


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.							
Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	10/03/26	Manager:	LH	Date: 11/3/26

Application Ref:	3/2025/0926			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	29/01/26	Site Notice:	29/01/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed change of use of land to provide dog day care area for an additional 16 dogs including a retrospective lean-to extension and exercise area, together a new exercise area, additional parking, extension to existing building, fencing and privacy screen netting and soft landscaping.
Site Address/Location:	Land at Mytton Fold Golf Course, Whalley Old Road, Langho, BB7 9JF.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
A consultation response from Billington and Langho Parish Council was received on 10 th March 2025. The Parish Council are in support of the application and feel that local business should be supported and encouraged.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the application as submitted fully assesses the highway impact of the proposed development and further information is required.
RVBC Environmental Health:	Concerns raised that noise from the proposed extension of the site may cause a nuisance to nearby residential properties. Request the submission of a noise assessment carried out by a suitably qualified person.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
<p>Three letters of objection have been received. The concerns raised can be summarised as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The road is increasingly dangerous, pitted with potholes and drop off points, and the volume and speed of traffic has increased. This together with an increase in the number of people using the area for recreational walking poses a serious threat to life. • The way out of the Dog Day Care Centre is on an uphill slope to a partially blind exit – inadequate for extra and regular additional traffic. • The Highway Department has incorrectly stated that the road has a 40 mile an hour speed limit. <p>One letter of support has also been received. The reasons outlined within the letter can be summarised as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley View Pet Services are a very professional business • The present dog day care facilities are in keeping with the surrounding area and are kept exceptionally clean • The dogs are transported in the day care vans – there is no extra traffic/ customers at the site • The dogs attending are kept busy 	

- The staff are friendly, professional and local to the area
- Noise is minimal compared to noise from traffic

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
 Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
 Key Statement EN1: Green Belt
 Key Statement EC1: Business and Employment Development
 Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
 Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
 Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
 Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2021/1057: Change of use of land including the extension of existing access track, installation of fencing, planting and shelter to provide dog day care area and halfway house for Golf Course with associated infrastructure with ancillary facilities (Approved).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to an existing dog day care area situated to the south-western corner of Mytton Fold Golf Course and accessed off Whalley Old Road. The site is the result of a retrospective planning permission granted in 2022 (application ref: 3/2021/1057) for the change of use of land including the extension of the existing access track, installation of fencing, planting and shelter to provide dog day care area and halfway house for the Golf Course.

The site to which the proposal relates is located within the designated Green Belt with the land sloping down from Whalley Old Road toward the main golf club and hotel complex which is accessed via Whalley Road. The proposal site is bordered by an area of trees to the south-east and south-west.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Condition no.9 imposed on application 3/2021/1057 currently restricts the maximum number of dogs allowed on site to 16 in relation to the applicant's existing dog day care business. This application seeks consent for the expansion of the existing dog day care facility to accommodate an additional 16 dogs on site. Consent is also being sought for a change of use land, retrospective lean-to extension and exercise area, a new exercise area, additional parking, extension to existing building, fencing, privacy screen netting and soft planting.

Principle of Development:

The principle of introducing a dog day care facility to the application site was previously established under planning application 3/2021/1057. Consideration must therefore be given towards the implications of expanding the existing business at the proposal site.

The application site occupies a Green Belt location. The NPPF states that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless it meets certain exceptions and advises that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

As set out in the NPPF and Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, the essential characteristic of the Green Belt is its openness. NPPF Paragraph 154 states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- a) *Buildings for agriculture or forestry;*
- b) *The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the use of the land or a change of use), including building, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) *The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) *The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially later than the one it replaces;*
- e) *Limited infilling in villages;*
- f) *Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) *Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*
- h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within in. These are:*
 - i. *Mineral extraction;*
 - ii. *Engineering operations*
 - iii. *Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
 - iv. *The re-use of buildings provided that the building are of permanent and substantial construction;*
 - v. *Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sports or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
 - vi. *Development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

Development which is harmful to the Green Belt should only be permitted in 'very special circumstances' and these will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

There is no definition of openness in the Framework but, in the Green Belt context, it is generally held to refer to freedom from, or the absence of, development. The degree of harm to openness is normally reliant on a spatial judgement, however, visual considerations can also be relevant.

It is acknowledged that the original development granted consent under application 3/2021/1057 was proposed to provide a small-scale dog day care facility caring for a maximum of 16 dogs, with the building also proposed to serve as a 'halfway house' refreshment and rest area for users of the Golf Course. As such, given the proposal was to be partially used for facilities in connection with the golf club, the

development was considered to meet Green Belt exception b). The Officer also noted that the exercise of dogs could be considered to be linked to outdoor recreation and given the modest scale of the building, measuring just under 40 square metres, it was not considered that the development would significantly impact the openness of the Green Belt.

It is understood that the dog day care business in question has since proved to be successful, with the building having already been extended to provide an open sided shelter, while an additional external astro turfed play area has also been created to the south-western corner of the day care facility. Neither of these additions benefit from planning consent. Retrospective planning consent is thus sought for these, along with the creation of an additional exercise area on land adjacent to the existing access track and extended car parking area. It is also proposed to extend the existing building to the north-east by 7m x 3.6m to provide space for an additional 16 dogs. A new 2m post and wire stock fence is also proposed around the new exercise area, as well as Pro-Tec Brown Privacy Screen netting to remove inter-visibility between the golf course and dog day care facility.

In this respect, the proposed works would comprise a substantial expansion when compared to the extent of development granted permission under the original consent. With respect to the building itself, the submitted plans indicate an approximate increase in floorspace from original to proposed of 160%. The submitted 'Supporting Planning, Design and Heritage Statement' also provides a comparison of volumes taking account of the original structure and the proposal. These calculations indicate a 152% increase in volume from original to proposed. The proposed extensions would thus clearly result in a disproportionate addition to the original building in as much that the cumulative increase in floorspace and volume would be significant in relation to the original building. As such, the development cannot reasonably be argued to satisfy Green Belt exception c) which relates to the extension or alteration of an existing building.

In addition to the extensions to the building, the proposal also includes new outdoor exercise areas, extended hard surfaced car parking provisions, and additional fencing/ privacy netting, all of which would result in a further extension of the footprint of built form compared to the original consent. The proposal would extend the development at the site beyond its originally defined boundaries, thus encroaching into the surrounding landscape.

Although the proposal site is somewhat screened by existing vegetation which borders the site to the south-east and south-west, it is partially visible from Whalley Old Road, particularly during the winter months. The site is also visible from the nearby Public Right of Way which passes through the Golf Course and therefore the proposed works would be visible from the public realm. Taking account of the visual openness to either side of the proposal site, it is not considered that the development would be well screened or assimilated by existing built development. There would therefore be clear visual impact as a result of the increased quantum of development.

In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would result in both spatial and visual loss of openness of the Green Belt by significantly increasing the quantum of built form at the proposal site. The proposal would therefore amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful.

It is acknowledged that the proposal site is a well-established dog day care facility and the proposal would allow the existing business to expand and accommodate an additional 16 dogs on site. In this regard, the desire to expand a successful business to meet customer demand is understandable and there is policy support for the expansion of existing business, where appropriate, including Key Statement EC1 and Policy DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. However, this general policy support does not override the need for compliance with other policies in the Core Strategy and the Framework, which in this case includes the Green Belt policies.

The submitted 'Supporting Planning, Design and Heritage Statement' also notes that there would be welfare benefits for dogs with the proposed shelter providing a dry area for dogs to exercise and play and

the part astro turfed/ part recycled bark exercise area providing a safe area for dogs to exercise during the winter months when the grass exercise area is wet and muddy. However, there is little to demonstrate that similar benefits could not be delivered by alternative schemes which would have a lesser impact upon the Green Belt. Therefore, the welfare and business benefits weigh in favour of the proposal to a limited degree.

The Framework advises that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. In this case, no very special circumstances have been identified which would outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and loss of openness. Consequently, the proposal would be in direct conflict with the policies set out in Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 13 of the NPPF which seek to protect the Green Belt.

Impact upon Listed Building and Setting:

Mytton Fold Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed Building is located approximately 625m to the north of the proposal site.

The Listing entry for Mytton Fold Farmhouse reads as follows:

“BILLINGTON SD 73 SW 6/9 Mytton Fold Farmhouse – Grade II House, 1702. Watershot sandstone with slate roof and brick chimney caps. 2 storeys, 2 bays. Windows mullioned. On the ground floor they have an inner hollow chamfer and outer chamfer, and hoods linked to a central hood over the door. The left-hand one is of 6 lights and the right-hand one of 4. On the 1st floor are 4-light hollow-chamfered windows with flush mullions. Door has chamfered surround with lintel inscribed: 'EC[?]A 1702'. Chimneys on gables, which are coped with kneelers. Interior has axial ovolo-moulded ceiling beams.”

With regards to proposals for development affecting Listed Buildings, Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

In addition, Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.”

Furthermore, Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states:

“Alterations or extensions to listed buildings or buildings of local heritage interest, or development proposals on sites within their setting which cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset will not be supported”.

The proposal site is located approximately 625m to the south of the Grade II Listed Building, separated by the railway line and Golf Course. The proposed development would therefore not be highly visible from Mytton Fold Farm. The immediate setting of Mytton Fold Farm has also been considerably altered over recent years, including the construction of Mytton Fold Hotel and the associated car parking and hotel infrastructure. With this in mind, it is not considered that the development would result in any measurable adverse impact upon the setting or character of the Grade II Listed heritage asset.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The proposed development would result in an increase in the total number of dogs being accommodated at the application site from 16 to 32. As such, consideration must be given towards the implications of increasing the existing number of dogs on site with respect to impacts upon neighbouring amenity.

The application has been accompanied by a Noise Management Plan which has been subject to review by the Council's Environmental Health Team. The Environmental Health Officer has raised concerns about noise from the proposed extension of the site and the potential for this to cause a nuisance to nearby residential properties. The Officer has therefore requested that a noise assessment be carried out by a suitably qualified person, advising that the rating level of sound emitted from the premises should not exceed background sound levels by more than 3dB(A) between the hours of 07.00 – 20.00 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest sound sensitive premises) and not exceed the background sound level between 20.00 – 07.00 (taken as a 15 minute LA90 at the nearest/ any sound sensitive premises).

If the Local Planning Authority (LPA) were minded to support the development, a noise impact assessment would have been requested during the course of the application; however, given the concerns in respect to Green Belt harm, this has not been requested. In the absence of this noise assessment, insufficient information has been submitted in order to determine whether or not the proposed development would be sympathetic to neighbouring land uses and that nearby residential receptors would not be subject to adverse noise issues. The proposal is therefore contrary to Paragraph 135 and 187 of the NPPF and Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

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 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 proposed development would be read in context with the existing use of the site as a dog day care facility. Whilst the proposed extensions to the building would be substantial relative to the footprint of the original structure, the overall design of the additions would remain in keeping with that of the original. The development would be constructed from materials to match the building originally granted consent under application 3/2021/1057 and would appear appropriate when read in context with the surrounding countryside landscape. The proposed new fencing and privacy screen netting would also appear similar to that installed around the perimeter of the grass exercise area approved under the original consent. With this in mind, the external appearance of development would not appear overly discordant or out of keeping so as to warrant the refusal of the application on visual amenity grounds alone.

Highways and Parking:

The proposal has been subject to review by Lancashire County Council Highways who did not consider that the application as submitted fully assessed the highway impact of the proposed development.

The site will continue to be accessed via an existing access off Whalley Old Road and whilst no parking plan has been provided with the supporting documentation, the application form states that 1 additional parking space will be created, resulting in a total of 3 parking spaces. Staff numbers will also double as part of the proposal, resulting in the equivalent of 6 full-time members of staff. The site also has a transport van in which clients' pets are picked up and dropped off. In view of this, the Local Highway

Authority (LHA) raised concerns over the parking not meeting the demand for the site and requested a parking plan showing at least 6 parking spaces measuring at least 2.4m wide and 5m long.

The LHA also noted that the site currently runs a pickup and drop off service in line with the existing permission. This arrangement will continue with the additional dogs being picked up by staff members from their owners' homes before being returned home at the end of the day in the same way. As such, the addition of 16 more dogs is expected to require one additional pickup and drop off service per day, which is likely to have a negligible impact on the surrounding network.

Following the LHA's initial consultation response, additional information has been provided by the Agent stating that staff members do not travel to the site in their own vehicles. Apprentice(s) are school leavers and are therefore too young to drive and part-time staff members are local and collected/ dropped off during the daily van runs. As such, it is stated that at full capacity, there will only ever be 3 vans. The Agent goes on to state that the proposed car parking area is 10m by 5m in total which is enough for 4 bays at the desired 2.4m by 5m. Furthermore, the Applicant does not wish to attract 3 vans at any one time and has no need for the additional bays, instead suggesting the imposition of a condition stating that no more than 4 cars/ vans shall be parking at the site at any one time.

This information was passed on to the Highways Officer, who has confirmed via an updated consultation response dated 6th March 2026 that based on the additional information, the LHA are satisfied that the parking provisions within the site meet the sites parking requirements. As such, the LHA are of the opinion that the proposed development would not have a significant impact upon highway safety or capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site, subject to the imposition of conditions.

With this in mind, the application is considered acceptable with respect to highway safety and parking subject to conditions.

Landscape/Ecology:

The application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The Appraisal notes that the core development area has a low value to amphibians being open and exposed and there are no breeding ponds in proximity to the site. Badger sets do not occur on site and a lack of feeding signs or runs across the site suggest that they do not occur within 30m of site boundaries. The risk to brown hares, is considered to be very low and the significance of the site to invertebrates is also likely to be limited in the local context. No indication of reptiles was recorded at the site.

The foraging habitat within the redline boundary is considered poor for bat species and it is not considered that there would be significant degradation of foraging habitats as a result of the proposal so long as the site is managed sympathetically and all trees bordering the site are retained. No indications of roosting or highly suitable roost sites were located within surrounding trees and the existing timber building on site has a negligible potential for use by roosting bats with no potential roost features to the roof and walls. As such, no further emergence surveys are considered necessary.

The impact on nesting birds is also considered to be minor, however precautionary mitigation is advised. This can be secured by way of an appropriately worded planning condition.

BNG

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report has been submitted in support of the application which indicates that the proposed development is capable of post-development net gain of 11.32%. As such, the proposal satisfies the statutory requirements with respect to BNG subject to the statutory condition being satisfied.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

As such, it is 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 reasons:
01:	The proposed development would result in inappropriate development within the Green Belt by way of substantially increasing the quantum of built form at the proposal site which would result in spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt and encroachment into the countryside. This harm identified is not outweighed by very special circumstances and as such, the proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the provisions of Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
02:	The submitted Noise Management Plan does not effectively assess the potential noise implications for nearby residents. Therefore, it cannot be concluded that the proposed development would be sympathetic to neighbouring land uses and that nearby residential occupants would not be subject to adverse noise issues contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 135 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.