


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

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	MC	<b>Date:</b>	08/08/2025	<b>Manager:</b>	LH	<b>Date:</b>	8/8/25
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2025/0289			 <p>Ribble Valley Borough Council <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	11/06/2025	<b>Site Notice:</b>	11/06/2025	
<b>Officer:</b>	MC			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>APPROVAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Outline application for the proposed erection of a farm workers dwelling with access applied for (all other matters reserved).
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Thornley Hall Farm Up Bedlam Road Thornley PR3 2TN

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No issues considered by Thornley with Wheatley Parish Council	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	<p>The Local Highway Authority have offered the following observations:</p> <p>Lancashire County Council acting as the Local Highway Authority does not raise any objections to the proposed development and are of the opinion that the proposal would not have a significant impact on highway safety of capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site. They recommend conditions relating to the provision of appropriate visibility splays prior to occupation of the dwelling, submission of a drainage strategy and the surfacing of the access track.</p>
<b>United Utilities:</b>	<p>United Utilities note that there is a water main located within the vicinity of the site which should not be built over.</p> <p>They consider that the proposal should consider a drainage plan in accordance with the drainage hierarchy and the applicant should investigate the existence of any pipelines and/or apparatus that might impact their detailed design.</p>
<b>RVBC Environmental Health Officer:</b>	<p>No objection subject to conditions relating to construction phase control of noise/dust/fumes/vibration and construction noise deliveries.</p> <p>No comments to make on noise subject to the property having an agricultural workers tie.</p>
<b>RVBC Countryside Officer:</b>	No comments received.
<b>Agricultural Advisor:</b>	<p>There is currently an established existing functional need at the present time in relation to the site and the labour requirement has been calculated to 4.5 full time workers, including the use of part time help during busy times. The Agricultural Advisor has confidence the business will remain financially viable for the foreseeable future and is of the view that it is essential for 2 full time workers to reside at the farm to meet the need. They note the existing agricultural worker dwelling nearing completion will provide suitable accommodation for one worker and they consider the two families living in Thornley Hall Farm appears to be presenting difficulties of</p>

	space availability. As such, the additional dwelling is considered to be essential for the succession process on the farm.
<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
No additional representations have been received.	

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:</b>	
<b>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</b>	
<p>Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy  Key Statement DS2: Sustainable development  Key statement EN2: Landscape  Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets  Key Statement EC1: Business And Employment Development  Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations</p> <p>Policy DMG1: General considerations  Policy DMG2: Strategic considerations  Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility  Policy DME1: Protecting Trees And Woodlands  Policy DME2: Landscape And Townscape Protection  Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the open countryside and AONB  Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth And The Local Economy</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>	
<b>Relevant Planning History:</b>	
<b>3/2025/0307</b>	
Approval of details reserved by the statutory biodiversity condition and condition 5 (biodiversity gain plan) on planning permission 3/2024/0877. Approved with Conditions	
<b>3/2024/0877</b>	
Proposed access track and new covered storage facility. Approved with Conditions	
<b>3/2024/0661</b>	
Proposed agricultural building for livestock including concrete yard and access track. Approved with Conditions	
<b>3/2023/0549</b>	
Proposed erection of a two-storey detached farm workers dwelling with attached garage and the creation of a garden area and balancing pond. Approved with Conditions	
<b>3/2022/0265</b>	
Proposed erection of a farm workers dwelling and the creation of a new access off the public highway. Approved with Conditions	
<b>3/2020/0108</b>	
Proposed extension to previously approved general purpose store to adjoin existing agricultural building.	

Approved with Conditions

**3/2019/1073**

Proposal to construct agricultural general purpose storage building to adjoin existing farm building.

Approved with Conditions

**3/2019/0118**

Extensions to agricultural building to house livestock.

Approved with Conditions

**3/2019/0096**

New agricultural building for livestock and storage.

Approved with Conditions

**3/2019/0095**

Proposal to construct further extension to approved agricultural building to provide storage and livestock housing.

Approved with Conditions

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

Thornley Hall Farm is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, to the north-east of the settlement of Longridge and includes the Grade II Listed Thornley Hall (dwellinghouse). There is a separate dwelling 'Thornley Hall Cottage' which is located to the front of Thornley Hall which is believed to be in separate ownership outside the farmstead. There is a public footpath which runs south of Thornley Hall Farm and also to the north, running through the farm itself.

The application site which this planning application relates to the South of Up Bledham Road which is on the opposite side of the existing farmstead. The site comprises an undeveloped agricultural field with an existing vehicular access point and is bound by trees and hedgerow. In addition, an ordinary watercourse runs along the Western boundary.

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

This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a farm workers dwelling with access applied for (all other matters reserved).

**Principle of Development:**

The application has been accompanied by a supporting statement which sets out the history of the farming enterprise. The site is farmed by G E Airey and Sons.

There is an existing farmhouse at the site (Grade II Listed) where father, mother, oldest son and his family currently reside. This property has 5 no. bedrooms.

Planning permission has been recently granted at the farm for a second dwelling on the holding. Outline planning permission was approved under planning ref: 3/2022/0265 and subsequent reserved matters application 3/2023/0549. This is a two-storey dwelling with attached garage that is nearing completion and will be occupied by the youngest son and his family. In granting this permission an agricultural occupancy condition was placed on the existing farmhouse.

The supporting statement indicates that father is nearing retirement and will be stepping down from his farming duties. As such, the two sons will take over the majority of the farming duties and the third dwelling now proposed would be for the oldest son and his family to move into, allowing the two sons to each have a dwelling at the farm.

The application site is situated within a rural area, approximately 5.9 km to the north-east of the settlement of Longridge. The site is also located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside”.*

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

*a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings:*

*b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”.*

*With regards to the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, Policy DMG2 allows for development outside of the defined settlement areas when the development in question is needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry.”*

Policy DMH3 states that:

*“Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied”.*

With the above in mind, an assessment has to be made of the proposal with regards to the following issues:

1. Evidence of the necessity for the applicant to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of the existing agricultural enterprise (functional need)
2. Labour requirements of the existing agricultural enterprise
3. The degree to which there is confidence that the agricultural enterprise is currently economically viable and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future
4. The suitability and availability of existing dwellings on the agricultural holding and / or evidence to demonstrate that options for alternative housing within the locality have been explored

The justification for an additional rural workers dwelling is that the previous application identified a need for 2 no. full time workers to reside at the farm to meet the functional need and the existing living arrangements for father, mother, eldest son and his family who are both temporarily residing in the farmhouse are inadequate.

The supporting statement indicates that the two families sharing the main farmhouse was only ever intend as a temporary solution.

With regards to whether the development is considered to be essential for the purposes of agriculture, the Council’s Agricultural Advisor has provided comments.

They are satisfied that there is a clearly established existing functional need on these land holdings with the intensity of need being in relation to the periods when animals are giving birth and throughout the year for the younger stock.

With regards to the labour requirements, it has a calculated labour requirement of around 4.5 full time workers, with the majority of the labour requirement being applicable to the dairy cattle enterprise. The Agricultural Advisor considers that this is currently being provided by the applicant (father) and his 2 sons working full time with part time help at busy times and the use of contractors for specialist tasks.

With regards to whether the farming enterprise is considered to be financial viable, the applicant has provided details of the farm accounts for the years ending May 2022 and 2023. These accounts confirm that this is a viable and sustainable business and as such, the Council should have confidence that the business at Thornley Hall Farm will remain viable for the foreseeable future.

An assessment must also be made as to whether there is any suitable and available accommodation on the agricultural holding. The Agricultural Advisor notes that at the present time, the existing farm house at Thornley Hall Farm is currently providing accommodation for 2 full time workers and the existing living arrangements are becoming difficult.

It is the intention for the applicant and his wife to remain in the farmhouse and reduce his input in terms of physical work on the farm due to his age. So, although the farmhouse will remain suitable, its availability will decline as the applicant will no longer be a full-time worker.

It should be noted that in relation to the suitability and availability of existing dwellings on farm holdings, there have been a number of cases where it has been found unreasonable to expect a retiring farmer to leave his home of many years, to provide accommodation for another worker on the farm. This has been established through the cases of *Keen v Secretary of State of the Environment and Aylesbury Vale District Council* [1996] and *J R Cussons & Son v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and North York Moors National Park Authority* [2008]. As a result of those cases, the Agricultural Advisor considers that it is inappropriate to expect an occupant of many years to leave their home to provide accommodation for a full-time worker. They are of the opinion that as the applicant withdraws from physical work on the farm and retires, but continues to reside in the farmhouse, that farmhouse will become unavailable to the farming business to house a full-time worker and the provision of an additional dwelling on this holding is essential for the succession process on this farm.

The applicant had sought pre-application advice regarding a scheme for an additional farm workers dwelling in this location. The Council were of the opinion that all alternative options should be fully explored before a new dwelling would be considered, including the option to subdivide and extend the existing farmhouse to allow for independent living for the applicant and his son and other family members, separately from each other, or to explore alternative buildings on the site for conversion.

Paragraph 9.11 of the appellants statement suggests that the applicant is of the opinion that Thornley Hall is not suitable for use as two dwellings through internal alterations and extensions as the property is a listed building which creates additional constraints. The applicant does not consider that extensions to the front and side of the property would be appropriate given the front elevation is detailed in the listing and the applicant considers there is no room for an extension to the rear due to the access passing the rear elevation to the garage and additional parking. Extending to the west would require the demolition of a number of curtilage listed buildings which the applicant does not consider to be appropriate.

The agricultural advisor for the Council has referenced an appeal (ref: APP/M0933/W/22/3309517) at a different Local Authority where an appeal was allowed for outline planning permission for the erection of a third agricultural workers dwelling on a farm with a similar level of livestock and an existing substantial 6-bedroom farmhouse and bungalow.

The inspector noted that in terms of terms of providing alterations to the main farmhouse, the agricultural worker may not be connected to the family residing in the farmhouse and it would not be unreasonable for both households to expect a degree of privacy. In this context, I am not persuaded that satisfactory accommodation could be provided through the subdivision/extension of the farmhouse for the appellant, his son and family and a separate worker.

Whilst the circumstances differ slightly, in that the agricultural worker would be related to those residing in the farmhouse, taking into account the appeal decision above and the site and building constraints identified, the Council are of the opinion that converting/extending the building would not provide suitable accommodation for the additional farm worker and their family.

The applicant is also of the opinion that there is no other suitable accommodation available for conversion within the farmstead and that if there were, then the existing detached farmworkers dwelling granted under planning ref: 3/2022/0265 and those circumstances have not changed.

Therefore, the principle of a new dwelling is now considered acceptable and the application has addressed the concerns raised at the pre-application stage.

#### **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

*'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'.*

Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

The closest residential property which lies outside of the farmstead is Thornley Hall Cottage which is located approximately 53 metres to the North-East of the application site. Whilst there would likely be additional vehicular trip movements from the site due to the residential use, this is not considered to be of such a change that would harm the amenities of nearby residential properties. In addition, due to the separation distance between the application site and the closest residential property (in separate ownership from the farmstead) being over 50 metres, it is not likely the proposal would result in any adverse overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or overbearing impact.

#### **Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

The application site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and consists of agricultural grassland. The majority of the farmstead is to the North of the application site, on the opposite side of the road.

Paragraph 135 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."*

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional general design guidance, stating:

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

With respect to development within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:

*“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.*

*The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”*

Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy states:

*“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.”*

Furthermore, Policy DMH3 of the Core Strategy states:

*“The protection of the open countryside and designated landscape areas from sporadic or visually harmful development is seen as a high priority by the Council and is necessary to deliver both sustainable patterns of development and the overarching Core Strategy vision.”*

No detailed floorplans or elevations have been submitted, however within the submitted Heritage Statement, it has been identified that the dwelling would be of two storeys, with an attached single-storey garage. The statement also confirms that the anticipated eaves height is 5.2m and the ridge height 7.85m with the length being approximately 12m and the width 9m. In addition, the garage would measure about 6.7m by 5.6m.

The site for the proposal dwelling is located on the opposite side of Thornley Hall Farm, on the side of the road which is currently void of built form. There are some dwellings on this side of Up Bledlams Road over 140 to the West.

The approved and nearly constructed farm workers dwelling was sited to the West of the farmstead, approximately 125m from the existing listed farmhouse and approximately 22m from the nearest farm building.

Whilst details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved for a later date these elements are critical to achieving an acceptable scheme.

The Council had concerns regarding the gradient of the site, which raises up from the roadside. As such, the agent for the application submitted a section drawing to identify an illustrative siting of the proposed dwelling.

Following ongoing discussions between the agent for the application and the Planning Officer, the indicative siting of the dwellinghouse has been amended so that the dwelling now runs parallel to the northwestern boundary and the single storey garage would be sited on the northern side of the dwelling, closest to the road. In addition, the curtilage has been slightly reduced to the south and southeast to reduce encroachment into the open countryside and the plans confirm the extent of roadside trees and hedgerow that can be retained to provide some mitigation.

Whilst the proposal would introduce built form to the opposite side of the road, the amended siting has reduced the visual impact of the dwelling and therefore would be acceptable and help preserve the

landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape subject to confirmation of finished floor levels at reserved matters stage.

### **Highways and Parking:**

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) have been consulted on the application. Lancashire County Council acting as the LHA does not raise an objection regarding the proposed development and are of the opinion that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on highway safety or capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site subject to the following conditions being stated on any approval.

The site will be accessed via an improved existing field gate access on to Up Bedlam Road, which is classified as the C357, a C-classified road with a national speed limit fronting the site access.

The LHA note that whilst there is a posted national speed limit fronting the site access, the applicant has provided a speed survey which identifies that the 85th percentile of traffic speed was 31.8mph Westbound and 32.4mph Eastbound and therefore a visibility splay of 2m x 47m is required to the East and 2m x 48m is required to the West.

The LHA has reviewed the proposed site plan and note that the access is to be 4.5m wide. However, the visibility splay does not appear to have been drawn correctly on the plan, particularly on the west side.

Notwithstanding this, the LHA have undertaken their own assessment which has found that the visibility splay can be achieved within the red and blue edges of the development and as such, the visibility splay requirements can be secured by way of planning condition. They also consider that the access is required to be surfaced in hard-standing material for at least the first 5m into the site and should have a gradient no steeper than 1:10.

Comments have been made in relation to parking arrangements. However, this would be dealt with at the reserved matters stage and would form part of the internal layout.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies.

### **Landscape/Ecology:**

An Arboricultural Report has not been submitted, however the proposed dwelling would be sited outside the Root Protection Area of trees along the northwestern boundary. As such, it is not considered the proposal would impact on any trees within the site.

Details of the proposed landscaping scheme would be reserved for a later stage. The proposal would involve the cutting back of approximately 12 metres of existing hedgerow and the removal of approximately 2.5 metres of hedgerow at the site entrance to achieve the appropriate visibility splays. However, a reserved matters application relating to landscaping can secure additional tree and hedgerow planting within the site.

As the application is proposed as a self-build dwelling and a legal agreement to secure this has been signed and submitted, it would benefit from the mandatory BNG exemption rules.

### **Heritage:**

Key Statement EN5 states that:

*There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings. The Historic Environment and its Heritage Assets and their settings will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance for their heritage value; their important contribution to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place; and to wider social, cultural and environmental benefits.*

*This will be achieved through:*

- *Recognising that the best way of ensuring the long-term protection of heritage assets is to ensure a viable use that optimises opportunities for sustaining and enhancing its significance.*
- *Keeping Conservation Area Appraisals under review to ensure that any development proposals respect and safeguard the character, appearance and significance of the area.*
- *Considering any development proposals which may impact on a heritage asset or their setting through seeking benefits that conserve and enhance their significance and avoids any substantial harm to the heritage asset.*
- *Requiring all development proposals to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness/sense of place.*
- *The consideration of Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights where the exercise of such rights would harm the historic environment.*

With Policy DME4 stating, in respect of development within conservation areas or those affecting the conservation areas, listed buildings or their setting, that development will be assessed on the following basis:

## **2: LISTED BUILDINGS AND OTHER BUILDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE INTEREST**

*Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported. Any proposals involving the demolition or loss of important historic fabric from listed buildings will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist.*

The proposed dwelling would be sited approximately 70m to the South-West of the Grade II Listed Thornley Hall. A Heritage Statement has been provided as part of the application which suggests that the new dwelling would lead to no harmful impact on the setting of the listed building, stating that it would form in visual and functional terms, part of the extensive and diverse group of existing buildings at the farm which has the listed house at its core. However, in common with the various farm buildings and the subordinate dwelling Thornley Hall Cottage, the proposed site clearly stands apart from the listed building and its sensitive surroundings.

As the site is located on the opposite side of the road, there would be limited intervisibility between the site and the farmhouse, and there would not likely be any intrusion on views of the farmhouse or negative impact on the way the designated heritage asset is appreciated.

As such, the proposal is likely to result in a neutral impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed Building, in accordance with Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

### **Drainage:**

Policy DME6 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."*

As the access slopes towards the adopted highway, the access is required to include drainage that is drained to a suitable internal outfall, which can be secured by way of planning condition. In addition, United Utilities have provided comments in their scheme and they note that the applicant should consider the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems as part of the drainage strategy to help manage surface water and to offer new opportunities for wildlife to flourish. A drainage strategy should be developed in accordance with the

In addition, they note that a water main is located in the vicinity of the site which must not be built over, or their access to the pipeline compromised in any way.

Subject to the inclusion of a drainage condition, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

**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 for outline planning permission be granted.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	That outline planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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