

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.							
Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	11/08/26	Manager:	KH	Date: 11/08/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0550			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk	
Date Inspected:	N/A	Site Notice:	N/A		
Officer:	LW				
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				Decision	REFUSAL

Development Description:	Prior notification for proposed agricultural track.
Site Address/Location:	Puddletown Field, Old Langho Road, Old Langho, BB6 8AW.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
N/A	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
N/A	
CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
N/A	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 and (Amendment) Order 2018
Relevant Planning History:
No planning history.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:
Site Description and Surrounding Area:
The application relates to a parcel of undeveloped land located to the east of Old Langho Road which is accessed from the public highway via an existing hard surfaced track which serves Field Barn.
Proposed Development for which consent is sought:
The application seeks a determination as to whether the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is required for the construction of a network of agricultural tracks with a combined length of approximately 823.5 metres. The proposed tracks would comprise two parallel wheel strips, each measuring 0.4 metres in width, constructed using permeable local aggregate laid over a flexible geocellular grid system, with a central strip of retained natural grass between the wheel tracks.
<u>Whether or not permitted development</u>
The scheme must satisfy a number of criteria as set out under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

The first of those requirements is that the development must be 'carried out on an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more' and be 'reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit'. In order to qualify as an agricultural unit, the land must be occupied and used for agriculture for the purposes of a trade or business.

The submitted application form states that the agricultural unit extends to 5.7 hectares. It is further advised that the land has been in continuous agricultural use for over 200 years, primarily for the production of animal feed, and now for apiculture and commercial wholesale honey production.

The supporting information explains that the proposed tracks are required to facilitate daily, year-round access to dispersed apiary areas across the holding, particularly during periods of wet and waterlogged ground conditions. It is stated that operation of the enterprise at a commercial scale involves the regular movement of heavy bulk supers, honey extraction equipment and storage drums, and that the proposed track network is necessary to enable the safe transportation of these items between the apiaries and collection vehicles, whilst avoiding vehicle damage, soil compaction and deterioration of ground conditions.

Notwithstanding these claims, limited evidence has been provided to demonstrate that an agricultural trade/ business is currently being undertaken on the land. In particular, insufficient information has been submitted to substantiate the scale, extent and ongoing nature of the alleged apiculture enterprise. Furthermore, review of recent aerial imagery, including Google Earth imagery dated September 2025, does not indicate the presence of an established apiary operation or any associated structures within the holding. The planning history of the site also reveals no record of applications relating to agricultural buildings or other development associated with such an enterprise. While the absence of previous planning applications is not, in itself, determinative, it does not assist in substantiating the existence of the agricultural operation described.

On the basis of the information submitted, the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the land is currently being used for agriculture as part of a trade or business, nor that the proposed tracks are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit. Accordingly, the proposal fails to satisfy the requirements of Class A, Part 6, Schedule 2 of the GPDO and does not benefit from permitted development rights.

Given this conclusion, it is not necessary to consider the remaining criteria of Class A. However, in the interests of completeness and transparency, the Local Planning Authority's assessment of those matters is set out below.

Having regard to criteria a) – k), development is not permitted by Class A if –

(a) the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;

The development would be carried out on a parcel of land which is greater than 1 hectare in area.

(b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any agricultural building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X of Part 3 of this Schedule) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins;

No development on the site has been carried out under Class Q or S of Part 3 of this Schedule within the last 10 years.

(c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;

The development does not include any works in relation to a dwelling.

(d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;

The proposal comprises a network of agricultural tracks.

(e) the ground area which would be covered by—

(i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations would exceed 1000 square metres; or

(ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1500 square metres, calculated as described in paragraph D.1(2)(a) of this Part;

The proposal does not relate to any of the above.

(f) the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;

The proposal is not within 3km of an aerodrome.

(g) the height of any part of any building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;

The height of the development would not exceed 12m.

(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;

The proposed development would not be within 25m of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road.

(i) it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;

The proposal would not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge.

(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming; or

The proposal would not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming.

(k) any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system—

(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit; or

(ii) is or would be within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.

The proposal does not comprise a building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system.

Whilst the proposal satisfies criteria a) – k), as stated above, the proposed development would not constitute permitted development under the GPDO.

Whether or not prior approval is needed

Notwithstanding the above, and in the interest of completeness and transparency, the Local Authority has also assessed whether prior approval is required as to the siting and means of construction of the proposal, in accordance with condition A2 (2) (i).

Siting

Whilst sections of the proposed track network would follow existing field boundaries, substantial lengths would extend across open and undeveloped fields. The proposed development would therefore introduce new built form, eroding the open and undeveloped character of the site.

Furthermore, for the reasons set out above, insufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that the extent and alignment of the proposed track network are reasonably necessary for the purposes of an existing agricultural operation. In the absence of such justification, the Local Planning Authority considers that the siting of the development would result in unnecessary harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.

Accordingly, prior approval is refused in respect of the siting of the proposed development.

Means of Construction

It is understood that the proposed track would comprise two parallel wheel-strip tracks, each approximately 0.4 metres in width, separated by a central strip of retained grass. The wheel strips would be formed using a flexible geocellular grid system filled with permeable local aggregate to a depth of approximately 150mm.

This is considered to be typical of agricultural tracks and, by reason of its relatively low-profile, would not give rise to concerns regarding the means of construction of the development.

Accordingly, prior approval is not required in respect of the means of construction of the proposed development.

Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:

The applicant has failed to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within an existing agricultural unit operated as part of a trade or business. Accordingly, the proposal does not satisfy the requirements of Class A, Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO and does not constitute permitted development.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Prior Approval be refused.