


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31/10/2025</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>31/10/25</b>

<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2025/0569			 <div>Ribble Valley Borough Council</div> <hr/> <div><a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a></div>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	25/09/2025	<b>Site Notice:</b>	25/09/2025	
<b>Officer:</b>	MC			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>REFUSAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Proposed demolition of redundant barn and erection of farm worker's (self-build) dwelling to include new vehicular track.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Wood Top Farm Chipping Road Chaigley PR3 2TS

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No objections (one Councillor particularly feels it is essential for the succession of this farm to the younger generation of this family so that it can continue as a thriving dairy farm).	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	The application does not fully assess the highway impact of the proposal.
<b>RVBC Environmental Health Officer:</b>	No objections subject to conditions restricting occupation to agricultural workers, restriction of construction noise/deliveries and compliance with Private Water Supply regulations.
<b>RVBC Countryside Officer:</b>	No concerns subject to the development proceeding in accordance with the conclusions of the Updated Bat Survey 2025 Update by Lynne Rushworth.
<b>Agricultural Advisor:</b>	The Agricultural Advisor concludes that there is an established existing functional need in relation to the farm with a requirement for 2 full time workers actively involved in the management of the unit to reside on the farm to meet this need. Recommends the inclusion of an occupancy condition on the existing main farmhouse, should permission be granted.
<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
None 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 EN2: Landscape Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development  Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility Policy DME2: Landscape & Townscape Protection Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation Policy DME6: Water Management

Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB  
Policy DMH4: The Conversion of barns and other Buildings to Dwellings  
Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

#### **Relevant Planning History:**

##### **3/2023/0620**

Proposed demolition of redundant barn and erection of farm worker's dwelling.

*Refused*

##### **3/2006/0742**

Substitute house type for agricultural worker's dwelling approved under application 3/2005/0524.

*Approved with Conditions*

##### **3/2005/0961**

Renewal of outline permission 3/1995/0635 for an agricultural workers dwelling

*Withdrawn*

##### **3/1999/0169:**

Steel framed portal building extension to cover yard area between milking parlour exit door and new existing cubicle building

*Approved with Conditions*

##### **3/1998/0509**

Extension for modernisation of cow housing, 390 sqm of new building

*Approved with Conditions*

##### **3/1995/0635:**

Outline application for an agricultural workers dwelling

*Approved with Conditions*

#### **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

##### **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The existing site relates to an area of land opposite the agricultural complex known as Wood Top Farm, situated just off Chipping Road, Chaigley. The existing access is gated immediately off Chipping Road, with the red line then heading north-east and includes a dilapidated barn.

The site and surroundings is predominantly rural in character, being located approximately 3km to the East of Chipping and falling within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

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

The proposal seeks permission for the demolition of an existing redundant barn and the erection of a farm workers dwelling (self-build). The dwelling would utilise an existing access which would be upgraded and would include the provision of a new driveway running parallel to Chipping Road.

The proposed dwelling would be set back approximately 10.2m from the public highway and would be two storeys in height, accommodating four bedrooms. The dwelling would be stone built with a dual pitched roof, with an oak framed canopy to the front elevation. The building would have an eaves height of approximately

4.9 metres with the main roof ridge being approximately 8.3 metres in height. In addition, the dwelling includes a stone-built chimney which would add an additional 1.2 metres to the height of the building. The materials are proposed to be natural stonework and render finish to the walls, and natural slate tiles to the roof.

Furthermore, the application establishes a curtilage bordered by a 1.8m high timber fence and incorporating a septic tank to deal with foul sewage.

A planning application for a similar scheme was refused under planning ref: 3/2023/0620 for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal has evidenced that there is a functional and financial need for two resident agricultural workers, but it has been assessed that this need can be met by existing accommodation in or adjacent to the agricultural complex. As such there is no evidenced functional or financial need for an additional (third) agricultural workers dwelling. The proposal would therefore amount to inappropriate development outside of a settlement boundary and would fail to satisfy Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies DMG2 and DMH3.*
- 2. The proposal, by way of the provision of a two-storey residential dwelling and associated domestic curtilage which is sited separately from the existing pattern of development, would comprise an unacceptable intrusion into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that detracts from the visual and landscape character of the area. As such it would fail to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies EN2, DME2, DMH3 and DMG1, together with the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 130).*
- 3. The proposed access arrangements are considered insufficient to support vehicle movements both for the proposed dwelling and the agricultural field. Furthermore insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate a suitable visibility splay can be achieved. As such the proposal would fail to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies DMG1 (Highways) and DMG3.*

The main differences between the refused scheme and the current scheme are as below:

1. Alterations to the fenestration to a more simplistic design
2. Removal of front and rear gable protrusions
3. Removal of cycle shed
4. Submission of a Transport Statement
5. The applicant is now a partner in the business

#### **Principle of Development:**

The application has been supported by a Structural Condition Survey from July 2023 which concludes that the building is in a poor condition and will require substantial areas of re-build to three elevations (around 40% of the building) and is not suitable for conversion to a residential property. Whilst an updated survey has not been provided. Given the assessment above it is our opinion that the barn is not suitable for conversion to a residential property. Whilst an updated survey has not been provided, when the Planning Officer visited the site, the building appeared to be in a worse condition.

As such, it is reasonable to conclude that the building is not suitable for conversion.

The application site is situated within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, outside of any settlement boundary. Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework 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”.*

In addition, Paragraph 84 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”.*

Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which states:

*“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”.*

Similarly, Policy DMG2 allows for development outside of the defined settlement areas on the basis of the development in question being necessary for the purposes of agriculture or forestry.

Accordingly, the current proposal shall be assessed in relation to the following issues:

- 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
- Labour requirements of the existing agricultural enterprise
- 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
- Availability and suitability of existing dwellings on the agricultural holding

The proposal is for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling which could be considered to comply with the relevant criteria of Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy subject to an assessment against the above criteria and as such, an assessment has subsequently been carried out through consultation with the Council’s Agricultural Advisor.

The farm is a dairy farm with 190 Holstein x Friesian cows producing around 10,000 litres of milk per cow, per year. The supporting information indicates that the cows calve all year round and there are currently 170 young cattle of varying ages on the farm, as well as 400 feeding lambs which are taken on over the winter months to ear off surplus grass. Approximately 90ha of grassland is cut for silage, reducing to around 40ha for in the winter for feed for the livestock.

There is an existing 3/4 bedroom main farm house at the farm and an existing farm workers dwelling known as ‘Wood Top House’. Both of these properties lie on the opposite side of the road.

Planning ref: 3/2006/0742 which was for a variation to the house type of an agricultural workers dwelling approved under planning ref: 3/2005/0524 (Wood Top House) included two restrictive conditions. These are as follows:

1. *The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed or last employed in the locality in agriculture as defined in Section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or in forestry, or a dependant of such a person residing with him or her or a widow or widower of such a person.*

*Reason: In order to comply with Policies G1, H2 and H3 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan*

*and the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance "Agricultural Dwellings - Siting, Size and Design". The site is within an area where residential development for purposes other than the essential requirements of agriculture, or forestry, are not normally permitted.*

2. *This permission shall relate to the Section 106 Agreement dated 1 October 2002 which also restricted the existing farmhouse(s) to an agricultural occupancy condition.*
3. *Reason: For the avoidance of doubt since the proposal needs to be read in conjunction with a Section 106 Agreement made under 3/95/0635/P.*

As such, both existing dwellings have agricultural occupancy ties.

The applicants Mr and Mrs Moon work full time on the land holdings and live approximately 5 miles from Wood Top Farm. Mr Moon's uncles work on the farm and reside in the main farmhouse and Wood Top House.

The applicants have advised that due to their uncles advancing years, they cannot be expected to undertake the more arduous tasks on a farm and the applicants are now the key workers on the farm. Both uncles do not have successors and the applicant will take majority control of the farm business in the future. A letter from 'Naphthens Solicitors' submitted with the application confirms that Mr Moon has been added to the partnership of J Seed & Sons on 1 October 2024.

The agricultural advisor is satisfied that the farm will remain financially viable for the foreseeable future.

Turning to functional need, the agricultural advisor confirms that given the scale of farming activities, there is an established existing functional need for a worker to be on hand to deal with instances that need to be dealt with reasonably quickly. They consider that there is a need for 4 full time workers at the site which is currently met by the applicants working full time and by the input from J and S Seed, an additional employee and by the use of contractors for specialist tasks.

The agricultural advisor considers that it is essential that 2 no. of the 4 no. full time workers actively involved in the management of the farming unit should be resident at Wood Top Farm and considers that at the present time the applicants can be regarded as the key full time workers as they undertake the twice daily milking, however, they do not currently live on the holding.

Whilst the two existing farm workers dwellings may be suitable to house 2 full time workers, they are currently not available to house Mr & Mrs Moon as the key workers. In addition, the two uncles do not intend to vacate their existing dwellings in the future.

The established 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] regarding the availability of existing dwellings for workers on the holdings considered it to be inappropriate to expect an occupant of many years to leave their home to make way for a full time worker.

The agricultural advisor considers that the wording of Paragraph 84 of the PPF which states "including those taking majority control of a farm businesses" were added to aid a smooth transition of one farming generation to the next and relying on Paragraph 84 of the NPPF and as Mr Moon has now been added to the partnership, Mr and Mrs Moon are the likely successors to this family farming business and as key workers, and their ability to live on site will assist in the farm succession process.

As such, it is considered that there is a justified need for an additional agricultural worker dwelling at the farm to accommodate 2 no. full time workers (the applicants). The Council are satisfied that the existing farmhouse and existing agricultural worker dwelling already have agricultural occupancy ties and as such, should permission be granted, only the dwelling subject of this application is required to be restricted by way of occupancy condition.

Subject to the above condition, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMH3 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

Policy DMG1 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.*

The closest neighbouring residential properties are the main farmhouse at Wood Top Farm and 'Wood Top Cottage'. Other neighbouring residential properties are 'Brook Wood' and 'Elliot's Barn' which are both located over 200m from the proposed dwelling. As such, there would be no adverse impact by way of loss of light, overshadowing, overlooking or overbearing impact.

In addition, the dwelling is compliant internally with the Nationally Described Space Standards with a reasonable private amenity space to the rear of the dwelling, ensuring the occupiers will not experience any undue impact on amenity or quality of life.

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

**Visual Impact:**

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.'*

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 the National Landscape *'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'*.

In addition, Policy DME2 states that development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features which includes traditional stone walls.

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 refused scheme included two gable roof projections, one to the rear and one to the front. In addition, the refused scheme included the use of vertical glazed features on the south-west elevation which were considered to force a vertical emphasis and resulted in a jarring style of fenestration with conflicting elevation styles.

The delegated report for the refused scheme also considered the dwelling to be substantially larger both in footprint and in height than the barn to be demolished and considered that the dwelling would result in a significantly greater intrusion into the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, given its siting with no other built development and directly obstructive of the landscape which includes sights of Longridge Fell.

Concerns were also raised with regards to the domestic miscellanea that further erodes the existing nature of the area.

Turning to the proposed scheme, it is noted that the siting of the dwelling would be similar, as would the curtilage size and the footprint of the building (albeit with the gable elements of the floorspace removed).

The Council consider that there are improvements in terms of design, with the introduction of traditional stonework to all elevations and a more simplistic fenestration pattern with simple glazing and stone surrounds. Notwithstanding this, the location of the building has not been amended from the refused scheme and the overall size and scale of the dwelling is still considered to be significantly larger than the dilapidated barn. As with the previously refused scheme, the dwelling would be sited on the opposite side of the road to the farm buildings and existing agricultural worker dwellings, in a prominent position within the street scene and within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The introduction of a dwelling with residential curtilage and domestic paraphernalia associated with the dwelling, together with a considerable length of gravel track serving the dwelling, to this side of the road is considered to be out of keeping with the pattern of development and would be located in a prominent position within the street scene and would result in a harmful intrusion into the Forest of Bowland National Landscape that would detract from the visual and landscape character of the area. As such, the previous reason for refusal has not been overcome and the scheme would fail to comply with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG2, DME2, DMH3 and DMG1.

#### **Highways and Parking:**

Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that *“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”*.

With regards to parking, Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

*“All development proposals will be required to provide adequate car parking and servicing space in line with currently approved standards”*.

Policy DMG1 also states that 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 have been consulted on the application and whilst they acknowledge the improvements made to the access, parking provision, and sustainable transport measures such as cycle storage and EV charging, due to the recorded traffic speeds exceeding 37 mph and the rural nature of Chipping Road (C354), visibility splays must comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standards. The currently proposed sightlines fall short of the required 120 meters in both directions and must be revised accordingly. They consider that should full compliance with DMRB visibility standards not be achievable due to physical constraints such as road curvature, the applicant must provide a drawing demonstrating the maximum achievable visibility splays within land under their control or the adopted highway.

The applicant has submitted an amended visibility splay drawing. However, given that the applicant has confirmed that they do not wish to amend the siting of the dwelling, these drawings have not been formally accepted / LCC Highways reconsulted, as doing so would delay determining the application and would not result in a positive determination given the concerns on visual impact grounds. As such, the application as submitted fails to fully assess the impact on the highway network, contrary to Policy DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, as well as Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Landscape/Ecology:**

The application is accompanied by an updated bat survey with updated emergence report. The report outlined that the evening emergence survey update commenced at 9.30pm during reasonable weather conditions for bat forage activity. At 10.20pm, activity was picked up (no sightings) from the trees / farm buildings adjacent to the farmhouse opposite and at 10.40pm activity was seen of 2no pipistrelles crossing the road to follow the tree line. Further forage activity was recorded of 3no pipistrelles in the trees to the east of the farm. There was no entry or emergence from the barn recorded.

The Countryside Officer raises no objections subject to the development being implemented in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the report.

The development is proposed as being exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it relates to self-build development, however in order to benefit from this exemption the applicant would be required to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking.

#### **Other Matters:**

It is noted that application site is located just outside of the area identified as a 1 in 30 chance of surface water flooding and as such the standing advice from the LLFA applies. Details of surface water drainage have not been provided and a detailed surface water drainage scheme could be secured via a pre-commencement condition.

Paragraph 6.29 of the applicants planning statement considers that the tilted balance is engaged. The Council's position is that in accordance with the Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply Report 2025, as of March 2025, the Council are able to demonstrate a 6.2 year supply. Notwithstanding this, given that the proposal is for an agricultural workers dwelling and is assessed based on financial and functional need, the dwelling would not count towards open market housing, as such whether or not the Council is able to demonstrate a 5YHLS is not considered to be directly relevant to this application.

#### **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 refusal.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**



That planning consent be refused for the following reason(s).	
<b>01:</b>	The proposal, by way of the provision of a two-storey residential dwelling and associated domestic curtilage which is sited separately from the existing pattern of development, would comprise an unacceptable intrusion into the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, in a prominent position that detracts from the visual and landscape character of the area. As such it would fail to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DME2, DMH3, DMG2 and DMG1, together with the National Planning Policy Framework (in particular paragraphs 135, 187 and 189).
<b>02:</b>	Insufficient information has been provided with the application submission to demonstrate a suitable visibility splay can be achieved. As such the application fails to demonstrate that the development would have a safe access and so fails to comply with Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policies DMG1 (Highways) and DMG3.