



ROMAN **SUMMER**



PLANNING STATEMENT

DOCKBER LAITHE FARM, SAWLEY OLD BROW, SAWLEY, BB7 4LF

FEBRUARY 2026

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Appendix 1

Confirmation from the applicant's landlord explaining why he will not permit the installation of a flue at the Company's HQ

Appendix 2

Certification from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports a full S73A planning application submitted by Beloved Pets Limited, which seeks retrospective planning permission for the construction of a steel portal framed building with associated chimney stack, to be used as a pet crematorium at Dockber Laithe Farm, Sawley Old Brow, Sawley, BB7 4LF.
- 1.2 The application follows recent refusal of application 3/2025/0517. That application proposed almost identical works / use, and the purpose of this new application is a positive attempt to address the reasons for refusal.
- 1.3 This proposal deviates from the refused application only in respect of the fitting of a cowl above the chimney stack.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement summarises the content of the application and sets out our response to the reasons for refusing the previous application. It assesses the merits of the proposal against relevant planning policies at both the national and local level, and discusses other material factors that call for consideration as part of the overall planning balance.
- 1.5 The application is supported by the following materials:
- Application form and ownership certificate
 - This Planning Statement
 - Consideration of Potential Odour Impact (February 2026) (Martin Environmental Solutions Ltd)
 - The following drawings:
 - RS/JB/Loc01 – Site Location Plan
 - RS/JB/PostD-01 – As Built Site Block Plan
 - RS/JB/Own01 – Plan showing extent of agricultural unit

- Access Route Plan
- RS/JB/ELV01 – North Elevations – Prior to Development + As Built
- RS/JB/ELV02 – West and East Elevations – Prior to Development + As Built
- RS/JB/FLOOR 01 – As Built Floor Plan
- RS/JB/ROOF 01 – As Built Roof Plan

1.6 The remainder of this Statement is structured as below:

- Section 2.0 summarises the progress and outcome of the recently refused application.
- Section 3.0 explains the Applicant’s business and the need for / details of the revised proposal.
- Section 4.0 explains why this site has been selected for the proposed facility.
- Section 5.0 discusses the consistency of the proposal with the Development Plan
- Section 6.0 discusses its consistency with the NPPF and NPPG as important material considerations.
- Section 7.0 sets out the overall planning balance and our conclusions

2.0 Progress of Refused Application

- 2.1 The previous planning application (3/2025/0517) was submitted retrospectively in July 2025 in an attempt to regularise the construction of the steel portal framed building and associated chimney stack for the purposes of proposed pet cremation.
- 2.2 It was accompanied by a covering letter explaining that the building had already been constructed and was intended to support a small-scale pet crematorium operation associated with an established business based in Burnley. The submission also included the application form, an Odour Assessment, agricultural holding maps, site location plans and elevation drawings.
- 2.3 The applicant explained that the operational model involved the collection of deceased pets from clients' homes, transfer to the Company's HQ at Burnley and then – in order to minimise journeys – transport to the proposed cremation facility at Dockber Laithe. Following cremation, the ashes are returned to Burnley for packaging and delivery to customers.
- 2.4 It was stated that the Dockber Laithe site is not open to the public, that all waste materials would be removed from the site, and that vehicle movements would be limited to those of the site operators - not anticipated to exceed four journeys per day.
- 2.5 It was explained that the cremator, chimney and associated equipment are fully licensed and certified by DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency.
- 2.6 The development was presented as a farm diversification proposal intended to support the long-term viability of the agricultural enterprise, with the building designed specifically for its use and constructed in materials consistent with surrounding farm buildings.

Comments Received

- 2.7 We were not involved in the previous application, and as such we are not aware if any communication occurred between the agent and the LPA. No such correspondence is visible on the LPA's website. However, other comments are available to view, albeit some of those are quite heavily retracted. We summarise those below.

Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council

- 2.8 The PC raised concerns regarding the retrospective nature of the application, noting that the building had already been constructed and the pet crematorium had been operating prior to the submission of the application. The Parish Council queried why planning permission had not been sought earlier, expressed concern that application documents continued to refer to a "*proposed*" development, and questioned whether appropriate planning controls had been applied to the use. It also requested that the local planning authority review the DEFRA and APHA licensing and certification, particularly in light of emissions reported by an objector, and raised concerns regarding the proximity of the development to a public right of way.
- 2.9 In response to that, we wish to record that our client understood – erroneously – that, because the proposal forms part of a working farm and is associated with the sustenance and diversification of the agricultural holding, planning permission was not required. Our client now appreciates that it is not the case that planning permission was not required, albeit (as was indicated by the Enforcement Officer at the time) it is arguable that the development and use might have been considered Permitted Development if it was directly associated with the operation of the agricultural enterprise. That is clearly not the case when the intended use is to serve an entirely different business. Our client duly accepted / accepts the need for planning permission and in turn apologises to the LPA and interested third parties, whilst also wishing to emphasise that, on no account, had there been any intention to flout the planning process.

Lancashire County Council as the Local Highway Authority


- 2.10 LCC raised no objection to the previous proposal. It concluded that the development would not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity, noting the limited scale of vehicle movements, the absence of public access to the site, and the adequacy of on-site parking provision. The Highway Authority confirmed that there were no highway grounds on which to refuse the application in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Council's Environmental Health Officer

- 2.11 The Delegated Report that led to refusal of the application records the comments of the EHO as below:

'Concerns raised with regards to impacts upon neighbouring amenity arising from odour omissions.'

- 2.12 It is unclear whether the EHO visited the site and observed any odour at first hand, or whether those comments were simply a response to third party objection points.
- 2.13 We note that two comments were issued by the EHO during the course of the application, the first of which (below) issued on 8th October 2025.

 **Nicola Berry** 8 October 2025 at 13:02
Re Planning App:3/2025/0517 Dockber Laithe Farm Sawley
To: Ben Taylor

Hi Ben

We've historically had complaints about this (we met with the APHA who regulate the site but one of the cremators was running at the wrong temperature), since it's been remedied, we've had no complaints, so provided it's running correctly it should be ok...

Thanks

Nicola Berry - Environmental Health Officer (Pollution)
Ribble Valley Borough Council, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, Lancashire
BB7 2RA
T: 01200 413206 E: nicola.berry@ribblevalley.gov.uk W: www.ribblevalley.gov.uk



2.14 Following the above comments, and clearly in response to a third party objection, the comments were made around one month later.

 **Nicola Berry** 6 November 2025 at 16:45
RE: 3/2025/0517: Regularisation of construction of steel portal f... 
To: Ben Taylor [Details](#)

Hi Ben

I think given the objections and the video there is grounds to suggest detriment to the amenity of the area to the neighbours through odour.

I'll send the video onto APHA, as they need to investigate this.

Thanks

Nicola Berry - Environmental Health Officer (Pollution)
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Ribble Valley
Borough Council
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From: Ben Taylor <Ben.Taylor@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 October 2025 08:33
To: Nicola Berry <Nicola.Berry@ribblevalley.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: 3/2025/0517: Regularisation of construction of steel portal framed building for use as a pet crematorium (sui generis) at Dockber Laithe Farm, BB7 4LF

Hi Nicola,

This objection came through yesterday in relation to the pet crematorium at Sawley – just wondered if you had any further comments in relation to the comments regarding smoke and odour attached above?

Thanks,

Ben.

- 2.15 Our client acknowledges that, when the cremators were initially installed, there were one or two occasions when ‘teething problems’ occurred while the machinery was being calibrated. We understand that those issues were resolved some time ago, and the applicant strongly refutes any suggestion that odour issues arise from the facility.
- 2.16 Furthermore, the Applicant is sceptical about certain of the alleged dates of photographs issued by the objector, and also points out that the farmer burns occasionally on his land close to the proposal. Indeed, we have recent evidence of open fires on the land of the objector, including we are advised the odour of melting plastic (video footage of these events will be provided to the LPA if it wishes to view).

Third Party Objections

- 2.17 Three items of third-party correspondence were received objecting to the proposal. The names and addresses of the individuals concerned have been redacted (as too the photographs that were issued). However, it is understood that these comments were issued by, or on behalf of, the same party.
- 2.18 Those representations raised concerns relating to the retrospective nature of the development; the intensification of non-agricultural uses at Dockber Laithe Farm; increased vehicle movements including activity during early morning and night-time hours; smoke, odour and emissions from the cremator affecting residential amenity; uncertainty over hours of operation; and potential impacts on nearby public rights of way.
- 2.19 The third party representations also questioned whether the development was appropriate within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape; whether it complied with adopted Core Strategy policies relating to rural development and amenity; and whether the scale and nature of the use could be justified as a form of farm diversification.

- 2.20 Concerns were also expressed that approval of the application would rely on other regulatory bodies to control emissions and operational impacts, and requests were made for any permission to include clear and enforceable conditions to regulate activity levels, vehicle movements and hours of operation.

Subsequent Events

- 2.21 Here we would highlight our client's ongoing concerns about what he considers to be ongoing vexatious behaviour, including evidence of trespass and what he considers to constitute intimidating activity. This has included reports apparently issued by a party to certain agencies, resulting in an unannounced site visit from Trading Standards and the Environment Agency, during which we are advised that those parties laboured no concerns and the officers attending stated to our client that they could not understand why they had been requested to attend in the first place.
- 2.22 Those unfortunate and ongoing activities have been reported to, and logged by, the Police. They have also been formally reported to the LPA (reproduced in full below).

Statement Regarding Pattern of Unfounded Complaints, Filming and Intimidating Conduct

Beloved Pets Limited wishes to place on record that [NAMES REDACTED] have repeatedly made unfounded complaints to external agencies, including Trading Standards, the Environment Agency and APHA/Defra.

On every occasion, attending officers confirmed that no issues were identified, and no action was required.

It has been observed that individuals have been filming and photographing the business, staff, and premises without permission on multiple occasions during both the day and night. These individuals positioned themselves in areas they knew were not covered by CCTV while still being able to cause the most distress and anxiety to my staff. Staff members have also reported incidents of intimidating and

confrontational behaviour intended to provoke a reaction, which has caused them distress and disrupted normal business operations.

The safety of my staff is paramount, and additional security measures, including CCTV and lighting, have been installed to protect them. The individuals involved are unlikely to confirm their presence, indicating that trespassing has occurred and that unknown persons have been on the property at night.

Due to the ongoing nature of these incidents, a formal incident log has been recorded with the police so that the pattern of behaviour is documented and can be referenced if issues continue or escalate the reference for this is LC-20260119-0380

Taken together, this demonstrates a sustained pattern of unreasonable and disruptive conduct that has interfered with the company's lawful operations and appears intended to obstruct or undermine our planning application.

Beloved Pets Ltd respectfully asks the planning case officer to take this established pattern of behaviour into account when considering the weight and credibility of objections or allegations submitted by this individual or associated colleagues.

Yours Sincerely

Mark Slater

Director

Beloved Pets Limited

- 2.23 As a result of those activities - which have resulted in concern, upset and anxiety for Company employees - CCTV cameras and security lights have now been fitted to the crematorium.

Delegated Report (DR)

- 2.24 A DR was prepared to sit alongside the refusal. That noted that the applicant had sought to justify the development as farm diversification, relying on Key Statement EC1 of the Core Strategy. However, the Local Planning Authority considered that insufficient information had been provided to demonstrate that the proposal is genuinely related to, proportionate with, or supportive of the existing agricultural enterprise.
- 2.25 The proposal was also assessed against Policy DMG2 in respect of development in the open countryside. While noting that the building is small in scale, the DR concluded that its use is not appropriate to a rural area; does not clearly deliver a local need or benefit; and would be more suitably located in an industrial setting.
- 2.26 Concerns were also raised about the sustainability of the location, given reliance on private vehicle movements between the site and the main business premises in Burnley, contrary to policies seeking to minimise travel.
- 2.27 Concerns were also raised regarding residential amenity, particularly in relation to odour and smoke emissions. Although it noted the submitted Odour Assessment concluded no adverse impacts, objections from neighbouring occupiers and photographic evidence of dark smoke emissions led the Council to question the reliability of the assessment and whether planning conditions could adequately prevent future incidents. On this basis, the proposal was considered contrary to amenity protection policies.
- 2.28 The DR also concluded that the visual impact of the development is unacceptable. While it acknowledged that the building itself is modest, it suggested that the addition of an industrial-style flue is incongruous within its agricultural context and harmful to the character and appearance of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, particularly as it is visible from public rights of way.
- 2.29 The DR noted that LCC Highways raised no objection and confirmed that traffic and parking impacts would be negligible.

3.0 About the Applicant and the Need for / Details of the Proposal

- 3.1 Beloved Pets Limited is a small licensed independent pet crematorium business providing home euthanasia and cremation services across Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and beyond.
- 3.2 The Company has recently been shortlisted as a finalist in two categories at the Lancashire Red Rose Business Awards and has received in excess of 1,000 five-star Google reviews. The Company operates with a strong commitment to its core values, sustainable practices, and active community engagement, and strives to deliver a dignified and meaningful service to pets and their owners.
- 3.3 Through its operations, the Company supports environmental initiatives and is committed to engaging exclusively in ethical business practices. Community support is central to the Company's ethos. It actively contributes to a range of charitable organisations, local businesses, and initiatives that align with its values, including the sponsorship of local animal charities and the provision of care for pets in need. These efforts are designed to support pets and their owners during challenging times.
- 3.4 In addition, the Company encourages employees to volunteer their time and skills to causes they are passionate about, fostering a culture of generosity, compassion, and social responsibility throughout the organisation.
- 3.5 Its headquarters is at Burnley Bridge Business Park in Burnley, but there is no scope to provide a crematorium facility at that location. The landlord will not permit it (see evidence at *Appendix 1*).
- 3.6 The business offers a home collection service for pets which have died at home or where owners have taken the difficult decision to euthanise.
- 3.7 The business collects pets from either homes or veterinary practices; transports the deceased to either its Burnley HQ for preparation or directly to the cremator facility;

sensitively, quickly and hygienically undertakes cremation; and reunites owners with pet ashes within a few days.

- 3.8 It is important to highlight that the facility will not be visited by any customers, and no 'waste' materials will be stored on the site. The only vehicle movements will be negligible – around 4 journeys per day - and those of employees of the business. Due to the small size and capacity of the facility, only one member of staff will usually attend the site.
- 3.9 One cremator sits inside the building, containing two chambers – one for small pets and one for larger pets (as seen on the photograph below).



- 3.10 Modern cremators such as these function in a straightforward and carefully controlled way. The pet is placed into the fully sealed cremation chamber, where burners gradually raise the temperature to a very high level. The secondary chamber is generally maintained at a temperature of around 850 degrees Celsius, whilst the primary chambers will vary in temperature dependant upon factors such as the size of the deceased pet – normally between 850 to 1,000 degrees.
- 3.11 At such temperatures, the natural organic material is completely broken down by heat in a controlled supply of oxygen.
- 3.12 What remains at the end of the process are clean, dry bone fragments, which are allowed to cool and then be processed into ashes, to be returned to customers.
- 3.13 Such equipment used in the UK is specifically designed for small animal cremation and must meet strict manufacturing and safety standards. Pet cremators are designed to be clean, efficient and environmentally responsible. They use precise temperature controls and advanced chamber design to ensure that combustion is complete, meaning gases are fully burned before leaving the system out of the flue (with cowel) that projects from the roof.
- 3.14 Units include secondary combustion or “afterburn” zones, which reheat exhaust gases to remove odour, smoke and unburnt particles. As a result, when operated correctly and in line with conditions, modern pet cremators do not produce noticeable odour, visible smoke or harmful pollutants. This technology ensures that pet cremation is a discrete, hygienic and low-impact process that is entirely unharful.
- 3.15 The cremators installed inside the building are licensed and certified by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) (see *Appendix 2*). APHA is part of DEFRA, responsible for protecting animal and plant health and safeguarding the agricultural and food industries. It oversees and enforces rules relating to animal health, welfare and biosecurity. This includes regulating activities such as the handling and disposal of animal by-products, disease control, livestock identification and movements, and approving and monitoring facilities such as animal crematoria and incinerators. Its role is to ensure that these

activities are carried out safely, hygienically and in a way that protects public health, animal health and the environment.

- 3.16 The small building has been designed specifically for its intended use, in contextual materials that reflect the immediate agricultural surroundings / buildings.
- 3.17 This proposal deviates from the refused application only in respect of the fitting of a cowl above the stack. The purpose of that is to help the flue system work safely, efficiently and consistently. In simple terms, the cowl helps to control how air and exhaust gases move in and out of the chimney. By shaping the airflow at the top of the flue, it assists in maintaining a steady upward draw, which is important for ensuring that combustion gases are carried away properly and do not linger or fall back down the chimney.
- 3.18 The cowl also helps protect the system from external influences such as wind and weather. In windy conditions, downdraughts can disrupt the normal flow of gases and potentially affect how efficiently the cremator operates. The cowl is designed to minimise these effects by deflecting wind and stabilising airflow, helping the cremator maintain the correct operating conditions.
- 3.19 In addition, it prevents rain, debris or birds from entering the flue, which could otherwise interfere with the equipment.
- 3.20 The cowl is therefore a standard and practical component that supports safe operation, efficiency and environmental control.
- 3.21 Beyond the inclusion of the cowl, the proposal is identical to that refused under application 3/2025/0517.

4.0 Site Selection

- 4.1 For understandable reasons, and while the cremation operation is fully licenced / regulated, small scale, safe, hygienic and generates practically no smoke or odour, there is inevitable sensitivity about locating such facilities very close to homes, businesses, schools and suchlike.
- 4.2 For obvious reasons, without a cremation facility, our client's business cannot operate, and as such it is crucial to the business to have identified an appropriate site.
- 4.3 Due to the above factors, a site in the rural area – distant from homes and other sensitive uses – naturally lends itself to such activities.
- 4.4 The location must also be located to serve the business's natural catchment and its core customer base across the whole of Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester (indeed beyond that). However, it is worth highlighting that – currently – around 85% of Company business is undertaken in the East Lancashire area.
- 4.5 The subject site is ideal in many respects, as explained below.
- 4.6 First, it forms part of a large working farm with an array of large agricultural / quasi industrial 'sheds'. The proposal is a small single storey structure that has been bolted discretely onto one such large shed (as shown on the photographs that follow), with little visibility beyond the immediate confines of the farm. Whilst open countryside and National Landscape, the immediate context of the location is far from beautiful, in the midst of much larger utilitarian structures, to such extent that the building is largely 'lost' within that context.

Photographs taken in February 2026:







- 4.7 Wider public vantage points are limited and from some distance. The closest such viewpoint is a quite narrow view from bridleway BW0339020 as seen below.



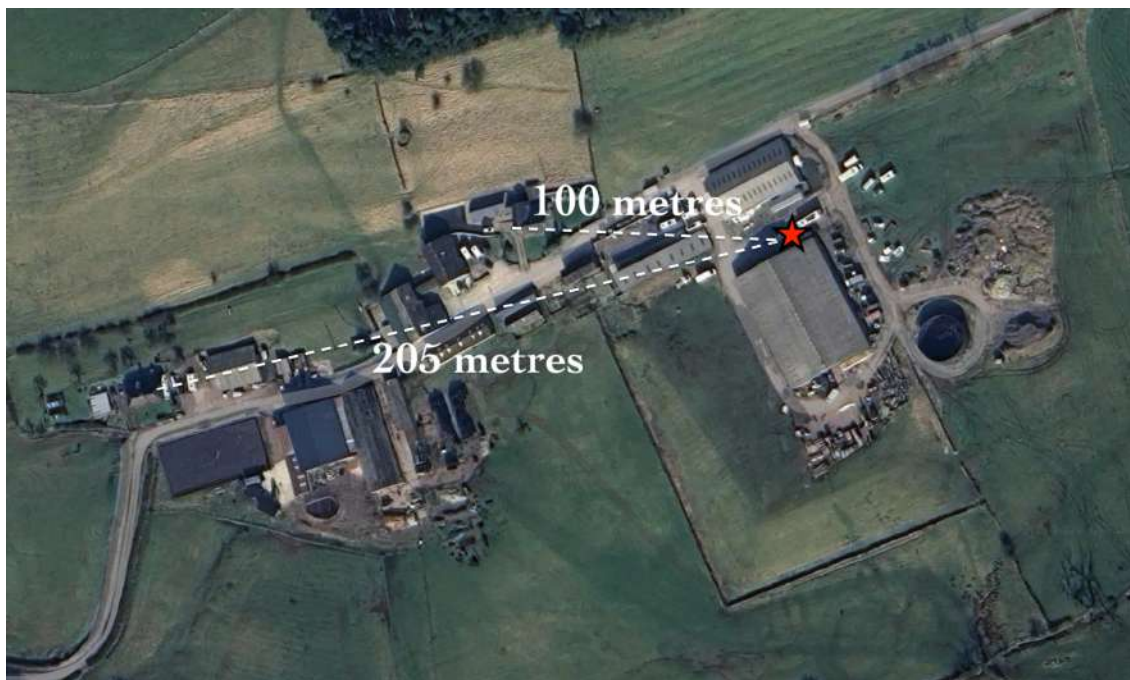
- 4.8 That viewpoint is seen in the context of the wider farmstead and is hardly offensive (as below).



4.9 Here we note the following extract from the Delegated Report that resulted in refusal of the previous application:

*'Lancashire County Council Public Rights of Way Team **raises no objection as the development will not cause a significant impact to bridleway BW0339020, recorded along the access to the proposed facility.***

4.10 The selected site is some distance from sensitive receptors. The closest of those is the landowner's / farmer's house, over 100 metres distance. The next closest dwellings are circa 205 metres distance, with no direct intervisibility and sizeable buildings in between.



4.11 We are advised that the prevailing wind conditions are towards are west to west-south-westerly, meaning any emissions would be carried away from residential receptors across open agricultural land.

- 4.12 Notwithstanding that, given the negligible extent of ‘smoke’, the overwhelming absence of odour arising from the facility and the total absence of hazardous emissions, it is evident that no material harm does or can arise from such a small facility in this location. That absence of harm – arising from its location – is a further locational benefit.
- 4.13 Given the wide geographical area serviced by the business – ie the entirety of Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and beyond (such as parts of Cheshire, Cumbria and West Yorkshire), there is no one obvious or ‘ideal’ site to locate the facility. The extent of traffic / journey will be the same irrespective of where it is located, be that in Burnley (where the applicant has been advised by the landowner that he cannot install a flue); in central Liverpool, Manchester; or anywhere else in North West England.
- 4.14 Furthermore, it is important that the facility is located within reasonable distance of the Company’s headquarters in Burnley around 9 miles away, which is a perfectly serviceable distance. When deceased pets are collected, they are transported to the Burnley HQ for storage in a controlled cool area, and then transported to Sawley for cremation within 24 hours.
- 4.15 The selected location is also suitable in respect of its positive contribution to the diversification of the rural economy. Locating the facility in the rural area and within the context of a working farm has synergy with policies at local and national level that seek to diversify and strengthen the rural economy.
- 4.16 Whilst the commentary was brief, it was explained in the previous application that the applicant in that case (ie the farmer) operates a long established agricultural enterprise that – like most such enterprises – faces ongoing financial pressures. It was explained that those challenges stem in part from the phased reduction of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) support, rising production costs, and heightened market volatility.

4.17 The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) has long acted as a key safety net for farmers by supplementing core agricultural income, with payments historically making up a significant proportion of total farm business income and helping many enterprises remain viable while market returns fluctuate. BPS payments were phased out as part of the agricultural transition and replaced by delinked payments and other support schemes, but these are being progressively reduced each year, with the last full BPS year in 2023 and direct support expected to diminish further through to 2027 and beyond.

4.18 This shift has led to reduced and less predictable direct income for farms, undermining cash flow planning and placing heightened emphasis on the need to generate income from non-traditional activities on the holding. The website link below provides a clear explanation.

<https://www.edwinthompson.co.uk/end-of-basic-payment-scheme-2026/>

4.19 This reduction in direct support coincides with broader and much publicised financial pressures in UK agriculture, including rising input costs and volatile commodity markets, contributing to a challenging economic environment in which many farms are struggling to generate profit from production alone. Recent national data and industry reports show significant declines in farm business income for major farm types, with a substantial proportion of farms making losses or very low net returns, and the relative importance of traditional subsidies such as BPS to overall profitability has declined sharply.

4.20 These trends are mirrored across England, reflecting a sector increasingly reliant on diversified activities to sustain farm businesses, with many farmers exploring alternative income streams to supplement core farming activity.

4.21 In this context, locating the proposed facility in the rural area and within a working farm environment not only aligns with national and local planning policy support for rural diversification and strengthening of the rural economy, but also represents a justified and innovative response to real economic pressures facing farming businesses.

4.22 This farmer in question has of course made other successful attempts to secure non-agricultural income streams. Most notably is the annual ‘Beatherder’ event - a boutique music and arts festival hosted at the farm. The event makes use of existing fields and infrastructure on a temporary basis, with the site reverting fully to agricultural use once the event has concluded.

<https://beatherder.co.uk/#content>

4.23 This planning application is a further effort to diversify income streams, and the additional revenue (ie rental payments) will play an important role in sustaining the core agricultural operation and in turn ensuring longevity of the farm business.

4.24 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy places importance on supporting and diversifying the rural economy, recognising that rural areas must adapt beyond traditional agricultural activity to remain sustainable. For example, within the economic strategy, the Core Strategy states that:

“developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies ... will be supported in principle”.

4.25 That establishes a positive policy framework for proposals that introduce new or expanded rural enterprises, including diversification projects that provide additional income streams, employment opportunities and economic resilience for farms and rural communities.

4.26 This is also reflected in NPPF, which provides clear and explicit support for the diversification of the rural economy. Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

“the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas”

4.27 And, in particular, should support:

“the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”

4.28 NPPF also recognises that rural diversification will not always be accommodated within existing settlements. Paragraph 89 confirms that local planning authorities should acknowledge that sites to meet business and community needs in rural areas:

“may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements”.

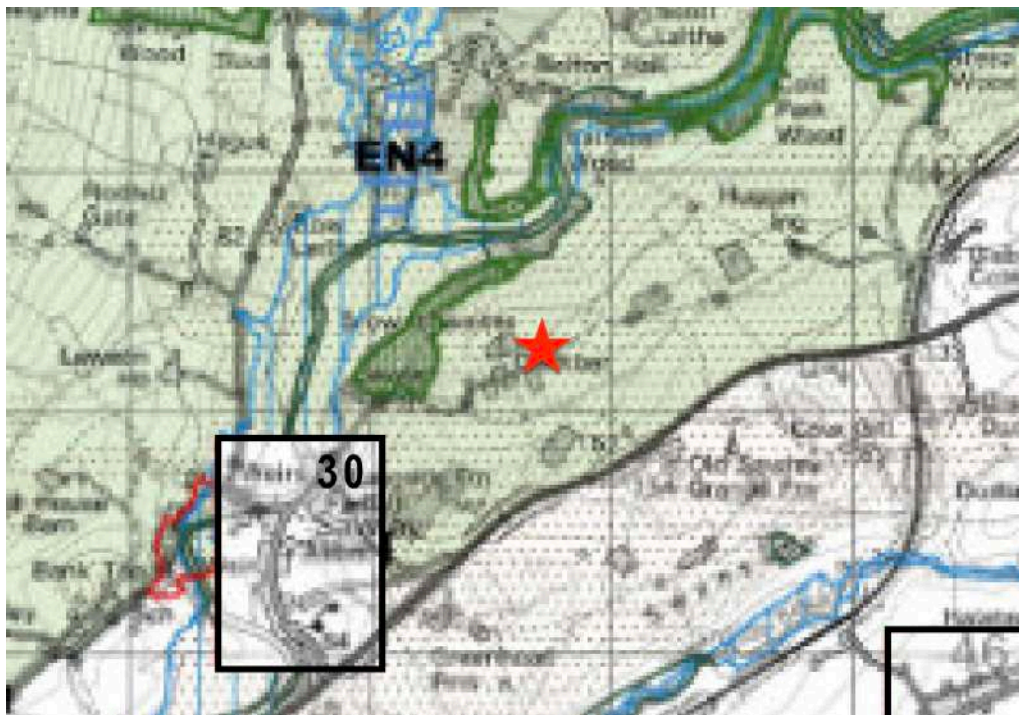
4.29 That reflects the practical realities of rural enterprise and farm-based diversification, which – by definition – are not located inside settlements and will always be in the countryside.

4.30 Taken together, the NPPF and the development plan demonstrate a consistent policy position that positively encourages appropriate, innovative forms of rural diversification as a means of supporting farm viability and strengthening the rural economy.

4.31 This is a further reason why locating this proposal on this site is appropriate.

5.0 Consistency with the Development Plan

- 5.1 The Development Plan comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted December 2014).
- 5.2 The online Policies Map is poor resolution, but the extract below confirms that the site is located outside of any defined settlement area (the closest being Sawley) and as such it lies within the open countryside and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.



- 5.3 The following assessment against the provisions of the development plan is proportionate to the scale and details of the proposal, and focuses on those policies cited to be specifically breached in the refusal notice of the previous application. There is little purpose in dwelling on wider development plan policies, because we agree with the LPA that there is no conflict with those.

- 5.4 The assessment below takes the lead of the previous reasons for refusal and the policies cited.

Reason for Refusal 1

The application fails to sufficiently evidence how the development is a genuine farm diversification scheme and the development is not considered to constitute a small-scale use that is appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated, contrary to Key Statement EC1 and Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

- 5.5 That Reason alleges conflict with one 'Key Statement' and one policy of the development plan.

- 5.6 **Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development** sets out the strategic approach to employment development across the borough and makes clear that, whilst the main settlements are the preferred locations for larger-scale employment growth:

“developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies ... will be supported in principle”.

- 5.7 That wording provides explicit and unambiguous policy support for appropriately scaled economic activity within rural areas where it contributes to the resilience and viability of agricultural enterprises.

- 5.8 This proposal clearly accords with that support. It comprises a small, discrete building located within an established working farmstead, attached to a much larger existing agricultural portal-framed shed.

- 5.9 The use will generate a stable rental income that directly assists the ongoing viability of the farm business at a time when agricultural enterprises are facing increasing financial pressures, including (as explained earlier) the withdrawal of Basic Payment Scheme support, rising production costs and market volatility. The development does not displace agricultural activity. Nor does it introduce a dominant, unrelated commercial use.

Rather, it represents modest and proportionate diversification enterprise, consistent with the clear intent of Key Statement EC1.

- 5.10 The previous refusal placed weight on a suggested absence of detailed information linking the proposal to the farm enterprise. This application seeks to address that concern by explaining the diversification rationale, the limited ‘*small scale*’ of the operation, and why this is a logical and appropriate site. It is unclear what further information might be expected. It is surely obvious that, at a time that the agricultural sector is struggling, any additional income that might be derived from diversification of the rural economy will assist in sustaining this agricultural enterprise.
- 5.11 The proposal introduces no public or customer access; employs only a single staff member directly at the facility; and generates negligible vehicle movements. When considered in the context of the scale and character of the wider farmstead, the development is demonstrably small scale, proportionate and supportive of the wider agricultural holding, fully consistent with the objectives of Key Statement EC1.
- 5.12 **Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations** governs development in the open countryside and allows for development outside defined settlement boundaries where ‘*at least one*’ specific criteria is met.
- 5.13 Criterion 2 is where ‘*the development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture*’. We have explained the importance of this project to the agricultural unit / farmer in question, deriving additional income (in terms of rental payments) at a very difficult economic time for the agricultural industry. The proposal therefore accords with that policy criteria.
- 5.14 Furthermore, criterion 5 supports:
- “small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated”.*

- 5.15 We suggest that the proposal also satisfies this criterion. The building is clearly '*small-scale*' with a footprint of just 40.7 sqm. It is low in intensity. And its operation is inherently quiet and discrete. It provides a direct '*local*' benefit by supporting the diversification and long-term sustainability of a working farm, thereby contributing to the rural economy in a manner expressly encouraged by the Core Strategy.
- 5.16 The suggestion in the previous refusal that the use would be more appropriate in an industrial estate fails to reflect both policy and operational reality. Rural diversification uses are, by definition, intended to operate in rural locations, and national and local policy recognises that such uses will need to be located outside settlement boundaries.
- 5.17 Furthermore, the operational characteristics of the proposal reinforce its suitability to a rural setting. There is no customer access to the site; no on-site waste storage; minimal staff presence; and extremely low traffic generation. The cremation equipment is fully licensed and regulated by DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, ensuring (in spite of initial '*teething*' issues now fully resolved) that it operates in a clean, controlled and environmentally responsible manner. In this context, the use cannot reasonably be characterised as inappropriate to the rural area.
- 5.18 When assessed against both the wording and purpose of Policy DMG2, the proposal constitutes a small-scale rural use delivering a clear and tangible benefit, and therefore complies with the policy.
- 5.19 Furthermore, when considering demonstration of *local need or benefit*, it is worth highlighting the high level of pet ownership across the country. Recent data show that around half of UK adults currently own a pet, with dogs and cats being the most common companion animals. In 2024, approximately 51% of UK adults reported owning a pet of some type, reflecting a substantial population of animals that may require responsible end-of-life services.

- 5.20 Pet ownership significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first year of the pandemic an estimated 3.2 million households in the UK acquired a pet, illustrating a marked rise in pet ownership associated with lockdowns and changes in work and lifestyle patterns.
- 5.21 In England and the wider UK, millions of companion animals die each year through natural causes, age-related conditions, accidents or euthanasia. While precise up-to-date annual mortality figures for all domestic pets are not routinely published, historical estimates have placed the number of cat and dog deaths in the UK in the order of millions annually. Many of these animals will have been euthanised at the end of life, and all require disposal in a responsible and dignified way.
- 5.22 There is accordingly a demonstrable need for facilities that provide respectful, professional end-of-life care for companion animals. The type of service offered by the applicant responds directly to this ongoing need in the community, supporting owners who wish to ensure that their pets are treated with dignity at the end of life and that their remains are managed appropriately.
- 5.23 The impact of deceased pets on their owners' mental health cannot be underestimated. Most pet owners regard their pets as family members who provide years of pleasure, companionship and emotional support, and the loss of a pet is therefore experienced as a genuine bereavement. For many people, particularly those living alone, older residents or individuals with limited social networks, pets play a central role in daily life and emotional wellbeing.
- 5.24 The death of a companion animal can lead to significant feelings of grief, anxiety and distress, and in some cases can have a lasting impact on mental health. The availability of compassionate, respectful end-of-life services can play an important role in helping owners process their loss, offering reassurance that their pet has been treated with dignity and care. Services that acknowledge the emotional significance of pet loss therefore provide a clear social and wellbeing benefit, supporting owners at a vulnerable time and helping them to achieve a sense of closure.

- 5.25 Customer feedback relating to the services provided by Beloved Pets consistently highlights the care, respect and professionalism shown by the applicant at a very difficult time for pet owners. Reviews describe a service delivered with sensitivity and compassion, with clear communication throughout each stage of the process. Customers have commented that arrangements were fully explained, handled gently and carried out in a respectful manner from first contact through to the return of their pet.
- 5.26 Several reviewers have expressed gratitude for the reassurance they felt, noting that the staff treated their pets with dignity and kindness and provided comfort during moments of loss. Feedback also reflects appreciation for the thoughtful touches and keepsakes provided, which customers describe as meaningful and comforting. Those reviews demonstrate trust in the service and a strong sense that their pets were cared for properly and respectfully.
- 5.27 The comments show that customers value the service not only for its practical support, but for the compassion and understanding shown throughout. Reviewers frequently recommend the service to others, describing it as supportive, caring and reliable, and expressing thanks for the way their experience was handled during an emotionally challenging time.
- 5.28 Until around 2013, the veterinary sector in the UK was predominantly made up of independently owned local practices, with estimates suggesting that approximately 90% of practices were small, standalone businesses. Since that time, the structure of the industry has changed significantly. It is now widely reported that around 60% of veterinary practices are owned by a small number of large corporate groups, following extensive consolidation and acquisition of traditional local practices.
- 5.29 This shift towards corporatisation has been accompanied by well publicised concerns regarding rising costs, reduced choice for consumers and the standardisation of services. There have also been allegations of anti-competitive behaviour and price inflation within the sector, which have attracted national media attention. One practical consequence of this change is that many veterinary practices no longer routinely offer home visits for euthanasia or provide collection services for deceased pets.
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- 5.30 As a result, pet owners are often required to transport their animals to veterinary premises, which can present significant practical and emotional difficulties. This is particularly challenging when dealing with very ill, elderly or incapacitated animals. In addition, a substantial proportion of pet owners are elderly themselves and may struggle to lift or carry larger animals. Others may not have access to private transport, and the use of public transport, where available, is clearly inappropriate and distressing when travelling with a seriously unwell animal or a deceased pet.
- 5.31 The applicant has identified a clear gap in the market and an unmet local need arising from these changes within the veterinary sector. The service offered focuses on providing a bespoke, highly personal and sensitive alternative, tailored to the needs of pet owners at a vulnerable time. Approximately 95% of the applicant's business involves home visits, enabling animals to remain in familiar surroundings and removing the practical and emotional burden associated with transporting sick or deceased pets. This approach delivers a tangible welfare and wellbeing benefit for both animals and their owners.
- 5.32 The nearest dedicated pet crematorium facility to the applicant's core operating area (east Lancashire) is Leyland Pet Crematorium & Cemetery, located on Wigan Road, Leyland (PR25 5DA). This facility is well located to serve west Lancashire and neighbouring areas, including Leyland, Chorley and Preston, and accordingly provides an appropriate level of coverage for those parts of the county.
- 5.33 By contrast, east Lancashire is not well served by dedicated pet cremation facilities. Aside from the applicant's service, there is no comparably located pet crematorium within east Lancashire itself, despite the area comprising a substantial population across towns such as Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn. For many residents in these areas, travel to Leyland involves a lengthy journey across the county, which is particularly impractical at a time of bereavement or when dealing with a deceased animal.

- 5.34 Further east and south, there are pet cremation facilities located within Greater Manchester, including providers based in Manchester, Bury, Sale, Stockport and Worsley. While these facilities are suitable for their local catchments, they are not well positioned to serve east Lancashire as a primary market.
- 5.35 In practical terms, the existence of facilities in west Lancashire and Greater Manchester does not adequately meet the needs of east Lancashire residents. The applicant's business therefore addresses a clear geographic gap in provision, offering a locally focused, accessible service tailored to an area that is otherwise underserved. This is particularly relevant given the applicant's emphasis on home visits and personal support, which reduces the need for distressed owners to undertake long or difficult journeys at a vulnerable time.
- 5.36 Taken as a whole, the evidence clearly demonstrates that a local need and benefit is established in this case. The policies relied upon do not define "*local*" in narrow or fixed geographic terms, and it is reasonable to interpret locality flexibly having regard to the nature of the use and the need it serves. Depending on the circumstances and context, "*local*" may refer to the immediate vicinity of Sawley, to this part of the Ribble Valley, or to the borough as a whole. Equally, given the specialist and sensitive nature of the service, and the absence of comparable provision across east Lancashire, it is entirely reasonable to regard that wider area as the relevant "*local*" catchment.
- 5.37 The proposal responds to a demonstrable and growing demand arising from high levels of pet ownership, increased end-of-life need, changes in veterinary practice and a clear geographic gap in provision. It delivers a tangible "*local*" benefit by supporting rural diversification, helping to sustain an agricultural enterprise, and providing an accessible, compassionate service to an underserved population. When assessed in the round, the proposal plainly satisfies the requirement of Policy DMG2 for a small-scale rural use where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated, and accordingly complies with the development plan when read as a whole.

Reason for Refusal 2

The development is not considered to be a sustainable use due to the involvement of travelling between two sites, with the application site being located in the rural location of Sawley, which is not considered to be a sustainable location and does not minimise the need to travel, whereby the business relies on the use of private motor vehicle use. No information has been submitted to demonstrate why the businesses cannot be operated from one premises or in a more sustainable location closer to the applicant's other site, contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

- 5.20 **Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations** seeks to ensure that new development is located so as to minimise the need to travel, particularly by private car, and encourages access by more sustainable modes where possible. However, this policy must be applied proportionately and in a manner that reflects the nature, scale and operational characteristics of the proposal.
- 5.21 In this case, the proposal is a small scale use with no public or customer access; a single employee; and extremely limited vehicle movements. The business model involves the collection of deceased pets from homes or veterinary practices across a wide regional catchment, with a very small number of daily journeys between the applicant's Burnley headquarters and the application site. These movements require use of the company van, and it is an obvious point that dead animals can hardly be transported using sustainable transport modes – ie it would be impossible and entirely inappropriate to transport deceased pets by foot, cycle, bus or train. That said, even if the facility was to be promoted in Manchester or Liverpool City Centre with an array of good quality sustainable transport options, it would not be possible to use those. It will always involve one company operative driving the company van, so in that context it is entirely irrelevant that the site might not be well blessed with sustainable transport options.

- 5.22 Those very limited travel movements are an inherent and unavoidable characteristic of the service provided and would occur irrespective of the precise location of the cremation facility. Relocating the facility to an alternative location would not reduce travel distances or vehicle movements, given the geographically dispersed nature of the customer base.
- 5.23 Furthermore, the suggestion that the use should be located in a more “sustainable” location closer to the Burnley site does not reflect practical or planning realities. The applicant has demonstrated that the Burnley premises cannot accommodate a cremation facility due to landlord restrictions, and as such there is no reasonable prospect of consolidating all operations onto a single site. In these circumstances, the policy requirement to “minimise” travel cannot be interpreted as requiring an impossible or impractical alternative, particularly where the scale of travel involved is so very modest and tightly controlled.
- 5.24 Given the very limited scale of activity, the absence of public / customer trips to the site, and the negligible number of vehicle movements, the proposal does not give rise to unsustainable travel patterns when assessed in a proportionate manner. The development therefore accords with the intent of Key Statement DMI2.
- 5.25 **Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility** sets out a range of considerations primarily aimed at developments that generate significant travel demand or involve regular movements by employees, customers or the public. Many of the criteria within the policy relate to major generators of travel, town centre uses, public transport accessibility, and developments intended to reduce reliance on the private car for regular everyday journeys.
- 5.26 The proposal does not fall within those categories. It is not a major generator of travel demand, does not attract visitors, and does not involve routine daily trips by multiple employees. Instead, it involves a single staff member and a small number of operational vehicle movements that are already accounted for within the existing business model. The Local Highway Authority has confirmed that these movements would have a

negligible impact on highway safety, capacity and amenity, and has raised no objection to the proposal.

- 5.27 While the site is in a rural location with limited access to public transport, this is neither unusual nor inappropriate for a small-scale rural diversification use. The policy clearly does not impose an absolute requirement for rural developments to be accessible by non-car modes where that is unrealistic or disproportionate. That would be counter intuitive when promoting the diversification of the rural area, bearing in mind that many parts of the rural area are simply not well served by sustainable transport options. Crucially, no customers will ever visit the site, and therefore there is no need or demand for public transport access, pedestrian connectivity or cycling infrastructure. Adequate on-site parking and servicing provision (for a single company van) is available, fully satisfying the relevant requirements of Policy DMG3.
- 5.28 The previous refusal reason also places weight on the existence of travel between two sites. However, the policy does not prohibit multi-site operations, nor does it require businesses to operate from a single premises where this is not feasible. In this case, the separation of functions between the Burnley headquarters and the rural cremation facility is operationally necessary and does not result in excessive or unreasonable travel demand.
- 5.29 When applied proportionately and in the context of the scale and nature of the development, the proposal does not conflict with either Key Statement DMI2 or Policy DMG3. The development generates minimal vehicle movements, involves no public / customer access, has already been accepted by the Highway Authority as having negligible transport impacts, and reflects the operational realities of a specialist rural diversification use. The second reason for refusal is therefore not supported by the development plan and should be set aside.

Reason for Refusal 3

The application fails to demonstrate that the development can be appropriately mitigated to avoid future incidents of adverse smoke and odour emissions from the development. Therefore the development fails to protect the amenities of nearby surrounding residential properties from adverse odour and smoke pollution, contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

- 5.30 **Policy DMG1 – General Considerations (Amenity and Air Quality)** requires that development must not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area and must consider air quality, mitigating adverse impacts where possible. The policy does not seek the elimination of all theoretical risk, but requires evidence that impacts can be adequately controlled and that the development will not give rise to material harm.
- 5.31 Both this application and the previous application is/was supported by a detailed and independent Odour Assessment prepared by Martin Environmental Solutions Ltd). The purpose of the updated assessment was to consider the potential for odour impacts arising from the operation of the proposed pet crematorium and to identify whether mitigation was required to ensure acceptability in planning terms.
- 5.32 The assessment confirms that the development consists of two small animal cremators with a combined capacity of less than 50kg/hour. As such, the equipment is classified by DEFRA as small cremators with limited environmental impact and is not subject to the Local Air Pollution Prevention and Control regime. The cremators operate at temperatures in excess of 850°C, a level specifically identified within Defra and Environmental Permitting guidance as sufficient to destroy volatile organic compounds and odour-causing constituents. This operational characteristic represents primary mitigation by design.

- 5.33 The Odour Assessment follows recognised best practice, including reference to the Institute of Air Quality Management guidance and application of the FIDOL factors (frequency, intensity, duration, offensiveness and location). It identifies that, for odour to cause harm, there must be a source, a pathway and a sensitive receptor. While the source is acknowledged, the assessment concludes that the pathway and receptor relationship is weak due to a combination of high combustion temperatures, effective dispersion, prevailing wind direction and substantial separation distances.
- 5.34 The site is located at the eastern edge of the farm complex, with agricultural buildings surrounding it and open farmland beyond. The nearest receptor is the site owner's dwelling at approximately 120 metres, located upwind of the cremators, with the next nearest third-party residential properties at approximately 240 metres. The Odour Assessment confirms that prevailing winds are west to west-south-westerly, meaning any emissions would be carried away from residential receptors across open agricultural land.
- 5.35 The assessment further recognises that the surrounding area already contains a number of established agricultural odour sources, including slurry storage, slurry spreading, livestock grazing and a nearby slaughterhouse. Against this baseline, the report concludes that the proposed crematorium would be unlikely to produce any discernible odour and, even if emissions were to occur, they would be diluted to a negligible level before reaching any sensitive receptors at some distance and away from prevailing wind conditions.
- 5.36 It seems that the Local Planning Authority's concern arises primarily from historic incidents involving dark smoke emissions during early operation. Those incidents have previously been acknowledged by the applicant, resulting from a specific 'teething problem' operational issue that has since been rectified. The Odour Assessment has been undertaken to assess normal, compliant operation of the facility, not one or two early 'one off' abnormal or fault conditions. Importantly, there is no evidence of ongoing or persistent odour or smoke emissions, and the regulatory licensing of the equipment by

DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency confirms that the facility is perfectly capable of operating in a compliant manner.

- 5.37 In addition, this application introduces a further layer of mitigation through the installation of a cowl above the chimney stack. As explained elsewhere in this Statement, the cowl stabilises airflow, prevents downdraughts and ensures consistent upward dispersion of exhaust gases, thereby reducing the risk of incomplete combustion or abnormal discharge conditions. This represents a targeted and proportionate response to the concerns raised and directly improves operational control.
- 5.38 Policy DMG1 requires that impacts are mitigated where possible. In this case, mitigation is secured through a combination of modern regulated equipment, high combustion temperatures, considerable separation distances, prevailing wind direction, absence of public / customer access, regulatory oversight and the physical improvement to the flue system through the fitting of a modest cowl. The Odour Assessment concludes unequivocally that the proposal *“will not produce any odours that will have the potential to result in a significant adverse impact”* and that nearby residential receptors will not be affected.
- 5.39 When properly informed by the Odour Assessment prepared by Martin Environmental Solutions Ltd, there is no evidential basis to conclude that the development cannot be adequately mitigated or that it would give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity. The concerns identified in the refusal relate to one off historic and isolated incidents rather than the inherent characteristics of the development or its ongoing operation. With the additional mitigation now proposed, the development fully complies with the amenity and air quality requirements of Policy DMG1. The third reason for refusal is therefore not supported by the evidence or the development plan.

Reason for Refusal 4

The proposed development, specifically the erection of an industrial flue/chimney, is considered to introduce an alien feature which is not appropriate to the agricultural character of the surrounding landscape, failing to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, contrary to the requirements of Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF.

- 5.40 **Key Statement EN2 – Landscape and Character (Forest of Bowland National Landscape)** seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, requiring development to be in keeping with the character of the area, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials. It does not impose a blanket prohibition on development, but requires a balanced assessment of scale, siting, context and visual effect.
- 5.41 The proposal complies with these objectives. The crematorium building is a small, single-storey portal-framed structure physically attached to an existing large agricultural shed within the confines of an established farmstead. The immediate context of the site is therefore not beautiful, open, undeveloped countryside, but rather a built up working agricultural complex characterised by large utilitarian farm buildings / sheds and associated hardstanding infrastructure. Within this context, the modest addition and its flue are read as part of the wider farmstead grouping rather than as an isolated or prominent feature within the landscape.
- 5.42 The flue (with cowl) is of limited height, quite slender profile and functional appearance, consistent with other more substantial and imposing agricultural features in this farm setting, and in line with common agricultural features such as grain vents, silos, extractor stacks and ventilation pipes. Its purpose is directly related to the safe and efficient operation of the building it serves, and it does not introduce a scale, mass or visual dominance that would materially alter the character of the landscape.

- 5.43 **Policy DMG1 – General Considerations (Design and Landscape Impact)** requires development to be sympathetic to existing land uses and to have particular regard to visual appearance and impact on landscape character. In this instance, the building materials and form reflect those of surrounding agricultural structures, and the flue is hardly excessive and is visually subordinate to the adjacent, significantly larger farm shed it sits against.
- 5.44 While the flue has been described as “industrial” in character, that description must be considered in context. Modern agricultural landscapes frequently contain sizeable functional, quasi-industrial structures whose appearance is driven by operational necessity rather than domestic design. The policy does not require rural development to replicate traditional vernacular forms where that would be inappropriate or impractical, particularly for specialist uses. The test is whether the development causes material harm to visual amenity, not whether it is entirely invisible or stylistically traditional.
- 5.45 Views of the flue are limited and mainly at distance. Wider public vantage points are constrained by distance, intervening buildings and landform, and the closest public right of way experiences only fleeting, filtered views of the structure within the context of the farmstead as a whole. In these circumstances, any visual change is localised and modest, and does not undermine the overall character or scenic quality of the National Landscape.
- 5.46 **Policy DMG2 – Development in the Open Countryside** allows for appropriate development in the open countryside where it meets specified criteria and is compatible with its rural setting. As set out under our comments on Reason for Refusal 1, the development constitutes a small-scale, appropriate rural use linked to diversification of a working farm. The flue is an integral and necessary component of that use and cannot reasonably be separated from the building without compromising its function.
- 5.47 The policy does not preclude functional features where they are proportionate and appropriately sited. In this case, the flue is located within an existing cluster of agricultural buildings and does not extend development into open or visually sensitive

parts of the landscape. Its presence does not erode countryside character or lead to encroachment beyond the established farm envelope.

- 5.48 When assessed against Key Statement EN2, Policies DMG1 and DMG2, the proposed flue does not constitute an *'alien'* or inappropriate feature in landscape terms. It is a modest, functional element of a small building located within an established agricultural complex, with limited visibility and no material impact on the wider landscape or public views. The proposal therefore protects and conserves the character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and complies with the development plan and national policy. The fourth reason for refusal is not substantiated and should be set aside.

6.0 Consistency with the NPPF and NPPG

6.1 The only references to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) cited in the reasons for refusal of the previous application are paragraphs 135(c) and 189 (in respect of the fourth reason for refusal). These are addressed below, but we first confirm our agreement with the Local Planning Authority that the proposal does not conflict with any other provisions of the NPPF.

NPPF Paragraph 135(c)

6.2 Paragraph 135(c) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are *“sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”*.

6.3 There is no conflict with this paragraph. As set out earlier in this Statement, the development comprises a small, purpose-built structure attached to an existing large agricultural shed within an established working farmstead. The form, scale and materials of the building reflect the utilitarian agricultural character of its immediate surroundings. The flue/chimney is a modest, functional element necessary for the operation of the use and is visually subordinate to the host building and the wider group of farm buildings. It does not introduce scale, massing or visual prominence that would be uncharacteristic of a modern agricultural setting.

6.4 Views of the flue are limited and localised, and where it is visible, it is read in the context of the wider farmstead rather than as an isolated or intrusive feature in the landscape. The proposal therefore responds positively to its setting and is sympathetic to local character, fully consistent with paragraph 135(c).

NPPF Paragraph 189

- 6.5 Paragraph 189 states that “*great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*”, now referred to as National Landscapes.
- 6.6 This requirement has been fully respected. The proposal is modest in scale, closely related to existing built form, and does not extend development into open or visually sensitive parts of the countryside. The immediate site context is a working farmstead containing large portal-framed buildings and associated infrastructure, not an undeveloped or scenic landscape. The flue does not intrude into important skylines, views or panoramas, nor does it undermine the special qualities of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.
- 6.7 Importantly, paragraph 189 does not preclude development within National Landscapes; rather, it requires careful consideration of landscape impact and the avoidance of harm. In this case, there is no material harm to landscape character or scenic beauty. The development conserves the character of the area and does not conflict with the objectives of paragraph 189.

Wider Compliance with the NPPF and NPPG

- 6.8 Beyond paragraphs 135(c) and 189, the proposal aligns positively with the wider objectives of the NPPF and the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The NPPF supports the sustainable growth and diversification of rural businesses, recognising that rural areas must adapt and innovate to remain economically viable. The proposal represents a small-scale, low-intensity diversification use that supports the long-term viability of a working farm, consistent with national policy objectives for a prosperous rural economy.

- 6.9 The NPPF also seeks to prevent development from giving rise to unacceptable impacts on residential amenity or environmental quality. As demonstrated by the independently prepared Odour Assessment and the regulatory controls applied through DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the use can operate without adverse impacts from smoke or odour. The proposal therefore accords with national policy requirements relating to pollution, health and amenity.
- 6.10 The NPPG reinforces the need for proportionate decision-making, recognising that the assessment of impacts should reflect the nature and scale of development. In this case, the proposal involves no public / customer access, negligible traffic movements, a single employee using the company van, and tightly regulated operations. The planning issues raised have been addressed through evidence-based assessment and targeted mitigation, including the introduction of a cowl to improve flue performance.
- 6.11 Taken as a whole, the proposal is consistent with the NPPF and NPPG. It represents sustainable rural development, causes no material harm to landscape character or residential amenity, and supports the resilience of a rural enterprise. There is therefore no national policy basis on which planning permission should be withheld.

7.0 Overall Balance and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Section 73A application has been submitted as a constructive and transparent response to the refusal of the previous application, with the express purpose of addressing each of the reasons for refusal through additional evidence, clarification and targeted mitigation. When assessed against the development plan as a whole, and having regard to all other material considerations, the proposal is acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.2 The development represents a small-scale, low-intensity form of rural diversification located within an established working farmstead. It accords with Key Statement EC1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and with national planning policy which actively supports the diversification of rural businesses as a means of sustaining agricultural enterprises. The scale, nature and operation of the use are modest and proportionate, generate minimal vehicle movements, involve no public access, and provide a tangible economic benefit to the farm, helping to secure its long-term viability in a challenging agricultural context.
- 7.3 Concerns previously raised in relation to sustainability and transport have been addressed. The proposal generates negligible traffic, has been accepted by the Local Highway Authority as having no material impact on highway safety or capacity, and reflects the operational realities of a specialist service with a very wide catchment. When applied proportionately, the objectives of Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 are met.
- 7.4 Residential amenity considerations have been carefully examined and are informed by a detailed and updated Odour Assessment prepared by Martin Environmental Solutions Ltd. That assessment confirms that the development will not give rise to adverse odour or smoke impacts, having regard to operating temperatures, separation distances, prevailing wind direction and regulatory controls. The introduction of a cowl to the flue represents a further improvement to operational performance and mitigation, directly addressing issues raised previously. There is no evidence of ongoing or inherent amenity harm, and the proposal complies with Policy DMG1.

- 7.5 In landscape terms, the development causes no material harm to the character or appearance of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The building and flue are very modest, functionally necessary elements located within a utilitarian farm setting, with limited visibility and no intrusion into sensitive views or open countryside. The proposal conserves landscape character and is consistent with Key Statement EN2, Policies DMG1 and DMG2, and paragraphs 135(c) and 189 of the NPPF.
- 7.6 Taken together, the benefits of the proposal are clear, while any perceived impacts are limited, localised and capable of effective mitigation. There is no conflict with the development plan when read as a whole, nor with national planning policy. In the overall planning balance, the proposal represents sustainable development and planning permission should therefore be granted.

Appendix 1

Confirmation from the applicant's Burnley landlord explaining why he will not permit the installation of a flue at the Company's HQ

Mark Slater

From: Steve Ackers <s.ackers@mrituk.com>
Sent: 10 October 2024 11:49
To: Mark Slater
Subject: Application for crematorium

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your recent enquiry regarding the proposed installation of a crematorium at Unit 1 Magnesium Court, Burnley.

After reviewing the request in detail, I must confirm that I am unable to grant approval for this installation. Unit 1 is held on a long-term lease and is currently a shared premises, which means any significant structural or operational changes must take into account the rights, business activities, and comfort of the existing tenant. The introduction of a crematorium would fundamentally alter the nature and use of the unit, and would likely cause disruption and concerns for the other occupier—something I am not prepared to impose on them.

Additionally, the unit contains a mezzanine floor, which forms part of the building's structure and overall value. The proposed installation would require the removal or alteration of this mezzanine. I cannot agree to this, as it would:

- Devalue the building,
- Create substantial reinstatement issues, and
- Cause major disruption to the existing tenant who relies on the current layout.
-

For these reasons, I am unable to permit the installation of a crematorium within Unit 1.

I appreciate your understanding and am happy to discuss alternative options should you wish to explore other types of occupancy or different units that may be more suitable.

Kind regards,
Stephen Ackers

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

Appendix 2

Certification from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

eDepartment for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Welsh Government



Approval Number: U1421613/INC

Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption

The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013*

Final Approval of Incineration Plant

1. In accordance with Regulation 14 of The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013 and Article 24 of (EC) No. 1069/2009, the Secretary of State approves:

Name of Operator	Beloved Pets Limited
Address of approved premises	Dockber Laithe Farm Sawley Clitheroe Lancashire Postcode BB7 4LH

to operate a low capacity incinerator (no more than 50kg/hr), make and model of incinerator - MSC 2I/C, make and model of burner: Riello RL34,G20 & G10, on the premises to incinerate domestic pets.

- The incinerator shall be located at the address above (and completely separate from livestock, feed and bedding in the case of on farm incinerators).
- The incinerator must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- The incinerator must be subject to an annual service by the manufacturer or an independent service engineer who should be able to confirm that the incinerator is still capable of meeting the requirements of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 142/2011.
- Each time the incinerator is used, a record must be made of the date, quantity and description of animal by-products incinerated. The temperature in the secondary chamber must be recorded either automatically or manually every 2 hours for at least 10% of burn cycles.
- This approval may be suspended or revoked in the event of non-compliance with the above Regulations.

Signature		Date	13/10/2025
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	ALBA ALONSO-GARCIA		

A person authorised in that behalf by the Secretary of State

APHA Address: ABP Team APHA Customer Service Centre County Hall Spetchley Road Worcester WR5 2NP
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Notes

1. All the conditions of The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013/The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 and Commission Regulation (EU) No. 142/2011 must be complied with.
2. Changes to the ownership, address or operation of an approved animal by-product premises must be notified to APHA at the above address.
3. The operator must take all necessary steps to ensure that:
 - animal by-products are handled and stored safely and incinerated without undue delay in such a way that they are reduced to dry ash
 - the dry ash is not removed from the combustion chamber unless combustion is complete
 - intermediate storage and transport of the dry ash takes place in a closed container to prevent dispersal in the environment
 - on farm pig/poultry carcase incinerators - the dry ash is disposed of in accordance with the relevant exemption registered with the environmental regulator:
 - or otherwise the dry ash is disposed of to a landfill with an appropriate environmental permit, or as directed by the environmental regulator
 - **and/or** in the case of individual carcase cremations, the ash may be returned to the animal owners.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

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