

## **Agricultural and Design Statement**

**Applicant : A Moffat, Land near Osbaldeston Lane, Blackburn BB2 7LZ**

Proposal to construct an agricultural field track to provide for access from existing field access to existing bale storage area, livestock pens and grassland. This will be a standard conventional crushed limestone access track. The purpose is for access to stored fodder, attending to/transport of livestock in/from handling pens and enable autumn/winter feeding of cattle/sheep. The land is owned and farmed by the applicant.

### **Agricultural Statement**

The existing farming business comprises a flock of sheep and cattle young stock of various ages. In addition, the business makes haylage bales for feeding the youngstock in the autumn and the flock of sheep during the mid-winter grazing period.

This proposal is for an agricultural track to service the grassland which provides grazing for cattle and sheep. This track is required to work with the natural outdoor grazing of cattle throughout the summer and with careful management using buffer feeding, on the higher and drier south eastern part of the land, with two ring feeders and troughs during autumn months before they are old enough to be sold. The sheep are fed with two racks and a number of troughs throughout the winter. During all these times the ground is easily poached and safe vehicular access including access with a tractor which is necessary for additional in field feeding and retrieving fodder. Large round bales can only be lifted and moved from the stack with a tractor/loader due to their weight usually in excess of 0.5 tonne. Access is also required to the handling pen so cattle/sheep may receive veterinary checks on site and/or collection for emergency treatment if required. Access to the grassland, stored fodder and livestock pen will be required at all times so a solid surface is a particular requirement. The proposed track is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture by the existing business.

### **Design**

The proposed access track will be constructed with a crushed limestone sub-base and finished with a standard compacted fine grade top layer. This will help prevent lameness which is more prevalent when coarse loose surfaces are used. This is particularly important close to the ring feeders where there is the highest level of use and cattle/sheep tend to congregate. The proposed track is designed for the purposes of agriculture.

### **Design continued**

The track will be set to traverse the edge of the land adjacent to the existing bale stack and field boundary where visual impact will be minimal. The siting and finish of the track has also been carefully planned to have regard for the high standard of welfare for the cattle and sheep.

## Transport & Access

The proposed track is more than 25 metres from the adopted public highway being Osbaldeston Lane. Access to the field is from the north via private surfaced lane using the existing agricultural field gate access. This application does not seek to alter the agricultural use of the entrance. The south east end of the proposed track will access the existing bale stack and livestock handling pen. There is a public footpath FP0330022 at the gateway. The site plan shows that the proposed track continues from an existing section and therefore does not conflict with or alter the public footpath.

## Access around the field

Access to the cattle/sheep grazing is proposed from access track to the higher and drier land. This is an additional agricultural justification to reduce poaching of the grassland from agricultural vehicles, the existing number of cattle and sheep. This DEFRA recommended good agricultural practice is part the standard management of all farm holdings and is an additional reasonably justified agricultural requirement.

## Appearance

The materials are going to be of a limestone base with improved compacted fine surface to complete the suitable agricultural access. As described above there is minimal net visual impact from the existing situation where screening provided by existing roadside hedges and neighbouring hedges forms adequate screening from the public highway and neighbouring properties.

## Conclusion

The completion of the track will improve the provision of suitable access to livestock feed and handling areas for the cattle youngstock and sheep. The track will assist the business in preparing to weather the future pressures of the predicted market changes and reform of the current agri-support mechanisms. The additional agricultural track is justified above as needed for the existing agricultural enterprises, reasonably required for agriculture and is designed for agriculture on this existing agricultural unit.

The proposal improves the existing business and management strategy.

Additional details - see application form and plans