


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	09/07/2025	Manager:	LH	Date:	10/07/25
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0284			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <hr/> www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	13/05/2025	Site Notice:	13/05/2025	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed alterations to vehicular access from Chipping Lane to include widening of access track, creation of pedestrian footpath and erection of fencing.
Site Address/Location:	Little Town Farm, Chipping Road, Thornley, PR3 2TB

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Supports the application.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	<p>The Local Highway Authority (LHA) originally objected to the scheme on the grounds that further information was required in relation to the parking/turning of HGV's and also concerns raised regarding the width of the proposed footpath.</p> <p>Following discussions between the agent for the application, the Planning Officer and the LHA, whilst the LHA still request the footpath is widened, they would not object on these grounds and suggest a number of conditions, should permission be granted.</p> <p>A method statement has been provided prior to the determination of the application which the LHA considers to be acceptable.</p>
LCC Rights of Way:	<p>LCC Rights of Way Team note that the proposed alterations to the track will obstruct footpath FP0341026 causing a conflict between footpath users and HGVs, as shown on the attached overlay, requiring a Public Path Order under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 257 (TCPA90 S257).</p> <p>An objection is raised to the width of the footpath which is shown to be at a reduced width of 1meter, which is not acceptable. They consider the minimum usable width of the footpath must be 2 meters between the hedge and the fence finished with a compacted stone or tarmac surface. The detail of the exact alignment of the new route, the construction specification and any association works would need to be agreed with the Public Rights of Way Team before the necessary TCPA90 S257 Order is applied for to the local planning authority.</p> <p>Conditions are suggested in relation to the diverting of the Public Right of Way.</p>
RVBC Countryside:	The Countryside Officer considers the BNG report to be suitable.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit:	<p>No objection to the above application on Ecology grounds and it is considered that the required biodiversity gain could be achieved on site by new landscaping for which details would need to be provided, e.g. tree species, size of trees to be planted, tree establishment measures etc. , at Condition Discharge stage.</p> <p>The development is not considered to be 'significant' that requires a 30-year Habitat Management Plan, however the Biodiversity Gain Condition will need to be applied to secure the Biodiversity Gain Plan.</p>
CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
No additional representations received.	

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 EN2: Landscape Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy</p> <p>Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMH5: Residential and Curtilage Extensions Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodland Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>
<p>Relevant Planning History:</p> <p>3/2025/0119 Prior notification for an open concrete wall silo clamp with one side wall and one end wall. Permission not required</p> <p>3/2023/0703 Prior notification for the re-location of agricultural machinery storage building 18.3m long, 9m wide, 3.5m to eaves 5.07m high to ridge. Permission not required</p> <p>3/2022/1062 Proposed agricultural workers dwelling and farm office over detached garage. Approved with Conditions</p> <p>3/2018/0814 Extension of the existing building for the expansion of the existing cafe, farm shop and butchery business. Approved with Conditions</p> <p>3/2018/0434 Application for prior notification of agricultural development to create storage space.</p>

Permission not required

3/2017/0664

Erection of a working nursery and shop.

Refused

3/2015/0252

Extension to existing dairy no change of use

Approved with Conditions

3/2014/0084

Erection of agricultural building 18.2m wide by 22.86m long for calf rearing.

Approved with Conditions

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site comprises an existing access track off Chipping Road which provides access to the Farm Complex. The supporting Planning Statement indicates that there are four businesses operating from the complex as follows: Little Town Farming, Little Town Dairy, Little Town Farm Shop and Café So Plants Country Garden Store.

The front part of the access track (which forms this application) is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and the area is predominantly rural in character with The Derby Arms pub and a linear pattern of residential properties being sited to the West of the application site, along Elm Brow.

It should also be noted that Public Footpath FP0341026 runs along the existing access track, south easterly, through the farm area.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The proposed development is for the enlargement of existing vehicular access. The existing access at the point where it meets Chipping Road is approximately 9.7 metres and this would be increased to approximately 19 metres. The width of the vehicular access would also be further widened towards the main complex and would have a width of approximately 7 metres in the middle section to allow HGV's to pass. The proposal also includes the creation of a separate pedestrian footpath to the West of the vehicular access which would extend from Chipping Road, into the site to provide a separation between pedestrian and motor vehicle.

It should also be noted that the hedgerow to the front of the site and the tree have already been re-positioned, ahead of the submission of the planning application. These were originally positioned closer to the vehicular entrance.

The proposal also includes the replacement of existing timber post and rail fencing with estate style fencing. The siting of which has been amended prior to the determination of the application to set the fencing back from the site frontage.

A Method Statement for construction, updating landscaping details and hard surfacing details have been provided prior to the determination of this application.

Principle of Development:

Key Statement EC3 states that:

“Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions.”

In addition, Policy DMB1 states that:

“Proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle. Development proposals will be determined in accord with the core strategy and detailed policies of the LDF as appropriate.

The expansion of established firms on land outside settlements will be allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape. There may be occasions where due to the scale of the proposal relocation to an alternative site is preferable.”

The supporting information indicates that there would be no increase in the number of staff or customers as a result of the development, nor would it create additional employment floor area. The alteration to the vehicular access is required as each business at the wider site has incrementally increased over the years which has generated a greater number of vehicle movements to and from the site. The support statement notes that, although at present the access track nominally is 4m wide is sufficient for single file traffic, there are issues with HGV access in and out of the site, along with customer car access which is causing unnecessary traffic congestion on the Chipping Road. In addition, the applicant considers that this is obstructing the Public Right of Way which runs along the vehicular access and as such, is the justification for the separate pedestrian route to provide a separate pathway for pedestrians from the vehicles.

Having regard to the above Policies, it is noted that the proposed development would not result in any increase in employment floor area, nor would it increase employee numbers or customer numbers which could result in the expansion of the site. It is considered that on balance, given that the proposed development is to facilitate a safer and less congested site access, there would be no in principle objection to the scheme as there is no direct increase in the size and scale of the commercial use.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG1 provides specific guidance in relation to amenity and states that all 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 closest residential property that would most likely be affected by the scheme would be no. 1 Stanley Court which is located immediately adjacent to the South-West of the application site. The proposal would include the creation of a separate pedestrian footpath, closer to the residential boundary of no. 1 Stanley Court when compared to the existing vehicular access, however it should be noted that as the site is already overlooked from the main site and the businesses are not expanding in commercial floor area which could result in increased customer numbers, the creation of the footpath, is not considered to result in any adverse impact on amenity and would not be significantly different to the current impact resulting from the existing access.

As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

'The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.'

The landscape and character of those areas that contribute to the setting and character of the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and conserved and wherever possible enhanced.

As a principle 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'.

In addition, Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that development must '*not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area*' and '*consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance*'.

Policy DMG2 also states that:

'In protecting the designated area of outstanding natural beauty the council will have regard to the economic and social well being of the area. However the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be Accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications'.

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decisions should ensure that development:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)

The proposed development would result in part of the existing agricultural field and grass verge being replaced with hardstanding with a width of approximately 7m at its narrowest point and also a hard surfaced footpath which would have a width of approximately 0.6m at its closest point. The proposal also includes the extension of the existing Hawthorn hedge along the northern boundary and the installation of a new Hawthorn hedge located along the boundary to the South of the proposed footpath. New estate style fencing would now also be erected along the access boundaries which would have a height of approximately 0.95m. As a result, it is considered that the proposal would have a slight urbanising impact by reason of loss of grassland at the application site to create the extended vehicular access. Whilst post and rail fencing is more rural in character to estate style fencing, the applicant has provided other examples of estate style fencing within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape for comparison.

It is considered that whilst the development may change the visual appearance of the access to a more formalised access with additional hardstanding, fencing and boundary hedgerow, the fencing would now be set back from the road frontage which would help to reduce the visual impact. The LPA could impose a planning condition to ensure the details of hard surfacing materials are provided as part of a landscaping plan.

The proposal therefore accords with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

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’.*

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) originally objected to the proposed development and requested that the applicant provide details of parking/turning for HGV’s as well as widening the proposed pedestrian footpath so that it complies with accessibility standards for wheelchair users.

The agent for the application has had discussions with the LHA and considers that the area for the parking/turning of HGV’s is not required to be submitted as part of this application and considers this to be acceptable. They recommend a number of conditions, including the submission of a Construction Management Plan and a condition to ensure the surfacing is implemented prior to the first use of the new access. Whilst the LHA would request that the footpath is widened to a minimum of 2m, they would not object on these grounds. They also note that the works are required to be undertaken as part of a S278 agreement.

The Public Rights of Way Officer has objected to the development as they consider the footpath should be widened to a minimum of 2m to meet mobility guidelines for wheelchair users and they also include conditions requiring the applicant to divert the Public Right of Way (PROW) prior to the commencement of development.

The LPA consider that the diversion of the PROW is dealt with under separate legislation and as such, the conditions would not be reasonable. It is considered that whilst there would be a benefit to increase the width of the pedestrian footpath to 2m, the proposal to create a 1m wide dedicated footway would be an improvement on the current situation. Moreover the existing track would still be available to use if required.

The agent for the application has now submitted a Construction Method Statement which the LHA have assessed as being acceptable. As such, a construction traffic management plan condition is no longer required, subject to the development being implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Subject to the above conditions requested by the LHA, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Landscape/Ecology:

The Ecology Advisor at Greater Manchester Ecology Unit has provided comments on the scheme. They raise no objection to the application on ecology grounds. An updated landscaping plan has been updated which identifies the planting species and implementation timeline.

The Ecology Advisor considers that the required biodiversity gain could be achieved on site by new landscaping and a Biodiversity Gain Plan will need to be provided as part of the Biodiversity Gain Condition.

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.
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