

22nd January 2026

Planning
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE – LAND AT WOONE LANE, CLITHEROE

Please find enclosed a planning application for permission in principle in respect of proposed residential development on land at Woone Lane, Clitheroe. The application is submitted on behalf of Beck Homes (UK) Ltd. In this letter we provide the background to the proposed development and demonstrate how such development is acceptable in principle.

Background and Planning History

The application site comprises approximately 0.49 ha of land to the east of Woone Lane, situated between existing residential development and the Primrose Lodge Nature Reserve. It was previously part of the complex of industrial buildings and an associated reservoir forming part of Primrose Mill but is now vacant scrubland to the east of garaging and other outbuildings that are situated to the rear of residential properties at 59-97 Woone Lane.

Planning permission was granted in 2012 for residential development of the site, adjoining land adjacent to no. 97 Woone Lane and land to the south-west of Primrose Village Phase 1 (ref. 3/2011/1064). This was to include 32 new dwellings on the 'Mearley Croft' site (of which the current site formed part) but this part of the permitted scheme was never implemented. A separate planning permission was granted in 2016 for the development of nine dwellings on land adjacent to Woone Lane (ref. 3/2015/0649). This scheme, as varied by planning permission ref. 3/2018/0535, has now been implemented and is occupied

It is noted that an application for pre-application advice in respect of residential development of the application site was made in 2024. The Council's previous advice is considered further below. We also note that the applicant discussed the scope of this current application with the Council's Head of Development Management and Building Control in early January 2026.

Proposed Development

This application seeks permission in principle for the residential development of the application site. We include as part of the application an indicative layout (drawing no. 26-139-P02) to show how such development might be delivered at the site. This indicative plan shows a low-density scheme of up to 9 dwellings with associated parking, external amenity space and landscaping. The scheme utilises the existing vehicle access and retained roadway from the earlier residential development at land adjacent to 97 Woone Lane.

This application for permission in principle is made pursuant to s58A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017. The scope of an application for permission in principle is limited to the issues of location, land use and amount of development. Planning Practice Guidance confirms that other matters should be considered at the subsequent technical details stage.

Relevant Planning Policy

The Ribble Valley Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and the following 'Key Statements' and policies will be relevant to the current application:

- Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) – states that the majority of new housing development will be concentrated within a strategic site to the south of Clitheroe and within the three principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. It goes on to say that the scale of planned housing growth will be managed to reflect existing population size, the availability of, or the opportunity to provide, facilities to serve the development and extent to which development can be accommodated within the local area.
- Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations) – requires development to accord with the development strategy and states that development proposals in the principal settlements should consolidate, expand or round-off existing development so that it is closely related to the main built-up areas.

The development plan for Ribble Valley also comprises the Housing and Economic Development DPD (2019) which identifies allocated sites for housing and other uses. The application site is not subject to any site-specific allocations.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of December 2024 contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11. For decision-making this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or, where there are no relevant policies (or those policies are out-of-date), granting permission unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole, having particular regard to key policies that include directing development to sustainable locations and making effective use of land.

Section 5 of the NPPF addresses 'Delivering a sufficient supply of homes'. Paragraph 73 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for small and medium enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes and are often built out relatively quickly. Paragraph 73 goes on to set out measures that local planning authorities should take to promote the development of a good mix of sites including supporting the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions and 'giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes'.

Principle of the Proposed Development

As noted above, the matters relevant to the determination of an application for permission in principle relate to the location, land use and amount of the proposed development.

Location

The application site is located within the built-up area of Clitheroe, a short distance to the south of the town centre with excellent access to local services and facilities. A location plan (drawing no 26-139-P01) is submitted with this application. It is a highly sustainable urban location where residential development will promote sustainable patterns of development. The proposed development will therefore accord with paragraph 73 of the NPPF which recognises the importance of small and medium sized housing sites, especially suitable sites within existing settlements.

The proposals will also align with the development strategy set out by Key Statement DS1 of the Core Strategy which seeks to direct housing development to the Borough's principal settlements, including Clitheroe. It also accords with Policy DMG2 which requires development proposals in Clitheroe and other principal settlements to consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely

related to the main built-up areas. Compliance with Key Statement DS1 and Policy DMG2 was confirmed as part of the pre-application advice provided by the Borough Council in October 2024 in respect of a similar proposal for residential development at the application site.

Land Use

This application is for residential use only and this land use is compatible with surrounding land uses within this part of Clitheroe. The Borough Council has previously accepted the principle of residential development, granting planning permission in 2012 for 32 dwellings (ref. 3/2011/1064) as part of a wider site including the application site and land to the south. The proposed development will make effective use of land within a highly sustainable location and will not conflict with neighbouring land uses or associated policy objectives.

It is noted that the proposal maps associated with the Housing and Economic Development DPD show the site partly within and partly outside the boundaries of a Policy DME3 area. Policy DME3 of the Core Strategy relates to site and species protection and conservation, including in relation to local nature reserves such as Primrose Lodge. We understand that the boundary shown on the proposals map pre-dates the creation of the nature reserve which was developed from a Council-coordinated masterplan published in 2017. That masterplan excluded the application site. We also note that planning permission was granted in 2016 for residential development on land adjacent to 97 Woone Lane that was also within the boundaries of the DME3 area shown on the current proposals map.

The applicant has already been in discussion with the Primrose Community Nature Trust which is aware of these proposals. The Trust has confirmed that the proposals are consistent with its expectations for the site and do not conflict with its own objectives for the future development of the nature reserve. The proposed development will not prejudice the potential provision of a new pedestrian link between the Nature Reserve and Back Woone Lane, for which we understand the Trust will shortly submit a separate planning application.

Amount of Development

Permission in principle is sought for the development of up to 9 dwellings at the application site. The indicative site plan submitted as part of this application shows how up to 9 dwellings can be comfortably accommodated within the application site.

The amount of development proposed will be appropriate to the context of the application site, neighbouring residential development and the adjacent nature reserve. As noted above, planning permission was granted in 2012 (ref. 3/2011/1064) for the development of up to 32 dwellings on the application site and land to the south. A separate permission has subsequently been granted for the development of nine dwellings on land to the south (ref. 3/2015/0649) and the current proposal for a further nine dwellings will be within the parameters previously established for residential development of the wider site. Appropriate parking and private amenity space can be provided, and the proposed development can be delivered without any unacceptable impacts on the amenities of existing residential properties, including in terms of privacy and overlooking. Access from Woone Lane will be provided via the existing site access and retained roadway that serves the recent residential development to the south of the application site.

We therefore consider that the current proposal for residential development of the application site will be acceptable in principle subject to the consideration of other matters at the technical details stage.

Other Matters

Other matters are outside of the scope of this application for permission in principle and will be addressed at the technical details consent stage. As discussed and agreed with the Head of Development Management and Building Control at the Borough Council prior to the submission of this application, flood risk (including the requirement for any sequential test) is a matter that can be fully assessed at the technical details stage. This has been confirmed by a number of planning appeal



decisions. These include appeal ref. APP/H1840/W/23/3329778 (Land off Holt Fleet Lane, Holt Fleet) which confirms that Flood Zone 2 or 3 designation does not prevent the grant of permission in principle and that flood risk matters, including the sequential test, can be dealt with at the technical details consent stage.

We also note that Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the grant of permission in principle is not within the scope of biodiversity net gain and that the biodiversity net gain condition only applies to technical details consent.

We therefore commend this application for permission in principle to the Borough Council. We look forward to hearing from you shortly. If you have any queries or require any further information, then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Wadcock".

JONATHAN WADCOCK
Director