


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	SK	Date:	17.09.25	Manager:	LH	Date:	
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Application Ref:	2025/0614			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk				
Date Inspected:	N/A	Site Notice:	27.8.25					
Officer:	SK							
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:					APPROVAL			

Development Description:	Proposed change of use of the existing dwellinghouse (C3) to a small children's residential home (C2)
Site Address/Location:	Higher College Farm Lower Road Longridge PR3 2YY

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Hothersall Parish Council have raised no objection to the proposal.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	
The Local Highways Authority have raised no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of conditions.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
One letter of representation has been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposal is incompatible with the EAL allocation• Misleading information• Highway concerns• Inappropriate form of development and use for the area	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy:
Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development
Key Statement DMI1: Planning Obligations
Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations
Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees & Woodland
Policy DME2: Landscape & Townscape Protection
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME5: Renewable Energy
Policy DME6: Water Management
Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Ribble Valley Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document:

Site Allocation EAL3 Land at Higher College Farm, Longridge (1.5ha)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2025/0512:

Proposed replacement domestic garage. (Approved)

3/2024/0256:

Proposed change of use of existing dwelling (use class C3) to children's assessment centre for care (use class C2 residential institution). (Withdrawn)

3/2023/0706:

Proposed erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access. Resubmission of application 3/2022/0553. (Approved)

3/2022/0553:

Proposed erection of commercial units (Use Class E(g)) including conversion and extension of existing farmhouse for purposes of Use Class E (g). (Approved)

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to an existing detached part two-storey and part single-storey dwelling known as Higher College Farm. the application property is located outside of any defined settlement limits - being located on land that benefits from an open countryside designation.

The application site is bounded to the north, east and west by existing open agricultural land, with the site also being bounded to the south by two existing commercial premises, namely Andertons Butchers and Cleggs Chilled Food Service.

The site to the north currently benefits from an extant consent (3/2023/0706) for the 'erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access'. The current application site and the land parcel to the north jointly form Employment Allocation Site EAL3 (Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document October 2019).

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks consent for the change of use of the dwelling from that of a C3 dwellinghouse to that of a children's residential home (C2). The submitted details state that the children's care home will be for children from 8 to 17 years old, with a maximum of 4 children residing at the property and when at this capacity up to 4 support staff along with a supporting manager will also be on site with 3 bedrooms/spaces being made available for staff to sleep overnight.

The statement submitted in support of the application states that:

'The carers will generally work on a rolling rota basis of two days on followed by four days off. Shifts will start at 9am and change over the same time two days later. At this time, a new team of carers will start

their shift, with a different carer/s staying overnight to ensure full 24-hour care. The site provides up to three bedrooms for carers on site, and four bedrooms for the children, allowing the site to function as effectively and without alteration to the current layout of the home. The children will not require any specific medical care which could be viewed as requiring material changes to the property to make it fit for purpose, they are simply being provided care by an adult, providing assistance with day to day tasks.'

It is not proposed that there will be any external alterations to the existing building nor any alterations to the existing site configuration or highways arrangement.

The application also seeks consent for the demolition of an existing garage structure and the erection of a replacement garage. The submitted details propose the garage will benefit from a footprint of approximately 6.7m by 11m, with the building measuring approximately 4.6m at ridge, benefitting from an eaves height of approximately 2.7m.

It is proposed that the structure will be faced in natural random stone with stone quoin detailing, with the roof being faced in natural slate. The garage structure will accommodate provision for the parking of three vehicles, utilising a single and double width garage door arrangement, with the proposed garage being identical to that which was consented pursuant to extant planning permission 3/2025/0512.

Principle of Development:

The application relates to the change of use of a C3 dwelling to that of a C2 Children Residential Home, with the application building being located outside of any defined settlement limits, upon land within the designated Open Countryside. The current application site and the land parcel to the north jointly form Employment Allocation Site EAL3 (Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document October 2019).

As such, consideration must be given in respect of the compatibility of the principle of the development when assessed against the spatial and locational aspirations for development within the borough as embodied within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

In this respect, taking account of the nature of the proposal and having regard to both the open countryside designation and the EAL allocation of the site, Policies DMG2 and DMB1 are primarily, but not solely, engaged in respect of assessing the principle of development.

Policy DMB1:

Given the EAL Allocation of the site, Policy DMB1 is engaged insofar that it relates to Designated and Committed Employment Sites with the Policy reading as follows:

Proposals for the development, redevelopment or conversion of sites with employment generating potential in the plan area for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:

- 1. The provisions of Policy DMG1, and*
- 2. The compatibility of the proposal with other plan policies of the LDF, and*
- 3. The environmental benefits to be gained by the community, and*
- 4. The economic and social impact caused by loss of employment opportunities to the borough, and*
- 5. Any attempts that have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site (must be supported by evidence (such as property agents details including periods of marketing and response) that the property/ business has been marketed for business use for a minimum period of six months or information that demonstrates to the council's satisfaction that the current use is not viable for employment purposes.)*

Taking account of the above Policy criterion, should over-riding conflict be found with the inherent criterion of Policy DMG1, Policy DMG2 or any other policies within the adopted development plan, then the support normally afforded by Policy DMB1, which would normally support development that contributes towards or enhance Business Growth and the Local Economy, would in this instance be fully disengaged.

In respect of criterion 5 of Policy DMB1, any application that proposes the redevelopment of the site for purposes in-lieu of an 'employment generating use' will have to be accompanied by robust evidence of the marketing of the site for 'employment uses'. In the absence of any marketing being undertaken and evidence of marketing submitted, the proposal would fail to satisfy criteria 5. However this in itself is not considered to be a reason to refuse planning permission subject to other criteria and policies being satisfied. The fact that the use of the premises for Class C2 purposes would in effect result in the employment of staff, with four support staff along with a supporting manager being employed to staff the site., is also a material consideration.

Additionally, it is considered that the proposed C2 use could successfully operate alongside, and not undermine the delivery of, employment development coming forward on the remainder of the site.

As such, notwithstanding other development management considerations, the principle of the use of the premises for Class C2 purposes does not raise any significant direct conflict with the adopted development strategy for the borough in respect of the aims and objectives of Policy DMB1.

Policy DMG2:

In respect of the locational aspects of the proposal, Policy DMG2 is also engaged in parallel with Policy DMB1 insofar that the application relates to an area of land within the designated open countryside.

Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy seeks to restrict development within the open countryside and Tier 2 Village settlements to that which meets a number of explicit criteria, with Key Statement DS1 also reaffirming these criteria and setting out the overall spatial aspirations for development within the Borough.

In respect of the submitted proposal, Policy DMG2 remains fully engaged. Policy DMG2 is two-fold in its approach to guiding development. The primary part of the Policy DMG2(1) is engaged where development proposals are located 'in' principal and tier 1 settlements with the second part of the policy DMG2(2) being engaged when a proposed development is located 'outside' defined settlement areas or within tier 2 villages, with each part of the policy therefore being engaged in isolation and independent of the other dependant on the locational aspects of a proposal.

The mechanics and engagement of the policy are clear in this respect insofar that it contains explicit triggers as to when the former or latter criterion are applied and the triggers are purely locational and clearly based on a proposals relationship to defined settlement boundaries and whether, in this case, such a proposal is 'in' or 'outside' a defined settlement.

The proposal is located outside of any defined settlement limits, in this respect, when assessing the locational aspects of development, Policy DMG2(2) remains engaged which states that:

Within the tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social wellbeing 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.*

In respect of the above criterion, the development would not be considered as being 'Local Needs Housing' nor has any information been submitted in support of the application that would demonstrate that the proposal is 'essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area'. Furthermore the proposal cannot be considered to meet a local need or benefit as the LPA cannot be certain that this facility would solely be used for Ribble Valley residents. As such, the proposal would fail to satisfy any of the criterion with Policy DMG2.

However, taking account of the EAL allocation of the site and that the C2 use will generate employment opportunities, it is not considered that the conflict with DMG2 in this case would result in a development that is in an inappropriate strategic location, given what other uses could come forward under this allocation in this countryside location.

Policy DMG3:

Policy DMG3 is also engaged insofar that the policy requires that proposals are well related to the primary road network and can be accessed by sustainable methods of transport. The application site is well related to Blackburn Road, being served by an established existing access, with reasonable accessibility and connectivity to the neighbouring settlement of Longridge. In respect of vehicular trips, the use is unlikely to generate a significant level of traffic over and above that of another employment use that could come forward as part of the EAL allocation.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The application site is bounded to the north, east and west by existing open agricultural land, with the site also being bounded to the south by two existing commercial premises, namely Andertons Butchers and Cleggs Chilled Food Service.

The site to the north currently benefits from an extant consent (3/2023/0706) for the 'erection of 34 Class E(g) units and one battery storage and maintenance unit with associated parking and access'. The current application site and the land parcel to the north jointly form Employment Allocation Site EAL3 (Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document October 2019).

As such and given the proposed use and proposed garage will not benefit from any direct interface or inter-relationship with existing nearby residential receptors, it is not considered the proposed change of use or the resultant associated activities will result in any measurable impacts upon nearby residential amenities.

As such, and taking account of the above matters, the proposal does not raise any significant direct conflicts with Policy DMG1 which seeks to ensure of adequate standards of residential amenity and protect against development(s) that would result in measurable detrimental impact(s) upon nearby existing residential amenities.

A third party concern about the safety and amenity of future residents in close proximity to a number of industrial units has been raised. Policy DMG1 requires development to be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses. Whilst the close proximity is noted, they would be sited in a property which has a defined curtilage and with a dedicated access track to the main road which is separate to the accesses used by existing and committed industrial uses. Therefore this is not considered to be a reason to refuse the application.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The submitted details do not propose any external alterations to the existing building, with the only new proposed structure being that of a garage identical to that which was previously consented pursuant to extant planning permission 3/2025/0512.

As such it is not considered that the proposal will result in any direct conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG1 or DMG2 which seek to protect against development which would be of detriment to the character or visual amenities of the area or be of detriment to the character and visual amenities of the designated open countryside.

Highways and Parking:

The Local Highways Authority have raised no objection to the proposal offering the following observations:

Lancashire County Council acting as the Local Highway Authority does not raise an objection regarding the proposed development and are of the opinion that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site subject to the following condition being stated on any approval.

Site Access

The site will be accessed via an existing access onto Lower Lane, the B6243, which is a classified road with a speed limit of 30 mph fronting the site access. The LHA has previously reviewed the site access as part of planning application 3/2024/0256 which was for a children's assessment centre for care and at the time did not raise any concerns. The LHA therefore finds the access arrangements acceptable for the proposal.

Internal Layout

The LHA have reviewed drawing number EAD_203_P_02 Revision S1 and are aware that the proposal has 8 dedicated off-street parking provisions.

Taking guidance from advice provided by Lancashire County Council's Commissioner, which indicates that parking provisions should be provided at 1 vehicle per staff/child, plus 1 vehicle for the home, plus 1 vehicle for the manager, plus any external agencies which may visit the house. The proposal states that maximum capacity four children and five staff present therefore 5 parking spaces should be provided for staff, 1 additional space will cater for the manager, 1 additional space should cater for a vehicle for the home and 1 additional space should be provide space for an any external agencies or visitors.

As such the LHA would expect the development to have 8 off-street parking spaces which can be supported within the site as shown on the plans provided. There is also space to manoeuvre within the site, which will allow for ingress and egress in a forward gear.

Condition

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or brought into use until the car parking and turning areas shown on the approved plan(s) have been provided in full and are available for use. The car parking and turning areas shall thereafter be kept available for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles at all times.

Reason: *To ensure the provision of adequate car parking on site and in the interests of highway safety.*

As such, taking account that no objection has been raised by the Local Highways Authority, , it is not considered that the proposal will result in any measurable conflict(s) with Key Statement DMI2 or Policy DMG3 which seek to ensure the continued safe operation of the highways network and to ensure

adequate pedestrian infrastructure and vehicular parking provision is brought forward to accommodate development.

Landscape/Ecology:

The submitted details do not propose any alterations to the existing building nor any alterations to the existing site configuration, with no impacts upon existing trees, hedgerow or habitat being resultant from the proposal. With the proposed garage being identical to and in an identical location to that which was consented pursuant to extant planning permission 3/2025/0512.

As such and taking account of the above, the proposal does not raise any significant measurable conflict(s) with Policies DME1, DME2 nor DME3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which seek to protect against adverse impacts upon habitat, biodiversity, ecology or protected species and species of conservation concern.

The development is exempt of having to secure the statutory biodiversity net gain, meeting the de minimis exemption.

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.