subject to the above conditions and the provisions of more detailed flood risk information, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

For the reasons outlined above the proposed development is considered to be in significant direct conflict with Policy DMG1, DMG2 and EC1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy insofar that approval would result in a form of development that will significantly undermine and compromise this open countryside location outside of a defined settlement. Additionally, the development is sited in an unsustainable location, contrary to key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3, as such users of the development would be car dependent.

It is further considered that the proposed development would result in the introduction of an incongruous and discordant form of development that fails to respond positively to the inherent character of the area, contrary to Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy LNDP3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:

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| 01: | The development would result in large scale commercial development within the designated open countryside outside of a defined settlement and fails to meet any of the exception criteria for allowing development in such locations. Furthermore, the rural location of the application site with poor accessibility and connectivity means that future users would be reliant on a private motor. As such the development is contrary to Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMG3 and Key Statements DS1, EC1 and DMI2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |
| 02: | The development, by virtue of its overall scale, footprint, design and materials, would result in the introduction of an incongruous, unsympathetic, and discordant form of development, which fails to be sympathetic to the rural and agricultural local character and distinctiveness of the surrounding open countryside, contrary to Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DME1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy LNDP3 of the adopted Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan. |