


**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>5/5/26</b>
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<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2026/0249			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>
<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 4no. dwellings.
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	Land off Spinners Vale, Billington, BB7 9GL.

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
Billington and Langho Parish Council object to the application on the ground that it is in open countryside. The development would have had an impact on the original application had it been submitted in the first place. There will be an increase in traffic and there is a lack of infrastructure. There is also potential impact on flood risk.	

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

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

- Impact on public right of way which passes through the site.
- A number of houses belong to BAE and house RAF personnel, but BAE have not been consulted.
- There are vacant or under-occupied properties locally and the proposal does not justify why new housing is needed.
- Only access is via a privately maintained road – unable to accommodate high increase in large vehicle movements.
- Disruption from construction traffic, noise, dust and working hours.
- Urbanisation of a currently open/rural setting.
- Loss of views.
- Loss of privacy.
- Overshadowing/ loss of light.
- Impact on flood risk.
- Scale of the proposal may not be in keeping with the surrounding properties.
- Disruption of ecosystems and reduced biodiversity.
- Unclear whether the site will have adequate access to utility services and vehicles without disruption to existing dwellings.
- Impact on existing infrastructure/ services in the area.
- There is no information regarding the scale, appearance and design of the proposed dwellings.
- Impact on green belt land.
- Approval will set a precedent for larger development on the adjoining land.
- Increase in traffic and likelihood of accidents and vehicle damage.
- Insufficient neighbour notification letters.

**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:**

3/2023/0165: Proposed temporary construction access and haul route and associated works and will be used specifically for construction of the flood compensation scheme (Approved).

3/2023/0205: Proposed erection of 36 residential dwellings, along with landscaping and associated site infrastructure (Approved).

3/2017/0133: The erection of 41 dwellings and associated works (Approved).

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

The application relates to a greenfield area of land 0.23 hectares in area. The site is located to the west of Spinners Vale, a recently constructed housing development comprising of 36 residential dwellings which were approved under application reference 3/2023/0205. The Spinners Vale site was a committed housing site within the settlement boundary of Billington; however, the land the subject of this application falls just outside the defined settlement limits and on land which benefits from an Open Countryside designation.

The land immediately north of the proposal site was included with the red edge of the Spinners Vale development to provide a SUDS pond. To the north, south and west of the site are open fields and a Public Right of Way runs along the southern boundary.

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

Consent is sought for 'Permission in Principle' (PiP) for the construction of up to four residential 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.

The red-edge boundary of the site has been amended since the submission of the application in order to include access to the site off Spinners Vale.

**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

It is acknowledged that third-party representations have noted that the proposed development would impact Green Belt land. Whilst, the proposal site is not located within the designated Green Belt, the application does seek Permission in Principle for the construction of up to four dwellings on land located outside of any defined settlement limits and within the Open Countryside. 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 development, Key Statement DS1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy outlines a spatial strategy for new housing development 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 the Policy DMG2(1) is engaged where development proposals are located 'in' Principal and Tier 1 settlements with the second 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 locational aspects of a 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 development 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' outlined in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

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

In addition to the above, Policies DMI2 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 just outside the defined settlement limits of Billington which is a Tier 1 settlement.

Despite being a Tier 1 settlement, the nearest local services/ facilities to the proposal in Billington are limited to a modest sized village store on Whalley Road and St Augustine's Roman Catholic High School which are within a 15-minute walking distance from the proposal site. Whilst this is considered a reasonable distance, given Billington does not benefit from a full complement or wide range of local services and facilities, future occupiers of the development would rely heavily on the provisions of neighbouring towns and villages in order to meet their day-to-day needs.

In this respect, the proposal site is within a 0.9km walking distance from the centre of the Principal settlement of Whalley which would provide residents with a broader range of services including a supermarket as well as a primary school, post office, village hall and numerous public houses which are all within a reasonable walking distance (20 minutes) from the proposal site. Whalley Road also benefits from an established footway network which would provide safe and accessible pedestrian route for future occupiers to access these services on foot.

The nearest bus stops to the proposal site are located along Whalley Road. The Local Highway Authority, in their consultation response, note that these bus stops are slightly outside the prescribed walking distance of 400m and are primarily served by Service 22, which provides links between Clitheroe, Langho, Wilpshire and Blackburn. Service 280 and 25 also serve the stop, providing links to Preston, Blackburn, Clitheroe and Skipton. However, the Council note that not all these services operate seven days a week and some operate on a limited frequency.

Notwithstanding this, it is considered, on balance, that the future occupiers of the proposed development would not 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

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 an existing field gate access and has a right of access off the end of the cul-de-sac Spinners Vale which was reserved when the land was sold. Spinners Vale forms part of the adjacent residential development approved under planning application 3/2021/0205. Whilst limited details have been provided at this stage, within the supporting documentation there is a suggestion that the site could utilise the access from Spinners Vale. With this 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 acknowledged 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 four 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 is located directly adjacent to a recently constructed housing development known as Spinners Vale which was approved under application 3/2021/0205. Whilst it is noted that the proposal site is currently greenfield land and the proposed residential development at the site would extend built form into the open countryside, the four additional dwellings would be read in context with existing residential properties at Spinners Vale. In addition to this, it is noted that the proposal site is already physically separated from the adjacent fields which border the site to the south and west, whilst directly to the north is the SUDS pond approved as part of the Spinners Vale housing development. The proposal would therefore be read in this context, and it is not considered that the residential development of the site for up to four dwellings would read as an overly incongruous or unsympathetic addition to the immediate or wider locality. As such, no concerns are raised at this Permission in Principle stage with respect to the amount 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 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 of 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 a 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 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 concluding 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 strategy and locational aspirations for residential development within the Borough.

As such, matters relating to the potential adverse impact(s) upon nearby residential amenities, such as overshadowing, loss of outlook, daylight or privacy, resultant from the development cannot be fully determined nor assessed at this stage and will be reserved for consideration/ assessment at any subsequent pursuant Technical Details submission.

It is noted that concerns have been raised with respect to the loss of views; however, the loss of a view is not a material planning consideration and will therefore be afforded no weight in the determination of any subsequent Technical Details application.

#### **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 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 consisting of up to four dwellings would be sympathetic to the prevailing character of the area. However, as this relates to principle only, a full assessment of the scheme cannot be made with regards to the specific size, scale, design or layout of the development. The potential for adverse impact(s) upon the

character or visual amenities of the 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/ Parking and Footpaths:**

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

As mentioned under the 'Land Use' section above, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) have confirmed that the site currently has an existing field gate access and has a right of access off the end of the cul-de-sac Spinners Vale. Whilst limited details have been provided at this Permission in Principle stage, there is the opportunity to utilise the access from Spinners Vale, and the LHA have not raised any objection(s) to the proposed residential development at the site.

It is noted that the LHA would expect an access which is a minimum of 5.5m wide, to support two-way traffic movement, as well as acceptable visibility splays. The access should also feature 2m footways on either side which are supported by crossing facilities.

With respect to the internal layout, the LHA have requested the submission of a swept path analysis drawing as part of any subsequent Technical Details application showing a 11.2m refuse vehicle using the internal layout. Given the number of dwellings proposed, there may be options to provide a bin store adjacent to the existing network, which may already support refuse collection.

The LHA have also provided additional comments with respect to parking provision, cycle storage and electric vehicle charging points.

A Public Right of Way (PROW) also runs through the site, and third-party representations have raised concerns about the potential impact upon this. The Definitive PROW should be included on the plans submitted as part of any subsequent Technical Details application and it is advised that the applicant contact Lancashire County Council's Public Rights of Way section to discuss the development before works begin. The PROW should remain a segregated pedestrian route, being at least 2m in width, whether it remains in place or is diverted.

Concerns have also been raised with respect to disruption caused by construction traffic, dust and working hours as well as an increase in traffic as a result of the proposed residential development. Should any subsequent Technical Details application be approved, then a condition would likely be imposed requiring the submission of a Construction Management Plan/ Construction Method Statement prior to any works commencing on site in order to ensure the safe operation of the highway during the construction phase. This would include details of the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors, the loading and unloading of plant and materials, measures to protect vulnerable road users, wheel washing facilities, measures to deal with dirt, debris, mud or loose material deposited on the highway because of construction, measures to control the emissions of dust and dirt during construction, construction vehicle routing and delivery, demolition and construction working hours. In addition to this, the additional traffic resulting from the construction of four new dwellings would be relatively limited.

Notwithstanding the above, and the concerns raised by third-party representations, the detailed assessment of the appropriateness/ adequacy of any internal highways arrangements and matters relating to on-site parking provision are reserved for consideration/ assessment as part of any subsequent Technical Details submission.

#### **Landscape/Ecology:**

It is noted that concerns have been raised by third-party representations regarding the impact upon ecosystems/ biodiversity. No landscape/ ecology issues have been identified at this stage given 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 any adverse impacts upon protected species/ species of conservation concerns 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

Part of the site is at risk of surface water flooding (towards the access off Spinners Vale) and concerns have been raised by third-party representations about the impact upon flood risk. 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 is applicable) to be undertaken and submitted in support of any subsequent Technical Details submission to ascertain as to whether the proposal will likely result in adverse impacts upon flood risk.

##### Neighbour Notifications

Third-party representations have also raised concerns about insufficient neighbour notifications. Notification letters were sent to all residential properties directly adjacent to the proposal site and a site notice was displayed along Spinners Vale in order to notify nearby residents that had not received a notification letter directly.

##### Precedent for Larger Development

Third-party representations have noted that the approval of the proposed development could set a precedent for a larger housing development on the adjoining land. However, this does not form a material planning consideration relevant to the determination of this application and any additional development on the adjacent land would be subject to a separate assessment as part of any subsequent planning 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, and the development would contribute up to four dwellings to the Council's housing supply. This is considered to carry low-moderate weight. 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) also requires the LPA to have particular regard to key polies 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 exiting connectivity of the site would mean that future occupants would not be wholly reliant on the use of private motor vehicle 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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