

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Development Department

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**Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING OBSERVATIONS

**APPLICATION NO:** 3/2025/0451

**DECISION DATE:** 18 July 2025

**DATE RECEIVED:** 10 June 2025

**APPLICANT:**

South Ribble Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
West Paddock  
Leyland  
PR25 1DH

**AGENT:**

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**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:**

Consultation on South Ribble Borough Council application 07/2025/00406/FUL. Proposed residential development of 121 dwellings with associated landscaping, access/egress, car parking, drainage and other necessary supporting infrastructure.

**AT:** Land South of Myerscough Road/West of Branch Road Mellor Brook

The Council, in pursuance of its planning powers, wishes to make the following comments in respect of the above planning application being considered by South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC):-

The proposed development site measures approximately 5.6ha of agricultural land with existing trees and hedgerows including trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the site with the existing access track forming the access to the site. The application site does immediately abut the boundary with Ribble Valley to the north and eastern sides and RVBC has provided comments on this basis.

The South Ribble Local Plan (2015) identifies the site as Village Development with Policy B2 relevant to this proposal as well as B2 – Village Development SPD. This policy aims to safeguard sites to meet local needs. It will only be released for development (including local affordable housing, health care, community facilities or employment) which meets the following requirements:

“The proposed development cannot be accommodated within the existing built-up area of the village, or this site is preferable for the use proposed. Evidence of this will be required.”

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Whilst it would be for SRBC to assess the proposal against the above policy and whether the development is considered to meet an identified local need and whether there are any alternative sites, RVBC observes that the need assessed in the submitted Housing Need and Mix Report and Housing Need Study includes the parishes of Mellor and Balderstone both of which lie within the Ribble Valley. The cross-boundary study area identified is not recognised in any strategy or assessed in any of Ribble Valley's evidence of housing need, so it is difficult to corroborate with the findings. RVBC has recently updated its Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (AHNA) published in May 2025 which the assessment does not take account of. Additionally, if SRBC decide to accept the study area assessment of need and approve the development, then they should align the affordable housing local connection / eligibility criteria accordingly to include the two Ribble Valley parishes.

It would be for SRBC to determine how much weight to afford to relevant emerging policies.

This application is supported by technical reports such as noise assessment, transport assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Arboricultural report, heritage assessment and ecology reports.

As to whether or not the residential development would be a compatible use close to nearby existing commercial uses which are sited in close proximity to the site, across Myerscough Smithy Road to the north within Ribble Valley boundary, it would be for SRBC to be assured that the proposal could be sufficiently mitigated such that a future residential use would not result in any additional restrictions having to be imposed on existing businesses, or which would undermine any growth opportunity.

The proposal indicates two main vehicular access routes into the site, one from Myerscough Smithy Road to the north of the site and another from Branch Road to the east of the site. There are also another two vehicular access points from Branch Road each of which serve five properties with no direct access into the site. This would result in an increase in traffic movements for the adjacent residents particularly those on Branch Road and appropriate considerations would need to be given to construction access in this respect in order to ensure the development would limit potential impacts at peak times.

The suitability of these vehicular access points will be fully assessed by LCC as part of the application process although it has been noted that the proposed accesses differ from those submitted as part of the pre-application discussions with LCC. RVBC would expect the site to be accessible by sustainable travel modes including public transport with priority towards cycling and pedestrian movements in accordance with para 109 of the NPPF.

A number of trees, some protected under TPO 2023 No. 1, are proposed to be removed to accommodate the access. The proposed development would also result in some root protection encroachments as the majority of the trees are within the site and the implications of this would be for SRBC to assess. This overall impact of the loss of hedges and trees would be assessed as part of the overall BNG requirements, together with the ability to provide 10% gain within the site.

Finally, the proposed density would seem to be denser than the adjacent more spacious plots particularly towards the centre and the southern edge of the site.

*Nicola Hopkins*

NICOLA HOPKINS  
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING