

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.							
Signed:	Officer:	LH	Date:	16/6/26	Manager:	NH	Date: 17.06.26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0316	 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	16/6/26	
Officer:	LH	
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:		APPROVAL

Development Description:	Proposed extension of existing footpath through the northern edge of the nature reserve
Site Address/Location:	Land to the North of Primrose Nature Reserve Clitheroe

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No objections	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
GMEU	No objection subject to conditions.
EA	No objection
RVBC Countryside	No objection

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:

Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
 Key Statement EN3- Sustainable Development and Climate change
 Key Statement EN4-Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 Policy DMG1 – General Considerations
 Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations
 Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodland
 Policy DME6 – Water Management

Relevant Planning History:

3/2019/0388- Creation of Woodland/Nature reserve with footpath and engineering works AC
 3/2020/0004 - Variation of Conditions of 3/2019/0388 – AC
 3/2021/1052 - Proposal to increase the amount of public access to the nature reserve through creation of additional footpaths and a second bridge crossing to create a mini-circular walk - AC

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

Primrose Mill Lodge lies between Whalley Road and Woone Lane in Clitheroe. Primrose Lodge comprises a former mill lodge, Mearley Brook and semi-natural broadleaved woodland situated south of Clitheroe town centre. The application site is approximately 0.18ha and the section of proposed new footpath extends approximately 340m within the reserve, between an existing bridge over Mearley Brook through to the back street off Woone Lane.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

Consent is sought to extend the footpath network at Primrose Lodge with an additional 1.5m wide footpath in the northern section of the reserve. Some tree felling is necessary to create the footpath.

Impact Upon Amenity:

The proposed works have no impact on any adjacent residential amenity and should enhance the local experience with an improved footpath network.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

The proposed has an acceptable visual impact and would not be readily seen. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms that four small low quality trees will require removal to facilitate the development along with approximately 200square metres of scrub which will have a localised impact only. The materials to be used for the footpath compliment the existing environment and structures that exist. A 2.4m high green mesh fence and new screening hedge is to be erected along the northerly section of footpath to provide an enclosure for the adjacent primary school, with other sections of the path to have a lower 1m high stock proof fence. Overall, the scheme satisfies policies DMG1, DMG2 and DME1 in terms of design / visual amenity including impact on trees.

Ecology and Drainage/ Flood Risk:

Primrose Nature Reserve is designated Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage Site (BHS). The supporting ecology appraisal identifies that the proposals will impact an area of bramble scrub within the BHS, avoiding direct impact on the woodland or plant species of conservation interest. As such the proposals are not expected to have any negative impact upon the conservation status and integrity of the BHS. Moreover the proposals will include enhancement of the scrub and planting of teres as part of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. Neither the Council's Countryside Officer or the Council's ecology advisors GMEU raise objections and the scheme is acceptable from an ecology perspective subject to conditions.

A flood risk assessment (FRA) concludes that the site is appropriate for development in terms of flood risk and will be suitable safe from flood risk during its lifetime. In terms of drainage, the path will be a traditional woodland footway which would disperse surface water into the landscaping either side.

The Environment Agency are satisfied with the ecology assessment recommendations and FRA and raise no objection although advise against pouring concrete within 10m of Mearley Brook which can be added as an advisory note.

Overall, the scheme satisfies policies EN4 and DME6 in terms of ecology and flood risk.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The proposal is policy compliant and will deliver public benefits with an enhanced recreational route through Primrose nature reserve.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions.
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