

RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REFUSAL

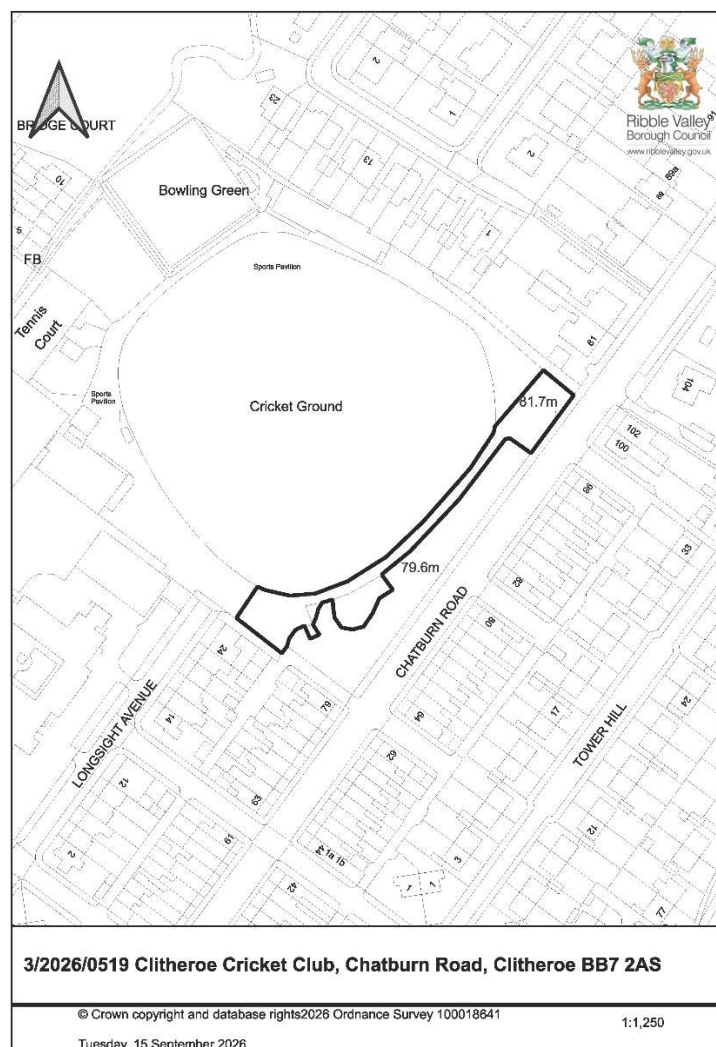
DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2026
REF: LW
CHECKED BY: LH

APPLICATION REF: 3/2026/0519

GRID REF: SD 374780 442526

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR A STANDALONE OFFICE POD FOR CAR SALES, THE USE OF FIVE EXISTING CAR PARKING SPACES AND CREATION OF AN EARTH BUND TO SCREEN THE OFFICE POD AT CLITHEROE CRICKET CLUB, CHATBURN ROAD, CLITHEROE, BB7 2AS



CONSULTEE RESPONSES/ REPRESENTATIONS MADE:

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL:

No representations received in respect of the application.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS:

The Local Highway Authority have noted that there is no change in the existing access for the proposal. However, they have advised that the timing for the collection of any vehicles should be arranged outside of matchdays and busy usage times in order to maintain safety and to minimise disruption to the highway network.

Subject to the above comments being noted, the Local Highway Authority does not raise an objection of the proposed development.

ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:

Two letters of representation have been received objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- More than 5 cars parked on the site which affects traffic flow and causes obstructions;
- Increased damage to road surface;
- Earth bund is an eyesore;
- The site is becoming an industrial estate;
- Previous application was refused in 2022;
- Cricket club hosts several large events which subsidises costs, without notifying the local residents.

Four letters of representation have been received in support of the application on the following grounds:

- Proposal has no noticeable impact – no noise disruption or disturbance;
- Clitheroe Cricket Club is a valuable community asset;
- The landscaping has completely screened the pod from view from the roadside and is a positive addition helping to improve the natural environment and appearance of the site;
- Brings more people to Clitheroe.

Members will additionally note that a ward councillor has requested that this application is determined by Planning and Development committee for the following reasons:

- Supporting a sustainable local business activity while also helping to maintain and enhance an important community and recreational facility;
- The development makes a productive use of an existing site without requiring significant additional infrastructure and provides a clear community benefit.
- The income generated will be reinvested by Clitheroe Cricket Club to provide free cricket sessions for local children supporting health, wellbeing and inclusion.

1. **Site Description and Surrounding Area**

- 1.1 The application site comprises Clitheroe Cricket Club, located on the north-western side of Chatburn Road. The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Clitheroe and is designated as Existing Open Space under Policy DMB4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.
- 1.2 There are a number of mature trees adjacent to the proposal site, along the boundary with Chatburn Road which are protected under a Tree Preservation Order.

2. **Proposed Development for which consent is sought**

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the retention of an existing standalone 'office pod' operated by We Buy Any Car for the purchase of vehicles, together with the formation of an earth bund around the pod and the use of five existing parking spaces in connection with the proposed use within the grounds of Clitheroe Cricket Club.
- 2.2 Planning permission was previously sought for the office pod under application 3/2022/0947. The application was refused in December 2022 for the following reason:

The proposed development, by virtue of its overall design, level of visual prominence and elevational language, would result in the introduction of an incongruous, unsympathetic, and discordant form of development, that fails to respond positively to the inherent visual character of the area or the inherent defining characteristics of the immediate street scene.

As such, the proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Paragraphs 130 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar that the proposed development would be of significant detriment to the character and visual amenities of the area.

- 2.3 Following the refusal, it is understood that the pod was removed from the site and relocated to the Homepage store in Clitheroe. Following the closure of that premises, the pod returned to Clitheroe Cricket Club in February 2025. Planning permission is now sought for its retention.
- 2.4 The current proposal differs to that previously considered under application 3/2022/0947. The siting of the pod has been amended slightly, and an earth bund has been formed around it to provide additional screening from views along Chatburn Road.
- 2.5 The office pod has a footprint of approximately 3.6m by 2.4m and incorporates a flat roof, with an overall height of approximately 2.65m. The pod includes uPVC framed windows and externally displays We Buy Any Car branding and associated signage.
- 2.6 Vehicle storage associated with the use is accommodated within five existing parking spaces located to the west of the pod. Vehicles are stored within these spaces on a temporary basis pending collection.
- 2.7 The proposed operating hours are 10:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 18:00 on Saturdays, and 10:00 to 17:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

- 2.8 Access to the site is obtained via the existing vehicle access from Chatburn Road. This access is shared with Clitheroe Cricket Club, Clitheroe Leisure, Clitheroe Tennis Club and Clitheroe Bowling Club.

3. **Relevant Planning History**

3/2022/0947: Retention of unauthorised standalone office for car sales and area to store vehicles. (Refused).

4. **Relevant Policies**

Ribble Valley Core Strategy

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2 – Sustainable Development
Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development
Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations

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 DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy
Policy DMB4 – Open Space Provision

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Updated 2026

5. **Assessment of Proposed Development**

5.1 **Principle of Development:**

- 5.1.1 The application site is located within an area designated as ‘Existing Open Space’ under Policy DMB4 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. Accordingly, regard must be had to the requirements of Policy DMB4, which states:

The Borough Council will refuse development proposals which involve the loss of existing public open space, including private playing fields which are in recreational use. In exceptional circumstances and following a robust assessment where the loss of a site is justifiable because of the social and economic benefits a proposed development would bring to the community, consent may be granted where replacement facilities are provided, or where existing facilities elsewhere in the vicinity are substantially upgraded. These must be readily accessible and convenient to users of the former open space areas.

It is important to protect existing recreational areas from development. Within defined settlements, public recreational land will be identified on the proposals map.

- 5.1.2 Whilst the application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of an office pod on land designated as Existing Open Space, the area occupied by

the development is limited in extent. The pod occupies a small section of land adjacent to the cricket ground and does not materially compromise the usability, function or recreational value of the wider open space designation. Nor does it prejudice the ongoing operation of the recreational facilities associated with the site.

- 5.1.3 Although the proposal results in the loss of a small area of designated open space, the land affected comprises a landscaped margin on the periphery of the cricket ground rather than an area actively used for recreational purposes. Consequently, it is not considered that the proposal gives rise to a significant conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy DMB4, nor would any such conflict justify the refusal of planning permission in this instance.
- 5.1.4 The proposed development would also provide economic benefits through the retention of an existing local business operation, including the provision of one full-time job. Furthermore, the supporting information submitted with the application states that the arrangement provides an important income stream for Clitheroe Cricket Club, assisting the continued operation and maintenance of facilities that deliver recreational, health and wellbeing benefits to the local community.
- 5.1.5 In this regard, Key Statement EC1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy directs employment development towards the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Whalley and Longridge. In addition, Policy DMB1 provides in principle support for development proposals that facilitate business growth and contribute positively to the local economy.
- 5.1.6 Taking these factors into account, the development is, on balance, considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of the other material planning considerations.

5.2 Impact upon Residential Amenity:

- 5.2.1 Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, its separation from nearby residential properties, and the limited level of activity associated with the office pod, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any material adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.2.2 A third-party representation has raised concerns regarding large events held at Clitheroe Cricket Club and the lack of notification provided to local residents. Whilst these comments are acknowledged, such matters do not relate directly to the development proposed under this application. As such, these concerns fall outside the scope of the current assessment.

5.3 Visual Amenity/External Appearance

- 5.3.1 Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy requires development proposals to 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. The Policy also requires consideration to be given to the density, layout and relationship between buildings, with regard to visual appearance, landscape

character, and the effects of development on the existing amenities of the surrounding area.

- 5.3.2 Similarly, Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework emphasises the importance of achieving well-designed places. In particular, development proposals should respond to their context, including the history, character and features of their site and its setting, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.
- 5.3.3 The office pod is positioned within the southern part of the Clitheroe Cricket Club grounds, adjacent to Chatburn Road. Owing to its location within a prominent frontage area, the development is visible from the public realm and therefore has the potential to influence the character and appearance of the site and wider street scene.
- 5.3.4 In assessing the proposal, consideration should be given to the previous refusal of planning permission under application 3/2022/0947. In assessing that application, the Local Planning Authority concluded that the design, form and appearance of the office pod represented an incongruous, unsympathetic and discordant feature and failed to respond positively to the character of the area. The visual impact of the development was considered to be exacerbated by the open nature of the site frontage and its high level of visibility from Chatburn Road.
- 5.3.5 It is acknowledged that the current proposal differs slightly from the scheme previously refused, most notably through the formation of a landscaped earth bund surrounding the pod with the intention of providing additional screening from public viewpoints.
- 5.3.6 In this regard, Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that development contributes positively to the natural environment, including through the use of appropriate landscaping to help integrate development into its surroundings and create well-designed places.
- 5.3.7 Whilst landscaping measures can assist in mitigating visual impacts, it is generally accepted that such measures should complement a development that is acceptable in its own right, rather than serve as the primary means of overcoming fundamental concerns regarding siting and design.
- 5.3.8 Notwithstanding this, the earth bund itself is considered to appear incongruous and anomalous within its setting. The application site forms part of an open and relatively level recreational landscape, and the introduction of a fairly significant engineered landform fails to reflect the established character or topography of the area. Whilst the bund provides a degree of screening, it also introduces a prominent and visually intrusive feature that detracts from the openness and character of the site and surrounding street scene.
- 5.3.9 Furthermore, although the bund has reduced views of the office pod when travelling along Chatburn Road from the south-west, visibility of the pod remains possible from other public vantage points, particularly when approaching the site from the north-east. From these viewpoints, the office pod remains readily identifiable as a standalone commercial structure. Its appearance, including the

display of corporate branding, appears unrelated to the recreational function and character of the cricket ground and further reinforces its incongruous appearance within the site.

5.3.10 Taken together, the office pod and the associated earth bund fail to integrate successfully with the character and appearance of the cricket ground and its surroundings. The development remains a discordant and visually prominent feature within a key frontage location and results in harm to the character and visual amenities of the area. The earth bund has not overcome the fundamental concerns previously identified in relation to the siting, design and appearance of the office pod and, in some respects, has introduced additional visual harm.

5.3.11 Accordingly, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policies DP3 and N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to ensure that development responds positively to local character, integrates successfully with its surroundings and contributes to the creation of well-designed places.

5.4 Impact on Trees:

5.4.1 There are a number of mature trees within close proximity to the proposed development, which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

5.4.2 The application has been reviewed by the Council's Countryside Officer, who advises that all trees within the affected area have survived despite the formation of the earth bund. However, ground levels around one of the protected oak trees have been raised within its Root Protection Area, extending up to the base of the main trunk. The construction of the bund is also likely to have resulted in soil compaction, reducing soil aeration within the root zone. In order to safeguard the long-term health, stability and life expectancy of the tree, the Countryside Officer advises that ground levels around the oak should be restored to their original levels.

5.4.3 In light of the above, insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the protected oak tree. The raising of ground levels and associated soil compaction within the Root Protection Area have the potential to adversely affect the tree's long-term health and longevity.

5.4.4 The proposal therefore fails to adequately address its impact on protected trees and is contrary to policies DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, which seek to safeguard important landscape features and protected trees. The proposal would also conflict with Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development proposals to contribute positively to the natural environment and conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic and nature conservation value, including established trees and hedgerows where possible.

5.5 Highway Safety and Accessibility:

- 5.5.1 It is noted that concerns have been raised through the public consultation process regarding the proposed parking arrangements. However, the application has been reviewed by Lancashire County Council Highways in its capacity as the Local Highway Authority (LHA), who have raised no objection to the proposed development.
- 5.5.2 The LHA notes that the proposal would utilise the existing vehicular access serving the site and would not result in any alterations to the access arrangements. Nevertheless, it advises that vehicle collections associated with the operation should be scheduled outside of cricket matchdays and other peak periods of activity in order to maintain safe site operations and minimise disruption to users of the shared access and the surrounding highway network.
- 5.5.3 Having regard to the comments of the Local Highway Authority, the existing access arrangements and the limited scale of the proposed use, it is not considered that the development would give rise to any unacceptable impacts on highway safety or capacity in the immediate vicinity of the site. Subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in regard to highway safety.

6. Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion

- 6.1 For the reasons set out above, the proposed development is considered to conflict with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policies DP3 and N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework. By reason of its siting, design and appearance, the development would introduce an incongruous, unsympathetic and visually discordant form of development that fails to respond positively to or integrate successfully with the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings.
- 6.2 Furthermore, the proposal fails to demonstrate that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on protected trees. The raising of ground levels and associated soil compaction within the Root Protection Area of a protected oak tree have the potential to adversely affect its long-term health, stability and life expectancy. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, which seek to protect important landscape features and trees of amenity value, as well as Policy N2 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires development proposals to conserve and enhance existing natural features, including established trees, wherever possible.
- 6.3 Whilst the proposal would provide some economic benefits through supporting the continued functioning of the Cricket Club, these benefits are not considered sufficient to outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area and to protected trees. On balance, the adverse impacts arising from the development are considered to substantially outweigh its benefits and, accordingly, the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION: That the application be REFUSED for the following reason(s):

1. The proposed office pod and earth bund, by virtue of their overall siting, design and level of visual prominence, represent an incongruous, unsympathetic and visually discordant form of development that fails to respond positively to the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings. The development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and visual amenities of the area, failing to integrate successfully with its context or contribute to the creation of a well-designed place. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policies DP3 and N4 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the protected oak tree. The raising of ground levels and associated soil compaction within the Root Protection Area have the potential to adversely affect the tree's long-term health and longevity. The proposal therefore fails to adequately address its impact on protected trees and is contrary to Policies DME1 and DME2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and Policy N4 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to safeguard important landscape features and established trees.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Planning Application - Ribble Valley Borough Council](#)