


Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	MC	Date:	20/05/2026	Manager:	LH	Date:	21/5/26
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Application Ref:	3/2026/0260			 Ribble Valley Borough Council <small>www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</small>				
Date Inspected:	28/04/2026	Site Notice:	28/04/2026					
Officer:	MC							
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:					REFUSAL			

Development Description:	Permission in principle for a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 dwellings.
Site Address/Location:	Land at The Warren, Warren Fold, Hurst Green, BB7 9QH

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No objection to the scheme in principle. However, some concerns raised with regards to the access and the development could pose a risk to users and visitors of the Tolkein Trail due to the close proximity of the Public Footpath. They also note that the proposed location is outside of the village boundary.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	Lancashire County Council acting as the Local Highway Authority does not raise an objection regarding the permission in principal of the development and are of the opinion that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on highway safety or capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site subject to issues being addressed as part of any future detailed planning application. This includes the widening of the existing lane or introduction of passing places.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Six representations have been received in response to the application raising the following issues/comments:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• highway safety concerns due to Warren Fold being small, narrow cul-de-sac• proposal would put additional pressure on an already strained road• development would erode quiet, rural character of the area• loss of open field would be detrimental to the character and amenity of area• concerns regarding overlooking to adjacent bungalows• concerns regarding increase noise and disturbance• whether the site represents overdevelopment• significant impact on residential amenity• concerns regarding impact on walkers on Tolkein Trail and tourism impact• concerns regarding construction vehicles and impact on users of the school• the widening of the lane would harm the character of the area and reduce biodiversity• impact on drainage/flood risk• tilted balance under NPPF does not automatically override all locational concerns	

RELEVANT POLICIES:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN3: Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations
Key Statement H1: Housing Provision
Key Statement H2: Housing Balance

Policy DMG1: General Considerations
Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations
Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility
Policy DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands
Policy DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection
Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation
Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:**3/2023/0671**

Outline planning application for the erection of two new residential self-build bungalows for those aged 55 or over (all matters reserved). Resubmission of 3/2022/0469.
Refused

3/2022/0469

Outline planning application for the erection of three new residential self-build bungalows for those aged 55 or over.
Refused

3/2014/0204

Outline planning application for the erection of one new residential dwelling.
Appeal dismissed

3/2013/0963

New dwelling in garden of The Warren.
Withdrawn

3/2011/0138

Substitution of house type for applications 3/2009/1014P and 3/2010/0765P.
Approved with Conditions

3/2010/0765

Substitution of house type previously granted in application 3/2009/1014P.
Approved with Conditions

3/2009/1014

Substitution of house type granted under consent 3/2008/0400P.
Approved with Conditions

3/2008/0400

Replacement dwelling, extension to residential curtilage and alterations to vehicular access, and redistribution of excavated material in existing hollows in surrounding agricultural land.

Approved with Conditions

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to an area of land outside of but directly adjacent to the defined settlement boundary of Hurst Green. The site is located within the defined Forest of Bowland National Landscape and also adjacent to the boundary of the Hurst Green Conservation Area which extends up to the site access.

The area of land to which the application relates lies directly to the north of the dwelling known as 'The Warren' and currently accommodates an area of grassland with trees/shrubs surrounding the north and east.

The site is accessed off a private track and is directly adjacent a Public Right of Way (footpath 64) which bounds the site to the east.

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 consideration are to be dealt with within 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 erection of up to 3 no. residential dwellings. 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 a new residential dwelling, Key Statement DS1 states that:

The majority of new housing development will be:

- *concentrated within an identified strategic site located to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59; and the principal settlements of:*
- *Clitheroe;*
- *Longridge; and*
- *Whalley.*

In addition to the strategic site at Standen and the Borough's principal settlements, development will be focused towards the Tier 1 Villages, which are the more sustainable of the 32 defined settlements:

- *Barrow*
- *Billington*
- *Chatburn*
- *Gisburn*
- *Langho*

- Mellor
- Mellor Brook
- Read & Simonstone
- Wilpshire

The first part of Policy DMG2 states that:

'Development should be in accordance with the core strategy development strategy and should support the spatial vision.

1. development proposals in the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and the tier 1 villages should consolidate, expand or round-off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring this is appropriate to the scale of, and in keeping with, the existing settlement'.

The second part of this policy requires development within the tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations which are listed as follows:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being 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'.*

Policy DMH3 seeks to limit residential development in the open countryside and AONB to development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need.

Whilst the applicants supporting statement may suggest that the development 'rounds off' the settlement pattern, the site is not located within a principle settlement and the introduction of between 1 and 3 market dwellings would not fall within any of the exception criteria, required for development to comply with Policy DMG2 of the RVCS for a site outside of a defined settlement boundary. As such, the scheme fails to comply with Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

The most recently published five-year housing land supply figure for the Ribble Valley (base date of 31st March 2025) indicated that Ribble Valley Borough Council has a housing land supply of 6.2 years. However, a recent appeal decision (appeal ref: APP/T2350/W/25/3372635) has found that the Council no longer have a Five-Year Housing Land Supply and the housing supply is calculated to be 3.45 years.

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

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

- i. the application of policies in this 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 this 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 habitats 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 within the National Landscape and therefore this subsection potentially applies, and an assessment of compliance with relevant NPPF policy will be considered within the 'land use' and 'amount of development' sections of this report and then considered further in the planning balance section of this report.

In terms of whether the site is in a sustainable location, as referred to at ii.) above and as required by policies DMI2 and DMG3 of the RVCS, the site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, outside of the settlement of Hurst Green which is a Tier 2 settlement. Whilst Hurst Green does offer some facilities such as a primary school, pub, village hall and a café, it does not have a convenience store or a post office and as such, the services that are within the village are considered to be limited and would not serve the day-to-day needs of residents.

With regards to the local bus service, there are two school buses that stop at Hurst Green and the number 5 public bus which includes stops at the principal settlements of Clitheroe and Longridge. The bus runs from Hurst Green from approximately 6:50am to 19:54pm hourly Monday to Saturday and approximately 09:00 to 17:00 every two hours on a Sunday. Journey times to Clitheroe are approximately 25 minutes and 17 minutes to Longridge. The bus service, including late night and Sunday services are therefore limited are not of a duration or frequency that would make travelling by public transport an attractive method of transport for future occupiers.

As such, future occupiers of the dwellings are likely to rely on private motor vehicle to access key services and facilities and the site is not considered to be a suitable or sustainable location for housing.

It should also be noted that the Inspector for appeal ref: APP/T2350/A/14/2221778 (which was for the erection of one dwelling at the site) stated the following:

"Given the limited range of services and facilities in Hurst Green, in order to meet their daily needs local residents would need to travel. There are bus stops on Whalley Road and I accept that the future occupants of the proposed house would have some opportunities for bus travel. However, it has not been put to me that opportunities for walking or cycling exist and, as I see it, these would be limited. In practical terms, the future occupants of the proposed house would have few alternatives to the use of a private vehicle. Thus, I cannot see that the proposal would minimise the need to travel or reduce reliance on the car."

As such, given the narrow, unlit and winding roads that connect the village of Hurst Green to nearby larger neighbouring settlements and taking into consideration the above appeal decision, it is not considered likely that users of the site would be able to access the nearby main settlements of Longridge, Whalley or Clitheroe by foot or bicycle as these would not be an attractive mode of travel.

This will be discussed in more detail in the planning balance section of this report.

Land use

Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy stipulates that all development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature. In this instance, the proposal seeks to introduce new housing to the application site which is located immediately adjacent to existing residential development.

Notwithstanding any potential visual impacts and the impact on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, given the presence of surrounding residential development along Warren Fold and to the south-east and north-west of the site, the land use as residential in principle, is not considered inappropriate when taken in isolation.

Amount of development

Policy DMG1 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 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy states that:

"Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build".

Policy DMH3 of the RVCS seeks to restrict residential development within the National Landscape (formerly the AONB) to development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. The same policy also allows for the conversion of buildings to dwellings and for the rebuilding and replacement of existing dwellings under certain circumstances.

In this instance permission in principle is sought for the development of between one and three dwellings within the application site. The application has not been supported by any indicative site plan.

Key Statement EN2 of the RVCS states that:

"The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area."

"As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials."

Policy DMG2 also states that within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape:

"Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting. The AONB management plan should be considered and will be used by the council in determining planning applications."

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)"

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF also states that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues."

The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

The site is also located immediately adjacent to the Hurst Green Conservation Area whereby Key Statement EN5 of the RVCS states “There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and their settings.”

Policy DME4 also states that “*proposals within, or affecting views into and out of, or affecting the setting of a conservation area will be required to conserve and where appropriate enhance its character and appearance and those elements which contribute towards its significance.*”

This should include considerations as to whether it conserves and enhances the special architectural and historic character of the area as set out in the relevant conservation area appraisal. Development which makes a positive contribution and conserves and enhances the character, appearance and significance of the area in terms of its location, scale, size, design and materials and existing buildings, structures, trees and open spaces will be supported.”

Previous applications have not considered that the development would impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area, including the introduction of passing places on the access track. As such, the amount of development proposed would not be inappropriate on heritage grounds.

Whilst potential visual impacts cannot be considered under the permission in principle application and is reserved for the ‘technical matters’ stage, the Council must assess whether the amount of development would be acceptable in principle.

Under the appeal scheme for the erection of one residential dwelling, the Inspector concluded the following:

“The site is surrounded by a stone wall and is elevated in relation to the adjoining fields. As such, it is already visually delineated from the wider countryside to the north and east. I also appreciate that the proposed house could be further screened by additional landscaping to lessen its visual impact. Nevertheless, in my view the further containment of the site would itself be harmful to the open character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Thus, whilst I appreciate that the matters of scale, layout, appearance and landscaping are reserved for future consideration, a dwelling on the appeal site would protrude into the open countryside and extend built development into it. Moreover it would be highly visible from the open fields to the north and east. This being so, I cannot see that the proposal would appear sympathetic to the surrounding countryside or that it would conserve the natural beauty of the AONB. That the site is not in the Green Belt does not alter my view.”

It is noted that the appeal scheme was assessed under the previous local plan. However, the National Landscape designation remains the same. The characteristics of the site do differ from previous years, as a large proportion of vegetation in the centre of the site has been removed. However, taking account of the above, given visual harm was determined to be evident resultant by virtue of the introduction of one single dwelling, it must therefore be concluded that the siting of three dwellings on the site would also undoubtedly result in a similar if not greater level of harm upon the character and visual amenities of the area and that of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and would introduce significant built form into an area currently devoid of structures.

The applicant considers that the appeal site does not constitute open, pristine countryside and that it is a visually contained, semi-domestic parcel wedged directly between existing modern, two-storey built form. However, the Council would disagree and whilst it was noted when the Planning Officer visited the site that the dwellings at Bilsberry Cottages are partially visible, the site retains an open character which makes a positive contribution to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape whereby any further development would erode the rural landscape and the separation between the open countryside and settlement boundary.

As such, the amount of development proposed, for three residential dwellings is considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 187 and 189 of the NPPF.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

This application relates solely to principle of development and whether the proposal would align with the spatial and locational strategy of the borough.

As such, the impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of surrounding residential properties does not fall to be assessed within the scope of this application and would be reserved for consideration/assessment following the submission of 'Technical Matters'.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance and Heritage:

There have been a number of objections to the scheme raising concerns with regards to the potential impact on the visual amenities of the area, including the potential impacts on the Hurst Green Conservation Area resulting from widening of the track. However, the application relates solely to principle of development and whether the proposal would align with the spatial and locational strategy of the borough.

The impact on the Forest of Bowland National Landscape has been previously assessed above in the 'amount of development' section. As this relates to the principle only, a full assessment of the scheme cannot be made with regards to the specific size and scale of the dwellings and associated development and the potential for adverse impact(s) upon the character or visual amenities of the area and Hurst Green Conservation Area resultant from 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 'Technical Matters'.

Highways and Parking:

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

The Local Highway Authority suggest that widening of the track would be required to ensure the track is a suitable width for all road users. As such, the red line boundary has been corrected to extend down to the public highway.

The specific matters relating to highway safety fall to be assessed under details submitted with a 'Technical Matters' application and highway safety alone would not warrant refusal of this application.

Landscape/Ecology:

Appropriate surveys would be required to be undertaken (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) given the close proximity to mature trees and submitted in support of any subsequent 'Technical Matters' submission to determine whether the proposal is likely to result in adverse impacts upon protected species or species of conservation concern.

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

Other matters

Concerns have been raised with regards to the impact on Flood Risk. However, this would be dealt with at the 'Technical Matters' stage with the submission of an appropriate drainage strategy, should permission in principle be granted.

Concerns have also been raised with regards to the potential impact on tourism as the footpath for the Tolkein Trail starts adjacent to the site. However, the applicant would be required to keep the Public Right of Way unobstructed during the construction phase unless a formal diversion is made. As such, this is not considered to impact on whether permission in principle would be granted.

Conclusion and Planning Balance:

For the above reasons the proposal fails to accord with the development plan. However, as the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing supply Paragraph 11d is engaged. On this basis the restrictive approach toward new housing development in Tier 2 Settlements and within the National Landscape must be considered to be out-of-date.

As the site lies within the National Landscape, sub section i) of Paragraph 11d) requires the LPA to consider whether the development would be in conflict with any of the NPPF policies that protect such areas. In light of the issues raised in regard to the harm to the character of the National Landscape, the scheme is considered to conflict with Paragraphs 187 and 189 of the NPPF.

In which case, the application of NPPF para 11(d)(i) means that the tilted balance need not apply under 11(d)(ii). Nevertheless, the tilted balance has been applied in any event and as set out below the harms would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits so its application would not change the outcome.

Sub section ii) of Para 11d) requires the LPA to consider whether the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The proposal fails to accord with paragraphs 187 and 189 of the NPPF, Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, insofar that the principle of allowing between one and three dwellings in this location would fail to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and would result in a harmful urbanising impact, diminishing its natural beauty through loss of openness.

Paragraph 11d) section ii) also requires the LPA to have particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, and for the reasons outlined within this statement it is not considered that the development is in a suitable or sustainable location as there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle for future occupiers to access key services and facilities.

The benefits of the development have been considered, namely the delivery of housing especially in the context of a lack of 5YHLS, albeit the development would only contribute up to three dwellings to the Council's housing supply as such this is considered to carry moderate weight. There would also be the benefit of consumer expenditure in the area, construction jobs and supporting the building industry supply chain. However, given the development is only for between one and three dwellings, these benefits are considered to carry limited weight.

The granting of residential development in this location is considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and even on the application of the tilted balance, there would not be justification to grant planning permission.

As such, this application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:	That Permission in Principle be refused.
01:	The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) insofar that approval would lead to the creation of between one and three new residential dwellings in an unsustainable location whereby there would be a reliance on private motor vehicle by occupiers of the dwellings to access key services and facilities.
02:	The amount and type of development proposed conflicts with Key Statement EN2, Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 187 and 189 of the NPPF, by virtue of the introduction of between one and three residential dwellings which fail to protect, conserve or enhance the character and landscape of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and would result in a harmful urbanising impact, diminishing its natural beauty through loss of openness.