


**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Officer:</b>	<b>LW</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>01/05/26</b>	<b>Manager:</b>	<b>LH</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>1/5/26</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2026/0232			 <b>Ribble Valley Borough Council</b> <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	14/04/26	<b>Site Notice:</b>	14/04/26	
<b>Officer:</b>	LW			
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>				<b>APPROVAL</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	Permission in principle application for the erection of up to 9 dwellings.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Petre Garage Ltd, Whalley Road, Langho, BB6 8AB.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
No comments received.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	No objection.
<b>United Utilities:</b>	No objection.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
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Three letters of objection have been received with respect to the proposed development. The concerns raised can be summarised as below:

- Overlooking/ loss of privacy;
- Visually dominant and overbearing;
- Lack of detailed information to assess impact on residential amenity;
- Increase in traffic movements;
- Road safety;
- May not be in keeping with the character of the area;
- Impact on existing drainage/ sewage provision.
- Ground contamination.
- Plans for a new petrol station nearby.

It has also been requested that should the application be approved, a number of conditions should be imposed requiring the submission of detailed level surveys and cross-section drawings, careful control of building heights and finished floor levels, measures to prevent overlooking and appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping.

One letter of support has also been received stating that the proposal would improve the visual appeal of the overall area and that there would be less traffic and noise.

**RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:**

**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy  
 Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development  
 Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1: General Considerations  
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations  
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility  
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Relevant Planning History:**

3/2010/0246: Retrospective application for the erection of a single storey valeting bay with a single storey WC. Extension to the rear (Approved).

3/2002/0809: Proposed workshop extension (Approved).

3/1997/0451: Extension of previously approved shop to provide additional floor space (Approved).

3/1994/0210: Refurbishment of existing garage (Approved).

3/1993/0185: Extension to MOT bay to accommodate larger vehicles (Approved).

**ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

**Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application relates to an existing MOT/ car mechanics garage, car wash and petrol filling station known as Petre Garage, accessed off Whalley Road, Langho.

Whilst the proposal site is located within a relatively built-up area, comprising a variety of land uses at the edge of Langho, it is outside of any defined settlement area and on land which benefits from an Open Countryside designation. Part of the site is at risk of surface water flooding, and a United Utilities mains pipe is located within close proximity.

**Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

Consent is sought for 'Permission in Principle' (PIP) for the construction of up to nine dwellings. Given the application seeks consent solely for matters pertaining to the principle of development, no details in respect of the proposed layout, configuration, nor external appearance of the dwellings are required to be submitted for consideration at this stage.

**Principle of Development:**

Permission in Principle applications may only deal with the principle of development and are not applications for planning permission. Any other details relating to any other material planning considerations are to be dealt with as part of any future Technical Details application. Planning practice guidance confirms the scope of Permission in Principle as being limited to matters of location, land use and amount of development. As such, these matters have been assessed as follows: -

Location

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the construction of nine dwellings on land located outside of any defined settlement limits. As such, it is necessary to consider whether the location of the proposed

new dwellings would be compatible with the overall spatial strategy for housing growth within the Borough as identified within the currently adopted development strategy.

When considering the principle of new residential development, Key Statement DS1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy outlines a spatial strategy for new housing developments which are to be directed to the strategic sites and Principal and Tier 1 settlements. Policies DMH3 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy seeks to restrict residential development within the Open Countryside and AONB to that which meets a number of explicit criteria.

Policy DMG2 is two-fold in its approach to guiding development. The primary part of Policy DMG2(1) is engaged where development proposals are located 'in' Principal and Tier 1 settlements with the secondary part of the Policy DMG2(2) being engaged in circumstances when proposed development is located 'outside' defined settlement areas or within Tier 2 villages, with each part of the Policy therefore being engaged in isolation and independent of the other, dependent on the location aspects of the proposal.

The mechanics and engagement of the Policy are clear in this respect, insofar that it contains explicit triggers as to when the former or latter criterion are applied and the triggers are purely locational and based on a proposals relationship to defined settlement boundaries and whether, in this case, such a proposal is 'in' or 'outside' a defined settlement

The proposal is located outside of any defined settlement boundary. In this respect, when assessing the locational aspects of the development, it is the secondary element of Policy DMG2 that is engaged, which 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.*

Given the site is located outside of any defined settlement limits, Policy DMH3 is also applicable, with the Policy being engaged in parallel with Policy DMG2. In this respect, Policy DMH3 states that:

*Within areas defined as Open Countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to:*

- 1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposals for an agricultural, forestry, or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.*
- 2. The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings provided they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.*
- 3. The rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings [subject to a number of criteria].*

In respect of the above first criterion, it is clear from the submitted details that the proposal could not be argued as being 'essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area' nor could it be considered that the proposal 'is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture'.

In respect of the matter of 'local need', no robust evidence has been provided to suggest that the proposal would align with the definition of 'local needs housing'.

As such, the proposed development would conflict with the spatial strategy set out in the development plan as the site lies outside of the settlement boundary and would not meet any of the identified considerations or exceptions which are required for residential development to be acceptable in the Open Countryside.

In addition to the above, Policies DM12 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy require new development to be located to minimise the need to travel, with good access by foot and cycle and convenient links to public transport. Considerable weight is to be attached to the availability and adequacy of public transport to serve those moving to and from a proposed development. This aligns with the sustainability objectives of the NPPF.

The site is located within the Open Countryside, approximately 240m to the north-east of the defined settlement limits of Langho and 1km south-west of the defined settlement limits of Billington, both of which are identified as Tier 1 villages in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

There is a primary school and village hall very close to the site as well as a restaurant across the road and a convenience store/ post office within a reasonable walking distance (approximately 20 minutes) from the proposal site and easily accessible via the existing footway network along Whalley Road. The site is also within a reasonable walking distance to St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School in Billington.

In addition to this, there are bus stops on Whalley Road that are serviced by routes that provide connections to centres with a broader range of services, or onward connection points for other public transport services. These bus stops are within an acceptable walking distance from the site, although it is noted that not all the services operate seven days a week and some operate on a limited frequency.

Taking account of the above, it is not considered that the future occupiers of the proposed development would be wholly reliant on the use of private motor vehicles to access facilities and services necessary to meet their day-to-day needs.

#### Land Use

The proposal would result in the loss of a site with employment generating potential, as such, consideration must be given to the aims, objectives and requirements of Key Statement EC1 and Policy DMB1. In this respect, Key Statement EC1 states that '*proposals that result in the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development will need to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact upon the local economy*'. With Policy DMB1 stating that:

*Proposals for the development, redevelopment or conversion of sites with employment generating potential in the plan area for alternative uses will be assessed with regard to the following criteria:*

- 1. The provision of Policy DMG1, and*
- 2. The compatibility of the proposal with other plan policies of the LDF, and*
- 3. The environmental benefits to be gained by the community, and*
- 4. The economic and social impact caused by loss of employment opportunities to the borough, and*
- 5. Any attempts that have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site (must be supported by evidence (such as property agents details including periods of marketing and response) that the property/ business has been marketed for business use for a minimum period of six months or information that demonstrates to the Council's satisfaction that the current use is not viable for employment purposes.)*

Having regard to criteria points 1 and 2, it is not considered that redevelopment of the site would result in any measurable conflict with the provisions of Policy DMG1 or any other plan policies. With respect to

criteria point 3, the residential use of the site would likely give rise to less noise disturbance in comparison to the existing garage which in turn would be of benefit to the amenity of neighbouring receptors.

Turning to criteria point 4, the site is located outside of a Main Centre Boundary and in a largely residential area. Furthermore, given the small-scale nature of the existing commercial operation accommodated on the site, or could be accommodated on the site, the loss of an employment generating use of this size and in this location is unlikely to yield significant impact to the local economy to the extent that this alone would endanger the support for the introduction of a replacement residential use.

In respect of criterion 5, Policy DMB1 requires that the proposed development should be assessed with regard to any attempts that have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site. In cases/ locations where the retention of commercial uses within a site is preferable, the policy requires the marketing of the site for business use for a minimum of 6 months in order to support/ justify the potential loss of the employment generating use.

In this instance, the 'commercial' use of the site is not considered to be of such a scale and quantum to warrant significant concerns in respect of loss, particularly given its location within a predominantly residential area. As such, the lack of marketing in this particular case would not justify a refusal of the application.

Taking account of the above, the principle of the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes raises no significant direct conflicts with Key Statement EC1 or Policy DMB1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission in relation to matters regarding the potential loss of 'employment generating' floorspace.

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that all development must:

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

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have provided comments on the scheme and note that the site currently has three existing access points, two of these sits to the south of the site on to Whalley Road. Another access into the site is situated on Longsight Road. Whilst limited details have been provided at this stage, the LHA note that there are opportunities to create a suitable access from Longsight Road, which would be the LHA's expected point of access for the residential site due to the existing road condition and geometry of Whalley Road.

It is also important to highlight that, at the time of writing, the Council is in receipt of a planning application (ref: 3/2026/0135) seeking consent to regularise the use of the land to the north of the proposal site, formerly used as a household waste recycling centre, as an open-air coach yard with jet washing facilities. It is noted that, should planning permission be granted for the coach yard, then this use will co-exist alongside existing residential development at Petre Wood Close and Petre Wood Crescent, with the resultant impact upon nearby residential amenity having been deemed acceptable. The presence of the coach yard and any potential impact upon the amenity of the future occupants of the proposed development would be reserved for consideration as part of any subsequent Technical Details submission.

With the above in mind, no concerns are raised at this Permission in Principle stage with respect to land use.

#### Amount of Development

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy states:

*'All development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style... particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings...'*

Policy DMG2 also states:

*'Within the Open Countryside, development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting'.*

In this instance, Permission in Principle is sought for the development of nine dwellings within the application site. Whilst an indicative site layout plan has not been provided, it is considered likely that the site would comprise sufficient space to accommodate the scale of development proposed with associated gardens and parking areas.

It is also relevant to consider at this stage whether or not the amount of residential development could be successfully integrated within the landscape. The proposal site consists of previously developed land and is located within a relatively built-up area, with existing residential development located immediately to the north of the site along Petre Wood Close, Petre Wood Crescent and Petre Wood Drive, on the opposite side of Longsight Road, as well to the south along Whalley Road. The proposed dwellings would therefore be read in this context, and no concerns are raised at this Permission in Principal stage with respect to the amount and type of development being proposed.

#### Other Material Considerations

The most recently published five-year housing land supply figure (base date 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025) indicated that Ribble Valley Borough Council has a housing land supply of 6.2 years. However, a recent appeal decision (dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026) at Land to the South of Chatburn Old Road, Chatburn (APP/T2350/W/25/3372635) determined that the council has a housing land supply of 3.45 years.

The consequence of not having a 5 YHLS is that in the case of this application, Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is engaged in the decision-making process. On this basis, the restrictive approach towards new housing development outside of settlements must be considered to be out-of-date.

Specifically for decision making, this means if the most relevant Local Plan policies for determining a planning application are out-of-date (such as when a 5 YHLS cannot be demonstrated), granting permission unless:

- i. 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
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

In terms of areas or assets of particular importance referred to at subsection i) above, these are identified as habitat sites and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, or National Landscape, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest...); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change. The application site is not affected by any such areas or assets and as such this subsection does not apply.

In which case, the tilted balance should be applied and subsection ii) of Paragraph 11d) requires the LPA to consider whether the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This will be considered in the concluded section of the report.

**Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**

Concerns have been raised by third-party representations about the potential for the proposed development to result in detrimental harm upon the existing amenities of nearby residents. However, the remit of assessment of this application is limited to solely that of the principle of the development and as to whether the proposed development would align with the spatial and locational aspirations for residential development within the Borough.

As noted in the 'Land Use' section above, at the time of writing, the Council is also in receipt of a planning application (ref: 3/2026/0135) seeking consent to regularise the use of the land to the north of the proposal site, formerly used as a household waste recycling centre, as an open-air coach yard. However, matters relating to the potential adverse impact(s) upon nearby residential amenities resultant from the development, as well as the potential adverse impact(s) upon future occupants of the development arising from existing nearby land uses, cannot be fully determined nor assessed at this stage and will be reserved for consideration/ assessment at any subsequent pursuant Technical Details submission.

**Visual Amenity/External Appearance:**

Third-party representations have raised concerns with respect to the visual impact of the proposed residential development. However, as mentioned above, the remit of assessment of this application is limited to solely that of the principle of the development and as to whether the proposed development would align with the spatial and locational aspirations for residential development within the Borough.

The impact upon the surrounding locality has been assessed above in the 'amount of development' section and it is considered that the use of the land within the application site for residential development would be sympathetic to the prevailing character of the area. However, as this relates to principal only, a full assessment of the scheme cannot be made with regards to the specific size, scale or design of the dwellings and associated development. The potential for adverse impact(s) upon the character or visual amenities of the area resultant from the detailed design of the development do not fall to be assessed within the scope of this application and would be reserved for consideration/ assessment following the submission of any subsequent Technical Details application.

**Highways and Parking:**

Lancashire County Council Highways have been consulted on the application and comments have been provided.

As mentioned under the 'Land Use' section, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have confirmed that there are opportunities to create an access from Longsight Road, which would be the LHA's preferred point of access for the residential site. Should Permission in Principle be approved, the LHA have stated that they would expect the access to be a minimum of 5.5m wide, to support two-way traffic movement, as well as acceptable visibility splays. The splays should be set 2.4m back from the near edge of the carriageway and extend 43m along the nearside carriageway edge in both directions and be wholly within the land which the applicant controls and/or the adopted highway. The access should also feature 2m footways of either side supported by crossing facilities featuring tactile paving in line with inclusive mobility guidance. It is also expected that the site will provide improved footway links into the existing pedestrian infrastructure surrounding the site.

The LHA have also recommended pedestrian connectivity improvements to Whalley Road and provided additional guidance with respect to the internal layout of the site, parking, cycle storage, electric vehicle charging points and drainage.

Notwithstanding the above, and the concerns raised by third-party representations, the detailed assessment of the appropriateness/ adequacy of any internal/ external highways arrangement and

matters relating to on-site parking provision are reserved for consideration/ assessment as part of any subsequent Technical Details submission(s).

### **Landscape/Ecology:**

No landscape/ ecology issues have been identified at this stage given the remit of the application relates solely to that of matters of principle. However, there will be a requirement for appropriate surveys to be undertaken and submitted in support of any subsequent Technical Details application to ascertain as to whether the proposal is likely to result in adverse impacts upon protected species or species/ species of conservation concern and trees.

In addition, at the Technical Details stage, the applicant would be required to demonstrate how the proposal would achieve the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirements or provide an appropriate exemption in accordance with Section 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) regulations 2024.

### **Other Matters:**

#### Flood Risk/ Drainage

Part of the site is at risk of surface water flooding and concerns have been raised about the impact upon existing drainage capacity by third-party representations. The Council is aware of recent planning appeal decisions (APP/H1840/W/23/3329778, APP/H1705/W/21/3281406 & APP/F0114/W/22/3313796) which confirms the issue of flood risk (including the application of the Sequential Test and any necessary mitigation) as a matter to be dealt with at the Technical Details stage.

As such, whilst no concerns are raised at this stage, given the remit of the application relates solely to that of matters of principle, should consent be granted, there will be the requirement for an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment (and flood risk sequential test if applicable) to be undertaken and submitted in support of any subsequent Technical Details submission to ascertain as to whether the proposal is likely to result in adverse impacts upon flood risk. A scheme for the sustainable drainage of both foul and surface water will also be required either as part of any subsequent Technical Details submission or at discharge of condition stage.

#### Ground Contamination

Concerns have also been raised by third-party representations with respect to ground contamination and the existing use of the site as a car mechanics garage and petrol filling station. This is again a matter to be considered at the Technical Details stage and there will be a requirement for an appropriate Land Contamination Statement/ Remediation Strategy to be submitted in support of any subsequent submission.

#### Application for new petrol station

It has been noted by a third-party representation that there has recently been an application to construct a new petrol filling station opposite Northcote and raised concerns about the construction of new fuel tanks when existing tanks already exist at the application site. However, this does not form a material planning consideration relevant to the determination of this application.

#### Requested Conditions

A number of conditions have been requested by third-party representations; however, the matters relating these conditions would be reserved for consideration/ assessment following the submission of any subsequent Technical Details application and not as part of this Permission in Principle application.

**Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**

As identified earlier in this report, the Council are unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and so Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF is engaged and in this case, the tilted balance applies. The proposal must be assessed against Paragraph 11d) ii. and a balancing exercise must be undertaken.

The benefits of the development have been considered namely the delivery of housing especially in the context of a lack of 5 YHLS, with the development contributing up to nine dwellings to the Council's housing supply. There would also be the benefit of consumer expenditure in the area, construction jobs and supporting the building industry supply chain. However, these short-term temporary benefits are considered to carry limited weight.

Paragraph 11d) ii. requires the LPA to have particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, and for the reasons outlined within the report, it is considered that granting of this Permission in Principle would, on balance, result in the creation of residential development in a sustainable location, given the existing connectivity of the site would mean that future occupants would not be wholly reliant on the use private motor vehicles to access services and facilities necessary to meet their day-to-day needs.

The adverse impact(s) of granting residential development in this location is therefore not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this particular instance.

As such, the application is recommended for approval.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	That Permission in Principle be approved.
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