

RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APPROVAL

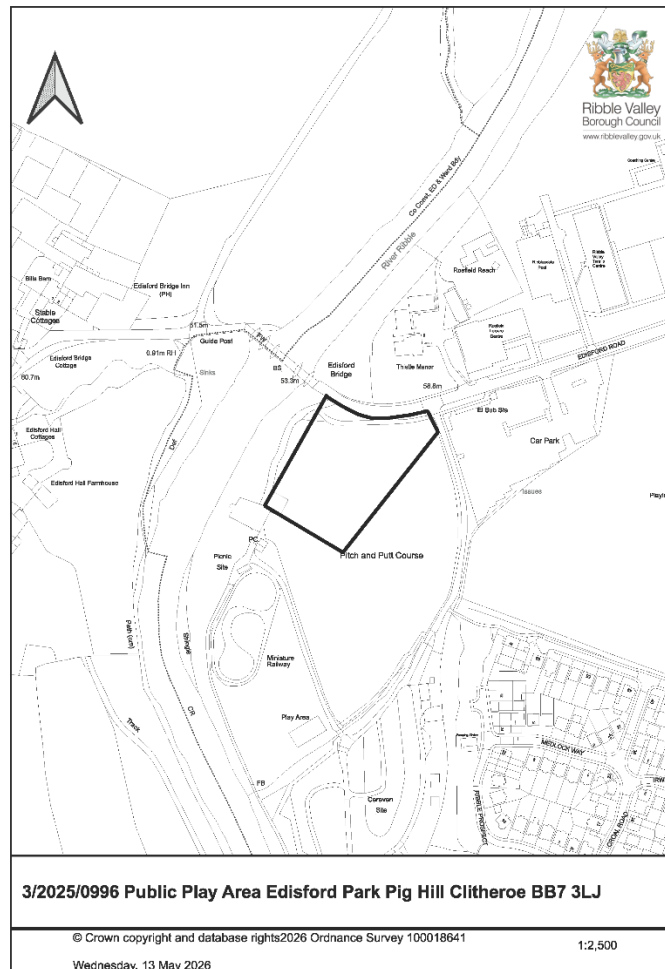
DATE: 28 MAY 2026
REF: MC
CHECKED BY: LH

APPLICATION REF: 3/2025/0996

GRID REF: SD 372437 441445

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

PROPOSED SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT, FORMING A NEW PLAY AREA - SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF ASSOCIATED SURFACING USING WET POUR SAFETY SURFACING AND GRASS MATTING AT PUBLIC PLAY AREA, EDISFORD PARK, PIG HILL, CLITHEROE, BB7 3LJ



CONSULTEE RESPONSES/ REPRESENTATIONS MADE:

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL:

No response received.

LOCAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY (LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS):

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) raise no objection to the scheme on highway safety grounds. They note that the site is sustainably located and there is a public car park within close proximity to the site. They recommend the inclusion of two conditions relating to wheel washing and the positioning of any new gates, should permission be granted.

HISTORIC ENGLAND

Historic England raise no objection to the scheme and note that the formal play area would have minimal impact on the setting of the scheduled bridge or views from it, nor would it impact on the setting of the Grade II Thistle Manor.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

No comment has been made on the scheme. National Flood Risk Standing Advice should be applied.

RVBC COUNTRYSIDE OFFICER

The Countryside Officer noted that there was no Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the application. However, a condition has been drafted to ensure that prior to the commencement of development, trees within influencing distance are protected and tree protection details shall be inspected and agreed prior to any works commencing with a tree protection monitoring schedule.

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:

One objection has been received raising the following comments/concerns:

- Ecology surveys are incomplete
- Concerns regarding water pollution from rubbish
- Loss of dog walking area
- A small woodland would be more appropriate for this development

1. Introduction, Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.1 Members will note that the application is being brought before Committee given the application is made on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council with the land to which the application relates also falling within the ownership of the authority.
- 1.2 The application site relates to an open recreational field which was formerly a Pitch and Putt Course, located to the western edge of Clitheroe. The site is owned by the Council and is designated as Open Space within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. The piece of

land is located to the south-east of Edisford Bridge which is a scheduled ancient monument and is located to the south of the Grade II Thistle Manor which is located on the opposite side of Edisford Road to the north of the application site. There are a number of mature trees within the site and Public Right of Way FP0301017 runs adjacent to the western site boundary. The River Ribble lies approximately 32 metres to the west of the site. A small part of the site is also located within Flood Zone 2.

2. **Proposed Development for which consent is sought**

- 2.1 This application seeks consent for the installation of new play park equipment in the recreation field. The equipment includes a wheelchair accessible equipment with a maximum height of 1.65m, a 'tower' with slide which would have a maximum height of 7.05m, a 'hurricane' piece of equipment with a maximum height of approximately 3.15m and a cableway with a maximum of 3.8m.
- 2.2 Other elements include climbing rocks, walkways, interactive play equipment, trampolines, musical/sensory equipment, seating, litter bin, pathways and archways. The hard surfacing includes coloured Wet Pour safety surfacing throughout the park area with a Conipave Pathway leading through the site. It should be noted that the layout has been slightly amended to change the positioning of the equipment and hard surfacing. These are not significant changes from the originally proposed scheme. The scheme also includes two wooden entrance arches at either side of the park which would have a maximum height of 2.25m.
- 2.3 The play equipment would be sited approximately 34 from Edisford Road at its closest point.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

3/2007/0224 - Refurbishment and alterations to existing cafe. Re-submission.
Approved with Conditions

3/2006/0274 - Refurbishment of existing cafe.
Approved with Conditions

3/2006/0973 - An extension and alterations to existing cafe.
Approved with Conditions

4. **Relevant Policies**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets
Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMB3: Recreation and Tourism Development

Policy DMB4: Open Space Provision
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
Policy DME6: Water Management

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5. Assessment of Proposed Development

5.1 Principle of Development:

5.1.1 The site is identified as a protected area of open space. Policy DMB4 of the Core Strategy protects open space and playing field provision. Policy DMG1 requires that development proposals must not result in the net loss of important open space, including public and private playing fields, without a robust assessment that sites are surplus to need. In assessing this, regard must be had to the level of provision and standard of public open space in the area [and] the importance of playing fields. Regard will also be had to the landscape or townscape of an area and the importance the open space has on this.

5.1.2 Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states that:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

5.1.3 Whilst the proposal would involve the development of a small area of the existing recreational ground, it does not result in the loss of any playing pitches and makes the provision for an alternative recreational facility for the community which would remain entirely compatible with the open space/recreation use.

5.1.4 As such, notwithstanding concerns from the occupier of a neighbouring property regarding the loss of space for dog walking, the proposal would only occupy part of this space and is an appropriate development within the open space designation that would comply with Policy DMB4 and paragraph 104 of the NPPF.

5.1.5 Whilst the proposed facility has been designed to meet the needs of local residents, given the scale and type of play equipment proposed within the park, including wheelchair accessible equipment, it is likely to attract people who live in nearby villages/towns and visitors. As such Policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy is relevant which states that planning permission will be granted for development

proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough. This is subject to meeting a number of criterion:-

1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;
2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;
3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;
4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;
5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and
6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought

5.1.6 Having regard to criterion 1, the proposal would not conflict with other policies of this plan in terms of protecting open space and playing field provision.

5.1.7 The site is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Clitheroe and as such, the proposal complies with criterion 2. Criteria 3-6 is considered in more detail later in this report but no conflict is identified. Therefore, the proposal is considered to satisfy policy DMB3 and provide an appropriate play / leisure facility in the Borough.

5.2 Impact upon Residential Amenity:

5.2.1 Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy stipulates that development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature and not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area. Furthermore, Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy requires all proposals for development to consider the effects of development upon existing amenities.

5.2.2 Paragraph 135 (f) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that 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; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

5.2.3 The closest residential receptors to the development are ‘Thistle Manor’ approximately 40 metres to the north of the site (which is a Care Home) and the properties to the south-east of the site being 24-42 Ribble Prospect which are sited over 100m from the play equipment.

- 5.2.4 The creation of a new play park is likely to result in some noise pollution and consideration must be given to the potential undue impacts on residential amenity.
- 5.2.5 However, given the distances to neighbouring properties and the fact that the site is already used as a recreation grounds, the proposed development is unlikely to result in a level of noise/disturbance that would be detrimental to residential amenity when compared to the existing level of background noise.

5.3 Visual Amenity/External Appearance

- 5.3.1 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.”

- 5.3.2 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.”

- 5.3.3 Policy DMG2 also states that:

“Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.”

- 5.3.4 The proposal would result in the introduction of built form into an area currently devoid of structures. Elevations of the play equipment have been provided which indicates that the majority of equipment is between 3-4 metres in height, with the exception of the ‘tower’ which would be just over 7 metres in height.
- 5.3.5 The proposed play park would result in a change to the visual amenities of the field. However, it is noted that the play equipment is designed around a woodland/river theme which takes inspiration from its surroundings. It is also considered that whilst the play equipment is likely to be visible from PROW FP0301017 and partly from Edisford Road, the presence of existing mature trees would help to screen the development. In addition, the introduction of play equipment to a recreational field is not considered to result in any visual harm that would be out of keeping with its surroundings.
- 5.3.6 Photographs of the hard surfacing and archways have been provided which are considered to be appropriate in size, scale and design and would not result in adverse visual impacts and the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DMG1 and Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5.4 Heritage Impacts:

5.4.1 The site is also within the setting of the Grade II Listed Thistle Manor and Edisford Bridge which is scheduled as an Ancient Monument and also Grade II Listed.

5.4.2 Key Statement EN5 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.”

5.4.3 In addition, Policy DME4 states that:

“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.”

“Applications for development that would result in harm to the significance of a scheduled Monument or nationally important archaeological sites will not be supported.”

5.4.4 Historic England have been consulted on the application and note that the play area includes a number of pieces of equipment, including surfacing and the highest multiplay unit would be just over 7 metres in height, with the remainder of the equipment not exceeding 4 metres.

5.4.5 They note that the proposed play area is located close to Eadsford or Edisford Bridge, a four-arched stone bridge of medieval origins which carries the B6243 over the River Ribble. Its significance as an example of medieval transport infrastructure is recognised by its scheduling as an ancient monument (National Heritage List for England entry number 1005118). In addition, on the far side of the B6243 from the site of the proposed play area is Thistle Manor (also known as Roefield), an 18th century building with 19th century modifications which is listed in Grade II (NHLE entry number 1072384).

5.4.6 Whilst Historic England have noted that the site of the proposed play area lies below the level of the scheduled bridge and the area is already used for play and for public recreation. They consider that trees and planting provide an element of screening to the site and given the minimal impact of the proposals on the setting of the scheduled bridge, Historic England has no objection to the application.

5.4.7 In addition to this, given the separation distances, land levels and screening afforded by trees and vegetation, it is considered that the setting on the Grade II Thistle Manor would also be neutral.

5.4.8 The proposal therefore complies with Key Statement EN5 and Policy DME4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5.5 Trees and Ecology

5.5.1 Policy DME1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

“Where applications are likely to have a substantial effect on tree cover, the borough council will require detailed Arboricultural Survey information and tree constraint plans including appropriate plans and particulars. these will include the position of every tree on site that could be influenced by the proposed development and any tree on neighbouring land that is also likely to be within influencing distance and could also include other relevant information such as stem diameter and crown spread.”

5.5.2 The Councils Countryside Officer has reviewed the application and note that there are trees within influencing distance of the proposed scheme. This includes two mature sycamore trees and four cherry trees.

5.5.3 The Countryside Officer notes that there was no Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the application and recommends the inclusion of a condition to ensure that prior to the commencement of development, trees within influencing distance are protected and tree protection details shall be inspected and agreed prior to any works commencing with a tree protection monitoring schedule.

5.5.4 Policy DME3 also states that:

‘Development proposals that are likely to adversely affect the following... ‘Wildlife species protected by law’ will not be granted planning permission. exceptions will only be made where it can clearly be demonstrated that the benefits of a development at a site outweigh both the local and the wider impacts. Planning conditions or agreements will be used to secure protection or, in the case of any exceptional development as defined above, to mitigate any harm, unless arrangements can be made through planning conditions or agreements to secure their protection’.

5.5.5 Concerns have been raised from the occupier of a nearby neighbour with regards to the fact that ecology surveys were not undertaken at night and the impact that the development would have on local wildlife populations.

5.5.6 It should be noted that the proposed development did not trigger the need for a Preliminary Ecology Survey as part of the validation of the planning application, nor has it been requested by the Countryside Officer. In addition, drainage details have been provided for the proposed surfacing which shows that the surfacing materials including both ‘wet pour’ and the ‘safety grass pads’ are both permeable. As such, surface water runoff which could impact on the aquatic habitat is considered to be reduced.

5.5.7 In addition, a condition can be added to any grant of permission to ensure that no external lighting is erected without written consent from the Local Planning Authority to reduce the impact on wildlife populations.

5.5.8 The Biodiversity Net Gain Statement confirms that baseline habitats of low and very low distinctiveness were assessed as being present during the site visit in February 2026. The Biodiversity Metric concludes that the proposed development would result in a -21.54% habitat net loss and the trading rules have also not been satisfied. In order for a 10% net gain to be achieved, 0.22 habitat units are required which would be achieved off-site through a habitat bank.

5.5.9 This can be secured through the statutory Biodiversity condition, requiring the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan.

5.6 Highway Safety and Parking

5.6.1 Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios”.

5.6.2 With regards to parking, Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

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

5.6.3 Policy DMG1 also states that development must:

1. *Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.*
1. *Ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.*

5.6.4 The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have been consulted on the application.

5.6.5 They note that Edisford Road features footway provisions which provide connectivity to the nearby public car park and bus stops and that the site is situated next to a public car park, Edisford Road Car Park, which can provide short stay parking provisions for those travelling to the park by vehicle. The site is also located within close proximity to bus stops on Edisford Road where buses from these stops mainly run between Clitheroe town centre, nearby residential areas, and surrounding villages, with some services extending toward local schools and rural communities, providing a sustainable travel option.

5.6.6 The LHA recommend two conditions should planning permission be granted, which includes, wheel washing facilities during the construction phase and a condition to ensure that any proposed pedestrian gates and associated mechanisms shall be located outside the adopted highway and the gates shall have physical restraints to prevent them from opening onto the adopted highway.

5.6.7 The agent for the application has confirmed that no new gates are proposed on to the highway and the latter condition is therefore not considered necessary. As such, the proposal is considered to be in compliance with Policy DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

5.7 Drainage

5.7.1 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.”

- 5.7.2 A small part of the site is located within Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment but having reviewed the flood map for planning, the only part of the proposed development at risk of flooding is an existing car parking area to the west of the red line boundary.
- 5.7.3 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment notes that wet pour safety surfacing is porous and permeable, being made from recycled and virgin rubber, and laid on a MOT Type 1 Stone base, which is also permeable. This combination allows for water to infiltrate through the surfacing, which provides a better or equivalent runoff rate. As such, it is not considered that the installation of new hard surfacing would increase significantly increase run-off rates.
- 5.7.4 In addition, it is important to note that the proposed use as a park is a water compatible development which is appropriate development within Flood Zone 2.
- 5.7.5 Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DME6 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

6. Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.1 For the reasons outlined above the application is recommended for approval insofar that the proposal will not result in any significant adverse impacts, nor will the proposal result in significant measurable conflicts with the aims and objectives of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission in this instance.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be APPROVED subject to the following conditions

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in conformity with the following submitted plans and details and recommendations therein received by the Local Planning Authority unless prohibited by any other condition.

Plans

Location Plan scale 1:1250

Amended Proposed Site Plan scale 1:500 received 19 May 2026

Proposed Elevations drawing ref: 1271493 Ribble Valley BC

Amended Proposed Equipment Details scale 1:150 received 19 May 2026

Documents

Pennine Ecology Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment February 2026

Materials Schedule received 19 May 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which plans are relevant to the consent.

3. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the hard surfacing details provided within the document named 'Ribble Valley Borough Council – Materials Schedule' received 19 May 2026.

REASON: To ensure the proposal is satisfactorily landscaped and trees/hedgerow of landscape/visual amenity value are retained as part of the development.

4. Prior to the commencement of development, a Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (see further details below at 5 of the Notes Section) and implemented in accordance with the approved details. The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Pennine Ecological dated February 2026.

REASON: To ensure the development delivers a net gain off site which satisfies paragraph 14 (2) of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and which is in accordance with the biodiversity information submitted with the planning application.

5. Prior to commencement of any site works including delivery of building materials and excavations for foundations or services, all trees within influencing distance of the proposed destination play area shall be protected in accordance with BS5837 2012 [Trees in Relation to Demolition, Design & Construction] this includes all trees within influencing distance of the foot print of any proposed equipment and access paths specifically the two mature sycamore and four cherry trees growing within influencing distance to the proposed access proposed path running on a north /south west trajectory from the proposed access point from Edisford road. The RPA [root protection area] shall be a

minimum of a 12m RPA measured from centre of the main stem of any said tree in accordance with BS5837.

The tree protection details shall be submitted to and inspected and agreed in writing by the Council's Countryside Officer prior to any site works commencing, along with a tree protection monitoring schedule.

The root protection/exclusion zone shall remain in place until all building work has been completed and all excess materials have been removed from site including soil/spoil and rubble. During the building works no excavations or changes in ground levels shall take place and no building materials/spoil/soil/rubble shall be stored or redistributed within the protection/exclusion zone, in addition no impermeable surfacing shall be constructed within the protection zone.

For the avoidance of doubt no tree felling or pruning works are authorised as part of the granting of this planning permission.

REASON: In order to ensure that nearby trees of amenity value are afforded appropriate protection from the potential adverse effects of development.

6. For the full period of construction, facilities shall be available on site for the cleaning of the wheels of vehicles leaving the site and such equipment shall be used as necessary to prevent mud and stones being carried onto the highway. The roads adjacent to the site shall be mechanically swept as required during the full construction period.

REASON: To prevent stones and mud being carried onto the public highway to the detriment of road safety.

7. No external lighting/floodlighting or building mounted lighting shall be erected or placed anywhere within the site to which this consent relates without express planning permission first being obtained.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over development which could prove materially harmful the character and visual amenities of the immediate area or wildlife.

Informative Note 5

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the local planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed in the legislation are considered to apply.

The biodiversity gain plan must include:

- (a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- (f) such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

When calculating the post-development biodiversity value of a habitat, the planning authority can only take into account an increase in biodiversity value post-development where it is satisfied that the habitat creation or enhancements delivering the increase will be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://webportal.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2025%2F0996