


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

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>10/6/26</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>NH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>11/06/26</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2025/0346			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a>				
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	14/05/26	<b>Site Notice:</b>	24/04/26					
<b>Officer:</b>	LH							
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>					<b>APPROVAL</b>			

<b>Development Description:</b>	Change of use of agricultural land to create an additional 95 car parking spaces
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Hawkshaw Farm, Longsight Road, Clayton le Dale, BB2 7JA.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No comments received.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	No objection subject to conditions
<b>United Utilities:</b>	Drainage to accord with the SuDS hierarchy
<b>LCC PROW Team:</b>	Concerns about potential obstruction of Footpath FP0313003 which is recorded along the access to the parking spaces and is proposed to be diverted across the area now proposed for the car park expansion.
<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
No representations received.	

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:</b>
<b>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</b>  Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development Key Statement EC3: Visitor Economy  Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DME2: Landscape & Townscape Protection Policy DME6: Water Management Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development Policy DMB5: Footpaths and Bridleways  National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
<b>Relevant Planning History:</b>  Extensive across both the Farm Park and adjacent Farm

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

The application relates to Hawkshaw Farm, located off Longsight Road (A59) which comprises a large range of agricultural buildings, as well as Mrs Dowsons leisure and educational family attraction. Part of the site is used on a seasonal basis to operate the Scare Kingdom Halloween visitor attraction.

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

Proposed is an expansion of the existing car park on agricultural land which is sometimes used informally for overflow parking. A recent site visit confirms construction works are underway.

**Principle of Development:**

Key Statement EC1 of the Core Strategy states:

‘Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle.’

Notwithstanding this general policy support offered to schemes which support the rural economy, it is necessary to apply Policy DMG2 to ascertain whether or not the principle of development is acceptable.

Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six exceptions which are as follows:

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

Furthermore, Policy DMB1 of the Core Strategy states:

‘Proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle...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.’

In this instance, the proposal relates to a well-established business operation located outside of the Borough’s defined settlement areas. The farm park has experienced significant growth since the original car park was approved in 2015, in terms of leisure and educational offer, staff and visitor numbers. Evidence of overspill of the existing car park into the field in peak periods has been submitted. Whilst the car park would not satisfy any of the exceptions in policy DMG2, it could not be reasonably argued that the proposal represents inappropriate development in the countryside given that expansion of the existing car park is considered necessary to support the continued business operation.

In light of the above, it is considered that the development would satisfy the provisions of Key statement EC1 and Policy DMB1 of the Core Strategy and would not conflict with the overriding purpose of Policy DMG2 and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

**Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

The nearest residential properties are occupied by workers of the farm (same ownership of the farm park). Given the existing background noise levels from the current business uses and traffic along the A59, no adverse noise levels are identified as a result of the car park expansion.

**Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

The applicant was invited to amend the scheme by omitting a bund initially proposed along the A59 and revising the layout to remove the furthest row of parking proposed closest to the A59 and repositioning these spaces to the east. This is considered to result in an improved visual impact and increase the green buffer retention between the car park and A59.

The car park will have an urbanising impact on the countryside character, by placing hardcore on an agricultural field, particularly when seen from the adjacent PROW and A59. However it will be seen against a backdrop of existing development and this impact is only apparent from immediate short distance views, as such any visual impact is not considered to result in significant adverse impact to justify refusal of the scheme when considered against policies DMG1 and DMG2.

Conditions can secure details of surfacing materials and control lighting.

**Highways / PROW:**

The Highways Authority consider that although the existing car park meets approved capacity, the spaces are constrained and do not adequately reflect the needs of the site's family-orientated user base. As such there is a clear need for wider bays or additional spacing to allow safe door opening. They consider the revised site layout addresses previous concerns raised in terms of functionally, accessibility and overall efficiency. Use of markers, manoeuvring aisles, dedicated pedestrian routes, one-way circulation system and clearly defined entrance and exit points are now proposed and supported.

The PROW Team have confirmed that the scheme would conflict with a Draft Order Plan for the diversion of FP313003 which runs across the wider site and that this proposed conflict would need addressing. Nonetheless, it is considered that there is opportunity to satisfactorily re-route this PROW without compromising user experience, as such this would not be a reason to refuse permission. The applicant is aware of this issue and an informative can be added.

In light of the above, it is considered that the development would satisfy the provisions of Policies DMG1, DMG3 and DMB5 of the Core Strategy subject to conditions.

**Landscape / BNG and Drainage:**

No trees or hedgerows would be affected by the development. The application proposes at least 20 native trees planted along the site frontage to help mitigate the visual impact but also to help achieve the mandatory 10% BNG uplift alongside grassland enhancement. These can be secured by condition.

The site is located within flood zone 1 (low risk of flooding). The proposed car park expansion has been designed to ensure it is permeable to rainwater, allowing all surface water to filter into the ground below. This satisfies the SuDS hierarchy and accords with policy DME6 of the Core Strategy.

**Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

The proposed development, as amended, is considered acceptable in principle and would not result in any harm to the amenities of nearby residential receptors or the visual amenities of the immediate or wider

area to an extent which would justify refusal of the scheme. Conditions are needed in the interests of design, visual impact and highway safety.

It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	That the application be approved.
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