

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	EP	Date:	28/04/2026	Manager:	LH	Date:	29/4/26
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Application Ref:	2026/0144			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	13/03/2026	Site Notice:	13/03/2026	
Officer:	EP			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Proposed ball stop net.
Site Address/Location:	Read Cricket and Bowling Club Whalley Road Read BB12 7PN

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
Read Parish council are in support of the proposal but note the structure would be preferred if entirely seasonal.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objection subject to condition.

Sport England: Object to the proposal based on inadequate information to assess the proposal against their playing field policy and the NPPF.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
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4 letters of objection have been received and are summarised as follows

- Loss of outlook/view
- Reduction in value of neighbouring residential property.
- Out of character.
- Proposal seems excessive in the absence of any known issues.
- Sets precedent for similar development.
- Future maintenance issues.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN1: Green Belt

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

No relevant planning history.

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

The application relates to the playing field at Read Cricket Club. The surrounding area is both commercial and residential in nature. The application site itself is within the designated Green Belt.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought for the erection of a ball stop net which will be mounted on the 14 poles spread across the edge of the site.

Principle of Development:

Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy States that within the Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area.
2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.
3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.
4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.
5. The development is for small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.
6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.

The proposed development is considered to comply with point 4 of the above policy in as much that the proposed development is for small-scale recreational purposes associated with the existing operation.

Policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy supports the development of recreational and leisure facilities.

Key Statement EN1 stipulates that the overall extent of the green belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. The development of new buildings will be limited to the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt, and which do not conflict with the purposes of the designation. This aligns with Paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

Building is defined in the 1990 Act as including any structure or erection and this definition would include any man-made above ground structure including enclosures which would amount to building operations. As such the structure could be considered a building although it has not been demonstrated in the application how it is essential to the current cricket club operations and there are concerns around its excessive height and resultant harm to the openness of the Green Belt. On that basis, it is considered the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, in conflict with Key Statement EN1 and Paragraph 154 of the NPPF.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

There are a number of residential properties along Whalley Road and directly opposite the proposed ball stop net. There is a separation distance of approximately 13.5m between the structure and habitable windows which is considered reasonable to mitigate any loss of light or sense of overbearing.

It is recognised that a number of representations have been raised in respect of loss of outlook/private view and potential decrease in neighbouring property value. Whilst noted, these are not material planning considerations and therefore do not form basis for refusal.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The proposed ball stop net will sit immediately adjacent to the existing stone boundary wall and will therefore host a visually prominent position from within the streetscape. The net itself will measure 8 metres in height and will be mounted on 11m tall posts. Whilst the net is to be in place during cricket season (April-September), the poles will be in place permanently. There will be 14 of said poles across the site boundary.

Policy DMG1 of the RVCS states that development must

1. Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the CABE/English Heritage building in context toolkit).
2. Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.
3. Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.

At a national level 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'.

Given the height, permanent nature and number of the proposed poles, their introduction will have an unacceptable impact on the visual amenities and character of the area, by virtue of the introduction of a visually intrusive and anomalous addition to the street scene. In addition, the net itself is to be in situ for 6 months of the year, which is a considerable length of time, and once in place will exacerbate the visual prominence of the structure.

No supporting information has been provided, namely a ball strike assessment, to justify the height and type of structure proposed. It is also unclear why the proposed poles need to exceed the height of the proposed net by 3 metres or why the net and associated poles cannot be used on a more temporary basis to reduce visual impact.

The existing stone boundary wall is a prominent and historic feature within the street scene which contributes positively to the character of the area. The proposed ball stop net and poles as proposed would undermine this existing character.

As such, based on the height, visual prominence and permanent nature of the structure, and in the absence of any suitable justification, the proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and visual amenities of the street scene contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways and Parking:

LCC Highways were consulted in relation to the proposal and raise no objection subject to condition relating to the submission of a construction management plan being placed on any approval decision.

Landscape/Ecology:

BNG.

The development is exempt from having to achieve the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as it is subject to the de minimis exception.

Other Matters:

Sport England were consulted in relation to the proposal and have objected on the basis that the development does not meet exception 2 of their playing fields policy. In assessing proposals effecting sports facilities/playing fields, development must meet at least one of the five exceptions set out by Sport England to be considered acceptable. Exception 2 stipulates that any ancillary development, such as the proposed ball stop net, must not affect the quantity or quality of the playing pitch or adversely effects their use.

Based on the information submitted, it is not considered the development can be adequately assessed by Sport England. Justification for the type and height of fencing system proposed has not been provided or any plan to show the potential impact to the cricket pitch and game play in terms of proximity of the fencing to the cricket boundary and wicket.

As such, there is insufficient information to adequately assess the proposal against Sport England's Fields Policy and Paragraphs 104 and 200 of the National Planning Policy framework.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning consent be refused for the following reason(s).

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| 01: | The proposal is considered to form an inappropriate type of development within the Green Belt and would be harmful to its openness by virtue of the insufficient information provided to justify the development as being essential to the existing sports facilities and by virtue of the proposed height. This is contrary to Key Statement EN1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework |
| 02: | By virtue of the height, visual prominence and permanent nature of the structure, and in the absence of any suitable justification, the proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and visual amenities of the area contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework. |