


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	08/01/2026	Manager:	LH	Date:	8/1/26
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Application Ref:	3/2025/0754			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk</small>
Date Inspected:	06/11/2025	Site Notice:	06/11/2025	
Officer:	MC			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed change of use from Class E to Class B2 for peanut butter production.
Site Address/Location:	Unit B Bee Mill, Preston Road, Ribchester, Lancashire, PR3 3XL

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Ribchester Parish Council:	No response received.

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	Following additional highways/parking information being submitted the Local Highway Authority (LHA) does not raise any objection to the development, subject to a condition that the development proceeds in accordance with the submitted operating statement.
RVBC Environmental Health Officer:	Following an updated noise assessment being submitted the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the proposed change of use would not result in any adverse impact to the adjacent neighbouring residential receptors.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
One representation has been received noting the highways comments. Concerns are raised regarding whether the change of use could lead to greater/heavier industrial productivity further down the line in terms of noise/smells/vibration.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
<p>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</p> <p>Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development</p> <p>Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3: Transport And Mobility Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy Policy DME6: Water Management</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p>
Relevant Planning History:

3/2023/0450

Prior notification for the installation of 69 solar panels (31.05kWp) on metal roof. Panels to be installed parallel to the roof, 48 to face south east and 21 to face north west.

Withdrawn

3/1998/0221

DEMOLITION OF PART OF OLD WEAVING SHED TO FORM ACCESS ROAD TO REAR. SUBDIVISION OF OLD WEAVING SHED TO FORM SMALL INDUSTRIAL UNITS AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Approved with Conditions

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

The site is currently vacant but forms part of the Bee Mill Industrial Units in the Tier 2 settlement of Ribchester, which is a designated Existing Employment Area. The site is also located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is at risk of surface water flooding. The wider site is split up into a number of commercial units with varying uses and the previous use of the unit was a fireplace/stove showroom (Class E) which had operated for a number of years and the wider site.

The site is accessed off Preston Road and is bounded by residential properties to the north-east (1-3 Sarmatian Fold) and south-west (properties at Church Street and Sunnyside Avenue).

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The proposed development is for the change of use of Unit B and Bee Mill from Use Class E to Use Class B2 for peanut butter production. Internally, the proposal would include the creation of a commercial kitchen, changing rooms, office, staff kitchen and packing area within the building. The Planning Statement indicates that there would be no external changes to the existing building with the exception of relevant signage. No external vents are required to be installed.

Principle Of Development:

Key Statement EC1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

“Employment development will be directed towards the main settlement of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge as the preferred locations to accommodate employment growth together with land at Barrow Enterprise Site, the Lancashire Enterprise Zone at Samesbury and locations well related to the A59 corridor.”

It also states that:

“Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle.”

The site is also located in the Tier 2 settlement of Ribchester, whereby Policy DMG2 also applies. Policy DMG2 requires development within the Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations which are listed as below:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being 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.

6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.

In addition, Policy DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“Proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle. development proposals will be determined in accord with the core strategy and detailed policies of the LDF as appropriate.”

With regards to compliance with Policy DMG2, the proposed development would introduce an employment generating use within an existing designated employment site. The most appropriate criterion which the proposal would fall within is criterion 5 which relates to small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated. It is the Councils view that the use is considered to be small-scale and appropriate to its location, within the Bee Mill Industrial Units (subject to compliance with other material considerations such as amenity and highways). The proposal is considered to provide a benefit through employment as the change of use would generate five jobs (3 full time and 2 part-time employees) as indicated within updated highways technical note by PSA design. Whilst the number of previous employees are unknown, the site is current vacant and as such, there would be a benefit of bringing a vacant unit into use.

The proposed change of use is therefore considered to support business growth and the local economy, in compliance with Policy DMG2 and DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and due to the siting of the unit, within an existing employment area, the use is considered to be appropriate to the rural area, in compliance with Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity:

Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users’.

Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

The Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the application and originally raised some concerns that the submitted noise and odour report did not include noise from the compressor on site. As such, an amended assessment as been submitted and the Environmental Health Officer is satisfied that the proposed change of use would not result in any adverse impact to the adjacent neighbouring residential receptors.

One neighbour objection has been received raising concerns regarding future use. They are concerned that if the change of use is granted to B2, there is the potential for the site to change to a use that could generate further noise, vibration and odour that would be harmful to the amenity of surrounding residential neighbouring properties.

Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the units at Bee Mill already have the potential to generate noise, such as a car repair garage, given the close proximity to neighbouring properties and the potential for cumulative impact, should the use change to a differing use within Use Class B2, it would not be unreasonable to restrict the use to peanut butter production.

As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF states:

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

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides additional 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 placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.'

The proposal is for a change of use only and therefore would not result in any external alterations to the building. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF and Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Highways/Parking:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3 states that:

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

In addition, Policy DMG1 states that all 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 (LHA) have provided comments on the proposal and they note that the site access point to Bee Mill Industrial Estate would remain unaltered. In line with the parking standards as defined in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan a Class B2 use should provide parking at a ratio of 1 space per 45 square metres. Applying the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan parking standard yields a requirement of 8 parking spaces and therefore the current provision, therefore, represents a shortfall of three spaces.

Further information has been provided and the Local Highway Authority are also in receipt of an operating statement. They note that whilst the site cannot provide parking provisions in line with the standards as detailed within the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, the applicant has provided information detailing the number of employees who will be present within the site, which is a maximum of 5 members of staff. As such, the current provisions are acceptable for the demand of the business. The business is also not open to the public, as such parking provisions are not required for customers.

The LHA has reviewed the operating statement provided by the applicant and understands that the largest vehicle expected to access the site is a small HGV or Luton box van. Servicing in such vehicles is expected to take place no more than 4 times a month. And vehicle tracing shows that the wider industrial estate operates a one-way system, with the largest vehicle serving the site being able to manoeuvre into the site and out of the site safely in a forward gear. When considering the route, the largest vehicle accessing the site will take, which is leaving the M6 at junction 30 before following the A59 and turning onto the B6245, the LHA do not consider this route will raise any highway safety concerns for the largest vehicle accessing the site. The site will also receive other deliveries/servicing in either small vans or transit vans; such servicing is expected up to 10 times per week, to either collect items produced within the site or to deliver raw products. Given the existing nature of the site, it is considered that the proposal will have a negligible impact on the surrounding network as such, the LHA has no objections to the development.

Whilst the LHA have recommended the inclusion of a condition for the site to operate in accordance with the submitted operating statement, this condition would not be enforceable and therefore could not be added to any grant of permission. An email from the LHA dated 08.01.2025 has confirmed that they would not object to the scheme without the suggested condition.

As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

Other matters:

The site is located on known contaminated land. However, given that there would be no breaking of the ground and the development is for the change of use only, it is not considered that any site investigation works would be necessary.

The site is also located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is at risk of surface water flooding,

Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“Development will not be permitted where the proposal would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. Applications for development should include appropriate measures for the conservation, protection and management of water such that development contributes to:

- 1. preventing pollution of surface and / or groundwater*
- 2. reducing water consumption*
- 3. reducing the risk of surface water flooding (for example the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS))*

As a part of the consideration of water management issues, and in parallel with flood management objectives, the authority will also seek the protection of the borough’s water courses for their biodiversity value.

All applications for planning permission should include details for surface water drainage and means of disposal based on sustainable drainage principles. the use of the public sewerage system is the least sustainable form of surface water drainage and therefore development proposals will be expected to investigate and identify more sustainable alternatives to help reduce the risk of surface water flooding and environmental impact.”

As such, a Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Management document has been submitted with the application. This states that the development would be considered ‘Less Vulnerable’ with regards to National Planning Policy Framework Annex 3 and there is no additional risk presented by permitting the change of use application. Less vulnerable use within Flood Zone 3 is deemed acceptable and an exception test is not required. As the development is for a change of use only, it is also not considered that the sequential test applies. The Flood Risk Assessment also considers that the removal of general public access to the building would directly reduce flood risk on site compared to the existing permitted use.

The report recommends that the property be registered for advance flood warnings. The site would then benefit from a systematic flood warning process to follow should such a warning occur and all staff should be briefed as part of their induction to the likelihood of flood warnings and be given a procedure to follow should one occur. In this area, it is considered that any flood water inundation on the site would be slow, and as such, the recommendation would be to vacate all users on the site.

The assessment considers that there are very limited interventions possible that could be retrofitted into the building to alleviate the risk of flooding given it directly interacts with the wider Bee Mill structure but recommends that all perishable items are stored on elevated racking to reduce the impacts of any future flood event.

With regards to surface water, the proposal is for a change of use only and as no external alterations are proposed. As such, no new drainage is being installed. The proposal is not considered to impact on the existing surface water drainage regime as a direct result of the application, and as such, in accordance with SuDS guidelines, no the report concludes that there is no requirement for any restrictions, improvements or betterment.

As such, the proposal is not likely to result in any adverse risk from flooding should the change of use be granted. A condition should be added to any grant of permission to ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the recommendations outlined within the Flood Risk Assessment, in accordance with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

The development would not raise any ecology issues and is exempt from the statutory BNG requirement due to being de-minimis.

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 the application be approved subject to condition(s).
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