


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

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>LW</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>22/10/25</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>23/10/25</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2025/0651			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	25/09/25	<b>Site Notice:</b>	25/09/25	
<b>Officer:</b>	LW			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>APPROVAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Proposed formation of new agricultural/field access.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Sugar Hill Farm, Whitewell Road, Cow Ark, BB7 3DG.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No comments received with respect to the proposed development.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	No objection subject to conditions.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
One representation has been received raising no objection to the scheme in principle but requesting the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imposition of a condition requiring suitable directional signage be installed during the planned works;</li> <li>• Imposition of a condition stating that no burning of waste can take place on the site;</li> <li>• A reduced speed limit along Clitheroe Road.</li> </ul>	

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:</b>
<p><b>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</b></p> <p>Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy                  Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development                  Key Statement EN2: Landscape</p> <p>Policy DMG1: General Considerations                  Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations                  Policy DMG3: Transport &amp; Mobility                  Policy DME1: Protecting Trees &amp; Woodland</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>
<p><b>Relevant Planning History:</b></p> <p>3/2019/0178: Proposed alterations and extensions to dwelling. Erection of two-storey office/garage with attached wood store/fuel store and alterations to existing workshop roof (Approved).</p> <p>3/2001/0272: Single storey extension to form extended family room, dining room and pantry (Approved).</p>

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

The application relates to an undeveloped field located to the southern side of Clitheroe Road, Cow Ark under the same ownership of Sugar Hill Farm, a residential property located to the south-west of the proposal site. The site to which the proposal relates is located approximately 5.3km north-west of the defined settlement area of Waddington and 5.4km north-east of Chipping, within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

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

Consent is sought for the proposed construction of a new hard surfaced agricultural field access off Clitheroe Road. The proposed access would be 6m wide and would extend for a length of 10m into the field.

**Principle of Development:**

The site is not located within a defined settlement area and as such, Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy is of relevance.

Policy DMG2 states that within the Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas, development must meet a number of criteria. This includes development that is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.

As such, an assessment must be made as to whether the proposal is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. The Planning Statement submitted in support of the application states that the residential property at Sugar Hill Farm is currently accessed off Whitewell Road via a private drive which banks to and then bridges over Cow Ark Brook. However, due to the part sale of the land, there is currently no longer a dedicated vehicular access to the agricultural fields within the applicant's ownership, with the existing field access from Clitheroe Road now serving a separate portion of land to the north of the applicant's ownership. It is therefore stated that the proposed access would provide a dedicated agricultural access to the fields, allowing the future maintenance and management of the agricultural land whilst removing any potential conflict between smaller domestic vehicles and larger agricultural vehicles, with the existing access to the residential property off Whitewell Road proposed to continue serving the domestic use of the dwelling.

Taking account of the above, the development is considered to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture in this particular instance. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle subject to an assessment of the material planning considerations.

**Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

The proposed access would be sited more than 200m away from the nearest residential receptor. Given this separation distance and taking account of the nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that the proposal would result in any undue impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.

**Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

*‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting’.*

With respect to development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes), Paragraph 182 of the NPPF states:

*‘Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.’*

The above is reiterated within Key Statement EN2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

*‘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. 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 Core Strategy provides general design guidance as follows:

*‘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 places on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.’*

The proposal site comprises an undeveloped field sited within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The land the subject of this application is void of any discernible built form, with the surrounding area predominantly comprising a mixture of undeveloped fields, mature tree cover and woodland. As such, the proposal site contributes towards the largely unspoilt and natural character of the surrounding landscape.

In this instance, the proposed development would involve the creation of a new hard surfaced vehicular access, approximately 6m in width and 10m in length off Clitheroe Road. The proposed access would be constructed from tarmac and concrete setts, with a post and wire fence, hedging and post and rail access gate also proposed. Whilst the development would be publicly viewable from Clitheroe Road, resulting in the visual impact of the proposed development being somewhat pronounced, the proposal would appear largely consistent with other field accesses along Clitheroe Road and therefore would not read as an overtly anomalous or out of keeping addition to the surrounding area. In addition to this, the proposed hard surfacing would only extend up to the access gate, set 10m away from the edge of the highway, largely maintaining the open and undeveloped appearance of the field. In this context, it is considered that the proposed access would sufficiently integrate within the landscape and no significant visual harm to the character or visual amenities of the area is anticipated as a result.

### **Highways and Parking:**

Lancashire County Council Highways have been consulted on the proposed development and raised no objection.

The proposed field access plan shows splays of 160m to both sides of the proposed access which is suitable for a 50-mph speed limit. Although Clitheroe Road has national speed limit, on this section the Local Highway Authority do not anticipate 85%ile speeds to be higher than 50 mph. The splays lie within the adopted highway or the applicants land, and the applicant must ensure that all vegetation, hedges, fences, walls, etc are kept below 1m high. This has been secured via condition. The applicant is also informed that the construction of the access from the carriageway edge to the field boundary must be to Lancashire County Council Specification under a S278 agreement.

### **Landscape/Ecology:**

### Trees

A Tree Survey has been submitted with the application. The Survey identified five individual trees, two groups of trees and a hedge, which are located within the site and on areas of immediately adjacent land. Four individual trees were categorised as high quality (A-category), one tree and one group of trees were categorised as moderate quality (B-category), the hedge was categorised as low quality (C-category) and the other group was categorised as unsuitable for retention (U-category) due to its limited remaining life expectancy.

In order to accommodate the new access, 2no. U-category ash trees with advanced stage ash dieback disease and a short length of C-category hedge are proposed for removal. The proposed access would also be partially located within the Root Protection Area (RPA) of A-category tree T2 and close to the RPA of A-category T4 and B-category T3 which are recommended for retention. However, subject to the recommendations to protect the retained trees detailed in the Tree Protection Plan being implemented it is not considered that the development proposal would have any long-term detrimental impact upon tree health or the contribution of trees to the character of the wider setting. This has been secured by way of a condition.

### BNG

A Biodiversity Net Gain strategy has been submitted in support of the proposed development which has been subject to review from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. The response received from GMEU, dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 2025, states that there are no objections to the application on ecology grounds and that it is accepted that the planting of the proposed hedgerow and trees will provide the required compensation, and the required BNG, to offset the impacts of the development.

The hedgerow and tree planting is not regarded as providing 'significant' on site biodiversity gain, and therefore securing the biodiversity gain for 30 years with a S106 agreement is not required in this instance. However, the planting and future maintenance has been secured by way of a condition.

### **Other Matters:**

It is noted that requests have been made with respect to the imposition of conditions relating to directional signage and the burning of waste, as well as a reduction in the speed limit along Clitheroe Road. However, such conditions cannot be reasonably justified in this instance and a reduced speed limit falls beyond the scope of this planning application for a new agricultural access. In addition to this, no concerns have been raised by the Local Highway Authority with respect to highway safety. The burning of waste is controlled by Environmental health legislation and is not a material planning consideration.

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

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised, the application is recommended for approval.

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