

ALL FROM SAME ADDRESS

FAO Maya Cullen
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Planning and Development Control
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire, BB7 2RA

By Email Only

1 September 2026

Dear Maya

RE: 3/2026/0587 – PLANE TREE FARM, CHIPPING ROAD - OBJECTION

[REDACTED]) write to formally comment, and object, to the application above which seeks planning permission for an earth banked slurry lagoon and the erection of a safety fence.

Executive Summary

The proposed slurry lagoon is unacceptable in its current form due to significant deficiencies in the submitted information and concerns regarding its scale, location, environmental impacts and compliance with planning and Environment Agency requirements.

There are significant inconsistencies regarding the required storage capacity, the size and use of the agricultural holding, and the justification for locating the lagoon at one of the most distant points from the farmyard and close to residential properties. The scale and visual impact of the proposal also appear to be understated. The lagoon could result in an embankment and fence approaching 5 metres in height on the side facing nearby properties. The submitted sections fail to properly illustrate its relationship with the surrounding sloping topography and nearby dwellings.

The application provides insufficient detail on the lagoon's liner, cover and construction. The EA correspondence does not confirm the suitability of the proposed location, while the ground investigation information is incomplete and contains inconsistencies regarding sampling and testing. Important matters including groundwater, soil conditions and seepage have not been adequately addressed. The odour assessment is particularly concerning, as it appears to assess cattle slurry despite the application also referring to storage of pig slurry. The assessment therefore potentially understates the odour impact. Revised calculations indicate significant odour levels, particularly given the proximity of residential properties.

Finally, the site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The application does not adequately demonstrate that the lagoon has been sensitively located or designed to avoid harm to the landscape, its special qualities or nearby residential amenity. Overall, the submission fails to demonstrate that the proposal is necessary, appropriately located or capable of being satisfactorily mitigated. The application should therefore be refused in its current form.

Site Introduction and Background

The application has been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority for this site with the proposal seeking planning permission for an earth banked slurry lagoon which would extend to 60 metres x 25 metres including the erection of a safety fence. The application also includes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and landscaping with native species

A search of the Council's online planning register returns the following site history for this farm:

3/2026/0106 – prior notification for general purpose agricultural storage building 18.28 metres long, 15.25 metres wide, 8.53 metres high to the eaves, 9.88 metres high to ridge under Part 6 Class A of the GDPO. Permission not required – 1 April 2026

3/2024/0476 – proposed general purpose open sided agricultural building 18.28 metres long, 9.14 metres wide, 4.27 metres high to eaves, 5.57 high to ridge. Approved with conditions – 5 February 2025

3/2024/0092 – prior notification for general purpose open sided agricultural building 18.28 metres long, 9.14 metres wide, 4.27 metres high to eaves, 5.57 metres high to ridge. Permission required – 28 March 2024

3/2022/0295 – proposed steel portal framed building to cover over a manure store within the existing farmyard. Approved with conditions – 19 May 2022

3/2020/0525 – installation of new feed storage bin. Withdrawn decision – 7 September 2020

3/2019/0541 – proposed construction of roofed cattle slurry storage facility. Approved with conditions – 13 August 2019

3/2017/0510 – construction of new agricultural building and feed silo. Approved with conditions – 11 August 2017

3/2016/0154 – new agricultural building. Approved with conditions – 14 April 2016

No other planning history is returned utilising the search term “Plane Tree Farm”.

The submitted Design and Access Statement states:

- Plane Tree Farm is a 57 hectares (140 acre) all grass unit of owned and rented land;
- The main enterprise is a Holstein Dairy Herd and a contract pig fattening unit;
- The current slurry storage capacity on the farm is less than the statutory 4 months required by the Environment Agency (EA) and that the EA recommendation for new stores is 6 months which will become statutory in the near future;
- The lagoon is to be covered with a liner (no specification provided).

The application site *does not* stand within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) which means that the standard baseline (minimum storage periods) outside an NVZ is 4 months.

The site is acknowledged to stand within an area where potential risk to water quality is high as demonstrated through the pre-application advice correspondence, with the Environment Agency (EA), requiring an assessment of the ground water vulnerability and the potential implications depending on the finalised location.

The site also stands, notably, within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape – within a prominent, elevated, position as can be seen from the imagery within this letter.

General Comments

No specification for the liner is provided with the application though commentary is noted with EA emails. There are no real design and construction details of the proposals to show compliance with Ciria C759b. It is misleading of the submitted statement to say that the design has been guided and overseen by the EA based on the provided correspondence.

The sectional plans provided show a depth of 5.75 metres (including a 0.75 metre freeboard) with the plans confirming a working storage volume of 4,464 cubic metres. The slurry wizard calculations state a total depth of 5m (assumed after freeboard).

The size of the lagoon has been understated within the design and access statement referring to the proposal being no more than 2 metres above ground level. The cross-section shows the embankment to be in the region of 3.5 metres on the side facing the Hamlet due to the ground sloping away which would be combined with a 1.55 metres fence on top, resulting in an overall height of development in the region of 5 metres further exacerbated by the topography of the area with the lagoon being above the height of the nearest dwellings.

The sections plan fails to show the proposal in the context of the surrounding site levels taking into account the sloped topography and its height relevant to dwellings that are situated less than 100m from the application site.

Furthermore, the suggestion of planting trees in close proximity to the proposal is of notable concern given the potential for trees roots to, over time, jeopardise the integrity of a lagoon and its (unspecified) liner.

Pre-Application correspondence with the Environment Agency

The pre-application correspondence, with the Environment Agency (EA), refers to the earth bank lagoon being lined (and covered), however, no details as to the lining or cover appears to have been provided with the application.

The laboratory sample description sheet states sample depths at 0 metres based upon “B” (large disturbed (bulk) sample). There is no confirmation, therefore, as to the depth of the samples which have been tested in line with the guidance and advice provided by the EA prior to application. The submission states that test holes were excavated to 4 metres with samples taken at approximately 1 metre depth intervals for laboratory testing, however, only five laboratory samples are provided in terms of results which equates to 1 sample per test hole which does not match with the test hole approach stated within the overall submission.

The cross section of lagoon provided shows the lagoon to be in the region of 3.5 metres below the current ground level with trial holes stated to be undertaken to a depth of 4 metres. The Environment Agency was clear that testing was required to be undertaken for at least a metre below the lowest point of the lagoon to ensure appropriate ground type.

Other information requested, by the Environment Agency, has not been provided such as an assessment of groundwater, details as to weather, soil stratification or seepage etc.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in assessing ground water an assessment of local vegetation should reasonably be undertaken. The proposal is only accompanied by a baseline assessment for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain. There are at least two badger setts within 50m of the application site – the extent of which is unknown underground. Working within 30m of an active badger sett is strictly restricted under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

In the absence of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal such implications have not been appropriately considered and the presence of a badger sett, or badgers in the area, could also further result in an earth bank lagoon being structurally compromised as a result of movement. Badgers generally shift, expand and rotate usage of tunnels within a territory with setts capable of extending notable distances from known points of entry.

There are trees adjacent to the application site that could reasonably be considered as important as part of the wider landscape taking into account the site stands within a National Landscape (contrary to the statement within the application form). There is an Alder wood adjacent to the application site with alder thriving in waterlogged ground, as is there, with reeds being prevalent between the trees. High water tables and waterlogged soils suit common alder exceptionally well, as its roots can survive permanently submerged. Lined lagoons are not suitable for sites with high water tables as noted within the EA correspondence and no groundwater vulnerability assessment has been undertaken nor any assessment as to groundwater levels.

The last email, from the EA is dated 6 May 2025 which is some ten months prior to the test holes stated to have been undertaken in March 2026. The pre-application correspondence, with the EA, does not therefore confirm the new location as suitable – just that an (unspecified) location (the attachments to the emails have not been provided) looks more favourable for investigation.

Proposal Justification

There are some potential discrepancies between the submission and previous (recent) planning history. The current application refers to the site as extending to 57 hectares, however, an earlier application this year refers to the area of the holding extending to 52.61 hectares of permanent grassland. The additional information required for agricultural applications (form) completed as part of application 3/2026/0106 also refers to those 52.61 hectares (as being owned) with no mention of rented land which is stated within the current application.

3/2026/0106 also makes reference (in the agricultural information form) to the site already benefitting from two to three months existing slurry capacity which is, presumably, provided as a result of a 27 metres x 9.4 metres covered slurry store. Based upon the location plan for application 3/2019/0541 the roofed cattle slurry storage facility is located on the other side of the road immediately adjacent to the existing farm buildings as well as the silage clamp. There seems to be limited justification as to why the proposal needs to be sited at one of the furthest points from the farmyard which is the closest point to protected dwellings (i.e. residential units not associated with the farm).

The same form confirms that this capacity was associated with 125/130 cows and 550 sows as of February 2026. Based upon 3/2026/0106 the current proposal should, therefore, only be required to provide a further three to four months storage capacity on the basis the applicant has stated they are aiming towards six months storage capacity (on the basis this is anticipated

to become a requirement in the future). There is therefore concern as to the potential over capacity being proposed to enable importation of slurry from other farms within the locality as a service for other farmers which is known to happen within the locality. The proposal should, therefore, be carefully considered and any permissions potentially granted on the basis of being for use of this farm holding only. Despite this, even with such conditions, for the reasons set out within the letter the proposal is still unacceptable as currently submitted for determination.

There are discrepancies, discussed below in the context of odour, as to the management of the slurry associated with the holding and the proposed lagoon. One document states the agitation of the slurry for the proposed covered store would be via an aeration bubbling system whilst contained within the covered lagoon, however, another document refers to access to the lagoon (for stirring) being via low pressure tyred vehicles to avoid soil damage with the requirement for the stone service track around the lagoon.

The proposal is submitted on the basis of not requiring tankers, however, due to the ambiguity within the submissions it would appear that this cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, the proposal utilising an umbilical system, will presumably raise a requirement for pipes to be placed across the road. No details as to the regularity of such actions are available as part of the application which, due to a potential requirement to cross the road with pipes, rubber ramps etc., means management of the proposal in its proposed location is insufficiently clarified as part of the impacts of the proposal. If pipework was to be installed under the road, then this is intrinsically linked, falls within the definition of development, and should be included on the application and/or form part of a separate (concurrent) planning application.

Odour

It stated that Plane Tree Farm is a 57 hectares all grass unit comprising of a Holstein Dairy Herd and a contract pig fattening unit. The SCAIL assessment has been completed, in terms of source details, based upon cattle only and no pigs and refers to a tank with a floating cover (again unspecified in terms of the specification of the cover).

The submitted odour assessment refers to the lagoon providing storage of cattle slurry from 120 milking cows. The planning statement, comparably, refers to the proposal being utilised for storage of pig slurry with pig slurry having a much higher concentration of odorous compounds. Pig manure breaks down to release a high volume of sharp ammonia and rotten egg smelling hydrogen sulphide largely due to diet differences with a protein rich diet for a pig creating a much more intense and nauseating odour profile during anaerobic (oxygen free) digestion in slurry pits compared to the herbivorous diet of cows. Pig slurry produces a higher overall odour emission per unit and releases smells more rapidly into the air than cattle slurry.

The submitted odour assessment is, therefore, factually incorrect and notably underestimates the potential impact and sensitivity with regard to residential guidelines and further calculations based upon the level of emissions using the data provided puts the level above the moderate level.

The odour assessment also refers to the proposed store being lined (again there are no details as to the liner) with the installation of a fixed floating cover (no details provided) stating that it would ensure no unpleasant or odours affect nearby residences.

A revised odour calculation is included with this letter. This demonstrates that, at the edge of the lagoon, the odour would be in the region of 75 OUg/m³ which is 25 times the allowable moderate level (3 OUg/m³). The proposal cannot, as submitted, be reasonably stated to have negligible implications with regard to odour taking into account its location in close proximity to protected residential dwellings (those occupied by parties unconnected to the farm).

The slurry lagoon would be located right on the boundary of the applicant's land ownership as demonstrated by the blue line on the location plan. To the west of the proposed application site is the land ownership of the property known as the Old Barn, Walker Fold (BB7 3LU). The lagoon would be within 80 metres of the residential curtilage of properties to the northwest.

There are further discrepancies between the submitted planning statement and the odour assessment with the latter stating that the agitation of the slurry for the proposed covered store would be via an aeration bubbling system where air is pumped into the slurry to effectively mix solids and liquids whilst contained within the covered lagoon. The submitted design and access statement does, however, refer to access to the lagoon (for stirring) being via low pressure tyred vehicles to avoid soil damage with the requirement for the stone service track around the lagoon being based upon the same reasoning.

Planning Policy

The starting point for determination of all applications should be the Local Plan in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 unless there is conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in which case the Framework takes priority. For Ribble Valley Borough Council the Local Plan is the Core Strategy (adopted December 2014) (CS). The CS forms the central document of the Local Development Framework and is the basis against which the proposal should be assessed.

CS Policy DMG2 is noted to allow, outside the defined settlement areas, development that is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture. It is not considered, based upon the current evidence, that development of the scale (or location) proposed is reasonably needed for the purposes of agriculture. The requirement for some form of storage is acknowledged, however, the location for the proposal is wholly inappropriate and there are notable inconsistencies throughout the submission which raise serious concern and point to the proposal needing to be refused in its current format.

Key Statement EN2 outlines that the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes) will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

National Policy S5 confirms certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements as set out within the list which includes development for agriculture. The policy states that these should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework.

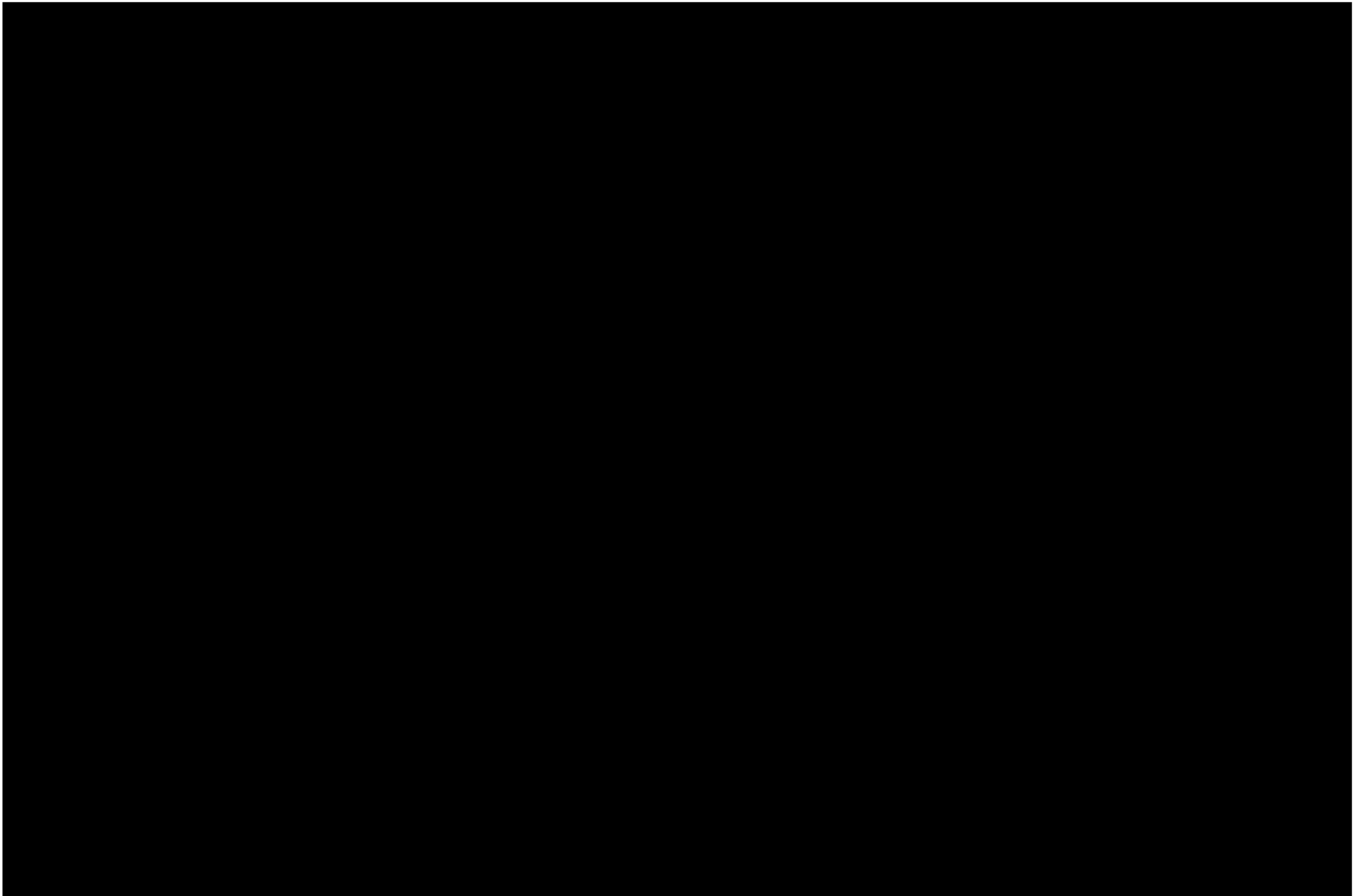


Figure 1: Application site context (red arrow to site for ease of reference)



Figure 2: Application site context (red arrow to site for ease of reference)

Annex B (Glossary) of the Framework, defines protected landscapes as referring to National Landscapes in England. Framework policy N4 states that development proposals within protected landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the protected landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.

The current submission fails to demonstrate that the proposal has been sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to avoid the statutory purposes and special qualities of the protected landscape. The submitted design and access statement acknowledges that the proposal is within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, however, does little to go on and define or discuss the impact or justify the location at the furthest point of the farm, close to residential properties on the top of a hill which will be highly visible within wider views as can be appreciated from figure 1 and 2 above.

The statement states that the external bunds will be managed as neutral grassland and have the appearance of such, however, regardless of the fencing material it is evident that the alteration to the land levels and introduction of fencing will create a notable feature visible well beyond the boundary of the application site and from public vantage points.

CS Policy DMG1 requires proposals to not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area and, furthermore, requires that they should consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible. Due to the submitted odour assessment, failing to account for utilisation of the proposal for pig slurry and given the proximity to residential properties, the proposal is contrary to CS Policy DMG1.

Overall, the proposal, as submitted, lacks justification for its location with the selected location being wholly inappropriate from a management perspective in such close proximity to residential dwellings. There are notable discrepancies within the submission documents which raise concern as to the safety of the proposal as well as its claimed impact in all regards.

The proposal should be refused in its current format.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ENC. – Odour Assessment

Odour Assessment

Given data for emissions	3.6	Oug/m2/s
Standard deviation	1.7	Oug/m2/s
98th percentile	7.09	Oug/m2/s

Area of Lagoon	1500	m2
Total potential emission	10635	Oug/s
Floating cover efficiency	61%	

Actual emissions	4147.65	Oug/s
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If wind is easterly towards Walker fold

Width of Lagoon presented to wind	25	m
Wind speed	5	mph
	2.2	m/s

Each linear meter presented to the wind every second will have a mass of	165.9	Oug
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Assume that the rising gas gets taken by the first meter of air passing over the lagoon every second this mass will be taken by 2.2m3.	75.4	Oug/m3	This is 25 times more than the allowance
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This would be the level of emission for a person standing on the embankment

Moderate impact which is regarded as significant for the purposes of environmental assessment when considering planning balance	3	Oug/m3
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As you move away from the lagoon the smell will get dispersed but topography, temperature inversions could limit this

[REDACTED]

2 September 2026

Planning Department
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices, Church Walk
Clitheroe BB7 2RA
By email: planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk
For the attention of Maya Cullen, Case Officer

Dear Ms Cullen,

Planning application 3/2026/0587 - Construction of an earth banked slurry lagoon and associated landscaping, Plane Tree Farm, Chipping Road, Chaigley BB7 3LT

OBJECTION

I am writing to object to the above application. [REDACTED], which the applicant's own Odour Assessment [REDACTED] lagoon. The nearest house in the hamlet, The Cottage, is 140 metres away, and twelve dwellings lie within 500 metres. The lagoon would be some 400 metres from the farmstead it is meant to serve.

I want to be clear at the outset that I do not object to Plane Tree Farm having adequate slurry storage. Properly stored slurry is better for the River Hodder catchment and I support that aim. My objection is to the **location, design and size** of what is proposed, and to the quality of the information on which the Council is being asked to decide it. The Parish Council has reached the same view and has asked the Council to require a different site within the farm; I agree with that request.

Summary of grounds of objection

1. **The site has not been justified.** The Design and Access Statement (DAS) gives no reason for placing the lagoon 400 m from the farm and 140 m from a hamlet, contains no assessment of alternatives within the 57-hectare holding, and does not mention Walker Fold, its residents or odour at all.
2. **The Environment Agency has not approved this site or design.** Its pre-application correspondence identified groundwater vulnerability and required further investigation. Its consultation response of 2 September 2026 raises no objection, but gives general SSAFO advice and records no site-specific finding on the ground investigation, liner or drainage.
3. **Groundwater and drainage evidence is incomplete.** The submission contains no individual trial-pit logs or surveyed levels demonstrating that the investigation extended one metre below the lowest lagoon base, and the watercourse and drainage documents conflict.
4. **The Odour Assessment is not fit for purpose.** It is unauthored, contains no dispersion modelling, never converts its emission rate into a concentration at any house, ignores the 550 pigs whose slurry the store is sized for, ignores agitation, emptying and spreading, and asserts that slurry odour is not carried on the wind.
5. **Potential harm to the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.** The undated sections sheet, scaled against its own 5 m depth dimension, indicates a downhill crest around 3.5 m above existing

ground; the 1.5 m fence would take the overall height towards 5 m. The structure would stand on open pasture, detached from the farmstead, with only 75 small whips proposed for screening.

6. **An insufficiently assessed pollution pathway.** The lagoon would sit upslope of a hamlet that already experiences surface-water flooding. The submission specifies only an undefined impermeable liner and includes no leak-detection, groundwater-management or breach-consequence assessment.
7. **The need case has not tested water-management alternatives.** In the applicant's six-month Slurry Wizard total, about 64% is yard run-off or rain falling directly on the lagoon, rising to about 76% when parlour washings are included. The rainfall allowance for a 1,500 m² store also needs reconciling with the promised fixed floating cover. Roofing, diversion and the resulting scope for a smaller store have not been assessed.
8. **Ecology has not been adequately assessed.** No protected-species survey has been submitted despite residents' reports of nearby badger setts and curlew nesting in the proposed field. The habitat survey predates the application by more than 14 months and does not assess the adjacent wet woodland and drainage features.

The proposal therefore conflicts with Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2, DME2, DME3 and DME6, and with the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Policies N4, P2 and P3. Each ground is set out below.

1. The site has not been justified

The DAS (Rural Futures, July 2026) says only that the applicant consulted the EA "to determine a site which meets the guidelines" and that an alternative site "adjacent to Moss Plantation ... was discounted as unsuitable after groundwater concerns and the proximity to drainage ditches was identified". That is the entire explanation of how the site was chosen. Nothing explains why, having rejected one site, the applicant settled on a field 400 metres from the farmstead and 140 metres from Walker Fold rather than a site within or adjoining the farm curtilage, where the slurry is produced, where the existing 673 m³ store already stands, and where a new structure would read as part of an existing group of farm buildings rather than an isolated industrial feature in open countryside.

I understand the applicant has told the Parish Council that the existing store cannot be extended because of the SABIC pipeline. A pipeline easement constrains one strip of land; it does not rule out the rest of a 57-hectare holding, and no sequential assessment of alternative sites has been provided. The only reasons that could justify siting the lagoon next to Walker Fold would be that no other location on the holding could meet the EA's guidelines, and that has not been shown.

Policy DMG1 requires development to be sympathetic to existing land uses in its size, intensity and nature and not to adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area; DMG2 requires development in the open countryside to be in keeping with the character of the landscape; DME2 and EN2 require the landscape of the National Landscape to be protected, conserved and enhanced. A 1,500 m² slurry store placed about 400 metres from the farmstead and only 140 metres from the nearest dwelling requires a convincing site-selection case. The applicant should demonstrate why no site closer to the farm and further from dwellings can meet the relevant environmental standards before the application is determined.

2. What the Environment Agency has and has not said

The DAS gives the impression that the site has been agreed with the EA: "Consultation with the EA has taken place and soil tests and design criteria have been carried out." The pre-application correspondence on the Council's file is more qualified. On 2 April 2025 the EA said the earlier site's geology and hydrogeology made it "unlikely to be suitable for a single HDPE liner". On 6 May 2025 it said the

alternative location looked "more favourable for further investigation" - not that it was acceptable - and required trial pits at each corner extending at least one metre below the lowest lagoon level, with the date, weather, strata, boulders, seepage and photographs recorded, followed by laboratory results and detailed design information.

The EA's consultation response of 2 September 2026 does not resolve those matters. It raises no objection and reminds the applicant that the Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 apply and that the EA must be notified at least 14 days before construction. It does not state that the site-specific investigation, liner or drainage is acceptable. SSAFO compliance is a separate regulatory regime and should be assumed to operate effectively, but NPPF Policy P3 still requires the Council to decide whether the proposal is appropriately located and whether its likely pollution effects have been adequately assessed. The evidence needed to establish site suitability should therefore be available before permission is granted.

3. Groundwater, nearby water features and incomplete site investigation

The planning agent has described the new site as having no local watercourses, with only a dried ditch nearby. The application form answers "No" to whether the proposal is within 20 metres of a watercourse, yet selects "Existing water course" for surface-water disposal; the submitted Location Plan also labels "Issues" and "Drain" downslope of the lagoon. Those positions need to be reconciled by a surveyed plan of all ditches, drains, culverts, springs and outfalls, checked in wet weather. The adjacent alder, reed and rush vegetation is consistent with wet or seasonally waterlogged ground. It is not, by itself, proof of groundwater level, but it reinforces the need for proper investigation. Residents report and have recorded the "dry" ditch carrying substantial flow after heavy rain, and the appended photographs demonstrate the wider surface-water flows through Walker Fold. Current SSAFO guidance requires new storage to be at least 10 metres clear of inland or coastal waters, while the applicant's AHDB Factsheet 5 says sites with high water tables or spring lines should be avoided and land drains relocated at least 10 metres from the embankment.

The site investigation cannot be checked against the applicant's own guidance. AHDB Factsheet 5a requires trial pits to extend one metre below the expected final store base, with the water table observed below base level, preferably during the wettest time of year. The sheet headed "Test Hole images - 26th March 2026" says five holes were excavated to 4 metres and samples taken at approximately one-metre intervals. However, it supplies photographs rather than an individual log for each pit: there are no surveyed pit coordinates, dimensions, strata logs, weather records or recorded groundwater/seepage observations. The undated sections sheet provides no datum or reduced levels for the lowest lagoon base, so it is impossible to verify that every pit reached one metre below that level. The IGNE report says the samples were received on 13 May 2026 and that the laboratory had no control over sampling; the submission does not clearly correlate every result with a pit, position and depth. A single investigation date without seasonal groundwater evidence does not establish wettest-condition performance. The DAS's conclusion that the soils can provide a secure bund therefore cannot be independently checked from the submitted material.

The liner is described only as "an impermeable liner". No liner material or thickness, jointing detail, construction-quality assurance, groundwater/uplift design, leakage detection or monitoring arrangement is submitted. Given the EA's earlier warning about relying on a single HDPE liner where groundwater is vulnerable, the application must demonstrate why the proposed containment system is suitable for this specific site.

The landscaping scheme proposes 75 trees at 3-metre centres close to the lagoon but states no minimum root-protection offset from the liner or toe of the embankment. The applicant's own AHDB guidance warns that trees, scrub and roots must be controlled around earth-banked stores. A

coordinated engineering and arboricultural layout is needed to show that screening will not compromise the liner, embankment or inspection access.

Residents report active badger setts close to the site. Precise sett locations should be supplied confidentially to the Council and its ecologist, as Natural England advises. Excavation, vibration, machinery and lighting can disturb badgers and damage or isolate setts, yet no badger survey has been submitted (see section 8).

4. Odour and residential amenity

Twelve dwellings lie within 500 metres of the lagoon; the nearest is 140 metres away. For a development of this kind in this position, a robust odour assessment is critical. The one submitted carries no author, company, qualifications or date. It takes emission rates for cattle slurry from a 2008 Italian study (3.6 odour units per m² per second in summer), reproduces the IAQM thresholds, notes that AHDB estimates floating covers reduce emissions by 61–90%, and concludes that "the impact of the lagoon on residences will be insignificant". It does not do the one thing an odour assessment exists to do.

- **It never calculates a concentration at any house.** Over a 1,500 m² surface, 3.6 ouE/m²/s is an emission of roughly 5,400 odour units per second in summer before any cover. Whether that produces 1, 3 or 30 ouE/m³ at The Cottage depends on dispersion - distance, wind direction and speed, atmospheric stability and topography - and none of these is assessed. There is no dispersion modelling, no wind rose and no source-pathway-receptor analysis. The IAQM guidance frames odour impact in terms of frequency, intensity, duration, offensiveness and location; the report addresses none of them. Its "negligible" conclusion is an assertion, not a result.
- **It incorrectly dismisses windborne transport.** The report states that "the storage of slurry in a covered store or lagoon does not involve dispersion of particles which carry on the wind". Odorous gases and volatile compounds are transported through the air. A report that excludes this source-to-receptor pathway cannot support its own conclusion.
- **It ignores topography.** The lagoon would sit on the slope above Walker Fold. The assessment does not examine whether cold-air drainage or stable night-time conditions could carry and retain odour downslope, and it contains no wind data or terrain-sensitive dispersion analysis.
- **It ignores the pigs.** The Slurry Wizard sheet includes 120 dairy cows and 550 finishing pigs and assumes collection of part of the pig excreta, but the Odour Assessment is expressly for "a 120 strong milking herd". It notes that its own source applies a higher offensiveness weighting to pig odour and then does not assess that source. The SCAIL ammonia assessment likewise models cattle only.
- **It rests entirely on the cover, and says nothing about it.** On the report's own figures a cover may remove as little as 61% of emissions, leaving 39% of the uncontrolled rate from a proposed store about six and a half times the existing capacity. No product, specification, design life, inspection, maintenance or replacement regime is supplied, and the Slurry Wizard still includes rainfall over the full lagoon surface.
- **It assesses only quiet storage.** Mixing, filling, emptying and subsequent land spreading can generate material odour, but none is assessed. The documents do not even give a consistent operating method: the Odour Assessment refers to aeration under the cover, while the DAS refers to vehicles using a 4-metre service track around the bund.
- **It quotes benchmarks but never applies them.** The report reproduces the IAQM benchmark for moderately offensive odours but provides no modelled concentration, frequency or duration at any receptor. Whatever benchmark is chosen, there is no result against which it can be tested.

I ask that the Council's Environmental Health Officer review this document specifically, and that a proportionate but robust odour impact assessment compliant with IAQM guidance - addressing both livestock types, terrain-sensitive dispersion, filling, mixing, emptying and an enforceable odour-management plan - be required before determination. Without it the Council cannot properly conclude that Policy DMG1 or NPPF Policy P3 is satisfied.

5. Landscape and visual impact in the National Landscape

The site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. Under section 85(A1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended, the Council must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty. The National Planning Policy Framework published on 17 August 2026 applies to decisions from publication. Policy N4 says development in Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent, sensitively located and designed to avoid harm, and that substantial weight should be placed on conserving and enhancing natural beauty. Key Statement EN2 and Policy DME2 reinforce those duties locally.

The DAS says the bund will be "no more than 2.00 m above ground". The submitted "Sections Plan Safety Fence" sheet is undated and bears no drawing number. Its E–W section crosses falling ground and does not dimension the crest against existing levels; scaled against the stated 5,000 mm lagoon-depth dimension, however, the downhill crest appears to be about 3.5 metres above existing ground. With the 1.5-metre safety fence, the overall height approaches 5 metres. No datum or reduced levels are given to reconcile this with the DAS. The applicant's landscaping scheme says planting is intended to screen views to the west, acknowledging a visual effect in that direction, yet no landscape and visual assessment or verified viewpoints from Walker Fold and the surrounding roads or paths have been submitted. The proposal is an isolated engineered structure in open pasture rather than a feature contained within the farmstead.

The proposed mitigation is 75 native whips only 90–120 cm tall. They would provide no immediate screening, and the scheme supplies no verified growth assumptions, viewpoint analysis or root-protection offset. The visual effect must be assessed as the development would be built, not solely by reference to future planting. With the buildings approved in 2017, 2019, 2022 and 2024 the farm has already grown substantially; this would be the first structure detached from the farmstead. Its cumulative effect on this part of the National Landscape has not been properly assessed, contrary to DME2 and NPPF Policy N4.

6. Flood risk and the pollution pathway into Walker Fold

The DAS states that the site is in Flood Zone 1 and that "there is no risk of surface water flooding". Flood Zone 1 addresses river and sea flooding, not the local run-off pathway from the fell. Walker Fold has flooded repeatedly in recent years from surface water coming off the land above it. The appended photographs show fast-moving water in the lane and immediately around buildings. The lagoon would sit on the same broader slope, upslope of the hamlet.

If the bund or liner failed, the lagoon overtopped, or slurry escaped during pumping, the topography indicates a potential downslope pathway towards Walker Fold. The working capacity would be 4,464 m³, yet no mapped exceedance, overtopping or breach-flow route and no consequence assessment are submitted. The application form selects discharge of surface water to an existing watercourse and does not select a sustainable drainage system, but no drainage layout or run-off calculation explains how this would operate safely. These are material planning matters under Policies DME6 and DMG1 and NPPF Policies P2 and P3.

7. Capacity and the need case

The DAS presents a 4,464 m³ lagoon giving six months' storage as a fixed requirement, but the applicant's Slurry Wizard shows why the scale needs closer examination. For the September-to-February storage period its total input is 5,136 m³. Approximately 1,261 m³ is livestock excreta; about 1,780 m³ is yard run-off and 1,528 m³ is rain falling directly on the lagoon, with a further 572 m³ of parlour washings (minor differences arise from rounding). **About 64% of the six-month input is therefore yard run-off or direct lagoon rainfall, rising to about 76% when parlour washings are included.** The calculator assumes 1,749 m² of uncovered dirty-yard area and rainfall over the full 1,500 m² store, although the Odour Assessment promises a fixed floating cover. The submission should reconcile those assumptions and test roofing, clean-water diversion and other measures before concluding that a lagoon of this scale and in this location is necessary.

Current government SSAFO guidance says a store will normally need at least four months' capacity; any additional NVZ rules must also be met. Six months may be prudent and environmentally beneficial, but the submission provides no source for the DAS claim that it will become a universal statutory period "in the near future". The existing 673 m³ store was approved in 2019 (3/2019/0541) as providing 120 days' storage for the enterprise then described. The present shortfall and the need to improve storage are accepted; they do not remove the need to demonstrate an appropriate site, scale and design.

8. Ecology

The Biodiversity Net Gain report relies on field work dated 22 May 2025, more than 14 months before the application was received on 31 July 2026. It describes the application area as part of an open silage field but contains no protected-species survey and does not assess the adjacent wet woodland and drainage features in the way needed to understand construction and operational effects. The application form answers "No" to likely effects on protected or priority species and important habitats; that answer is not a survey. Residents report active badger setts close to the site. A Walker Fold resident's representation dated 20 August 2026, already on the portal, reports annually observing curlew return in March and nest in the proposed lagoon field. Natural England's standing advice says a badger survey should be requested where records show activity or suitable habitat exists, with sett locations kept confidential. The necessary protected-species information should be obtained before determination, not deferred to a condition. The site-area figures also need reconciliation: 3,000 m² on the application form and 0.58 ha in the BNG report.

9. Other errors and inconsistencies in the application

- The SCAIL ammonia assessment and the Odour Assessment both model 120 cattle only; the Slurry Wizard sizes the store for 120 cattle and 550 pigs.
- The DAS says the lagoon "will be covered with a liner"; the Odour Assessment says "a fixed floating cover". Neither is specified.
- Mixing: aeration under the cover (Odour Assessment) or vehicles on a service track around the bund (DAS).
- Filling: the Odour Assessment says "a pumped overground flexible pipe"; the DAS says a pumped system that avoids tankers crossing Chipping Road. The submitted Location Plan confirms that the farmstead and lagoon lie on opposite sides of Chipping Road and depicts the red connection crossing the road. The documents provide no design for a lawful and safe road crossing, no Highway Authority consent and no clear operational, traffic or noise assessment for the actual filling arrangement.
- Height: "no more than 2.00 m above ground" (DAS) against an undimensioned sloping-ground section that, when scaled, indicates roughly 3.5 m on the downhill side.

- Water and drainage: "only a dried ditch" (agent); "No" to a watercourse within 20 metres but "Existing water course" selected for surface-water disposal (application form); and "Issues" and "Drain" labelled downslope (Location Plan).
- Surface water: "no risk of surface water flooding" (DAS) against the appended photographs.
- Site area: 3,000 m² (application form) against 0.58 ha (BNG report).
- The DAS claims six months' storage "will become the statutory period in the near future". Current government SSAFO guidance says stores will normally need at least four months' capacity; no source is provided for a universal future six-month rule.

10. What I ask the Council to do

For the reasons above I ask the Council to **refuse** the application. If the Council is not minded to refuse on the present information, I ask that it require before determination: a proportionate assessment of alternative sites on the holding; an IAQM-compliant odour assessment covering both livestock types and all operating conditions; a site-specific ground and hydrogeological investigation with individual logs, surveyed levels and seasonal groundwater evidence; a surveyed drainage/water-feature plan and surface-water, overtopping and breach-flow assessment; sufficient engineered containment and cover details to establish that the design is feasible; protected-species surveys; and a workable, consentable route for the slurry pipe across Chipping Road. The Council should obtain specific advice from Environmental Health, its ecology/countryside adviser, the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Highway Authority on those matters.

I ask that the application be determined by the Planning and Development Committee and that members visit both the site and Walker Fold before doing so. The slope, separation from the farmstead, relationship to the hamlet and observed surface-water pathways are far easier to understand on site than from the submitted plans.

Without prejudice to that objection, if permission were granted, the minimum safeguards would include: dimensioned existing and proposed levels fixing a maximum crest height; an independently designed containment, construction-quality assurance, groundwater-management and leak-monitoring scheme; a specified cover installed before first use and maintained and replaced for the life of the store; an enforceable operating and odour-management plan covering filling, mixing and emptying; landscape planting with an engineering-approved root-protection offset; implementation of mitigation identified by pre-determination ecological surveys; no development until a safe highway crossing is approved; and a pollution-incident and emergency-response plan.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted line]

[Redacted line]

[Redacted line]

[REDACTED]

08 SEP 2026



31.08.26

Planning Application No 3/2026/0587

Dear Ms Cullen,

I am writing as a resident of [REDACTED] in opposition to the proposal of the construction of an earth banked slurry lagoon by Andrew Bullock of Plane Tree farm.

Having studied the submission, I would like to highlight and question a number of misleading claims.

The information submitted in the initial planning permission application by John Metcalfe claims, under site visit, that the site cannot be seen from a public road, public footpath, bridleway or other public land.

Furthermore, it is repeated in the design and access statement 2.7 which states that there are no public rights of way within this site or nearby. This information is incorrect. I walk my dog daily in the area directly adjacent to the proposed location. I do this because it is the only safe, flat space locally to exercise a dog. Walker Fold is positioned on a road of national speed limit with no footpath.

The odour submission would directly impact my walk because of its close proximity. The type of slurry is also misleading. The odour assessment refers only to cattle slurry and having spoken to [REDACTED] on the 21/08/26 it was confirmed that the proposal would also be utilised for pig slurry. Pig slurry is known to produce a higher overall odour mission and therefore challenges the odour assessment conclusion that the impact of the lagoon on residences will be insignificant.

The adjacent area is not only identified on the map as Moss plantation but also home to an Alder woodland, often referred to as a wet woodland or Alder-Carr. Moss thrives in

damp conditions where soil remains waterlogged likewise an Alder-Carr thus suggesting from a groundwater vulnerability perspective that this will be an issue.

I note from Environment Agency correspondence that the initial proposal, further east from our hamlet, was not rejected. It indicated that an alternative design or location should be considered because of groundwater vulnerability. There is no evidence to suggest that a new design has been considered. If the Lagoon had been in the original location, we would not be raising objections to the application. The most recent correspondence 06/05/25 does not confirm that the new site in question has been approved as stated in the design and access statement

2.4 a further inquiry regarding the chosen site was found to be acceptable providing soil samples were acceptable.

The information regarding the soil sample testing is not comprehensive enough to provide the information to make an informed decision. The laboratory sample description sheet states sample depths at 0 metres based upon "B" (large disturbed (bulk)sample). There is no confirmation, therefore, as to the depth of the samples which have been tested in line with the guidance and advice provided by the EA prior to application. The submission states that the test holes were excavated to 4 metres with samples taken at approximately 1 metre depth intervals for laboratory testing, however, only 5 laboratory samples were provided in terms of results which equates to 1 sample per test hole which does not match with the test hole approach stated within the overall submission.

In conclusion, it is impossible to make an informed decision as to whether planning permission should be granted. The proposal is unacceptable because of the discrepancies and factual inaccuracies in vital areas.

Yours faithfully,



NB. Attached is a video of the area adjacent to the proposed Slurry Lagoon. It shows the Alder Carr, drainage ditch and water course and is taken from the footpath. 10m from the proposed site.



Proposed site showing footpath and neighbouring house

Continuation of footpath, Alder Carr and waterways



FAO Maya Cullen
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Planning and Development Control
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire, BB7 2RA

08 SEP 2026

By Hand

1 September 2026

Dear Maya

RE: 3/2026/0587 – PLANE TREE FARM, CHIPPING ROAD - OBJECTION

[REDACTED] write to
formally comment, and object, to the application above which seeks planning permission for an
earth banked slurry lagoon and the erection of a safety fence.

Executive Summary

The proposed slurry lagoon is unacceptable in its current form due to significant deficiencies in the submitted information and concerns regarding its scale, location, environmental impacts and compliance with planning and Environment Agency requirements.

There are significant inconsistencies regarding the required storage capacity, the size and use of the agricultural holding, and the justification for locating the lagoon at one of the most distant points from the farmyard and close to residential properties. The scale and visual impact of the proposal also appear to be understated. The lagoon could result in an embankment and fence approaching 5 metres in height on the side facing nearby properties. The submitted sections fail to properly illustrate its relationship with the surrounding sloping topography and nearby dwellings.

The application provides insufficient detail on the lagoon's liner, cover and construction. The EA correspondence does not confirm the suitability of the proposed location, while the ground investigation information is incomplete and contains inconsistencies regarding sampling and testing. Important matters including groundwater, soil conditions and seepage have not been adequately addressed. The odour assessment is particularly concerning, as it appears to assess cattle slurry despite the application also referring to storage of pig slurry. The assessment therefore potentially understates the odour impact. Revised calculations indicate significant odour levels, particularly given the proximity of residential properties.

Finally, the site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The application does not adequately demonstrate that the lagoon has been sensitively located or designed to avoid harm to the landscape, its special qualities or nearby residential amenity. Overall, the submission fails to demonstrate that the proposal is necessary, appropriately located or capable of being satisfactorily mitigated. The application should therefore be refused in its current form.

Site Introduction and Background

The application has been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority for this site with the proposal seeking planning permission for an earth banked slurry lagoon which would extend to 60 metres x 25 metres including the erection of a safety fence. The application also includes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and landscaping with native species

A search of the Council's online planning register returns the following site history for this farm:

3/2026/0106 – prior notification for general purpose agricultural storage building 18.28 metres long, 15.25 metres wide, 8.53 metres high to the eaves, 9.88 metres high to ridge under Part 6 Class A of the GDPO. Permission not required – 1 April 2026

3/2024/0476 – proposed general purpose open sided agricultural building 18.28 metres long, 9.14 metres wide, 4.27 metres high to eaves, 5.57 high to ridge. Approved with conditions – 5 February 2025

3/2024/0092 – prior notification for general purpose open sided agricultural building 18.28 metres long, 9.14 metres wide, 4.27 metres high to eaves, 5.57 metres high to ridge. Permission required – 28 March 2024

3/2022/0295 – proposed steel portal framed building to cover over a manure store within the existing farmyard. Approved with conditions – 19 May 2022

3/2020/0525 – installation of new feed storage bin. Withdrawn decision – 7 September 2020

3/2019/0541 – proposed construction of roofed cattle slurry storage facility. Approved with conditions – 13 August 2019

3/2017/0510 – construction of new agricultural building and feed silo. Approved with conditions – 11 August 2017

3/2016/0154 – new agricultural building. Approved with conditions – 14 April 2016

No other planning history is returned utilising the search term “Plane Tree Farm”.

The submitted Design and Access Statement states:

- Plane Tree Farm is a 57 hectares (140 acre) all grass unit of owned and rented land;
- The main enterprise is a Holstein Dairy Herd and a contract pig fattening unit;
- The current slurry storage capacity on the farm is less than the statutory 4 months required by the Environment Agency (EA) and that the EA recommendation for new stores is 6 months which will become statutory in the near future;
- The lagoon is to be covered with a liner (no specification provided).

The application site *does not* stand within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) which means that the standard baseline (minimum storage periods) outside an NVZ is 4 months.

The site is acknowledged to stand within an area where potential risk to water quality is high as demonstrated through the pre-application advice correspondence, with the Environment Agency (EA), requiring an assessment of the ground water vulnerability and the potential implications depending on the finalised location.

The site also stands, notably, within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape – within a prominent, elevated, position as can be seen from the imagery within this letter.

General Comments

No specification for the liner is provided with the application though commentary is noted with EA emails. There are no real design and construction details of the proposals to show compliance with Ciria C759b. It is misleading of the submitted statement to say that the design has been guided and overseen by the EA based on the provided correspondence.

The sectional plans provided show a depth of 5.75 metres (including a 0.75 metre freeboard) with the plans confirming a working storage volume of 4,464 cubic metres. The slurry wizard calculations state a total depth of 5m (assumed after freeboard).

The size of the lagoon has been understated within the design and access statement referring to the proposal being no more than 2 metres above ground level. The cross-section shows the embankment to be in the region of 3.5 metres on the side facing the Hamlet due to the ground sloping away which would be combined with a 1.55 metres fence on top, resulting in an overall height of development in the region of 5 metres further exacerbated by the topography of the area with the lagoon being above the height of the nearest dwellings.

The sections plan fails to show the proposal in the context of the surrounding site levels taking into account the sloped topography and its height relevant to dwellings that are situated less than 100m from the application site.

Furthermore, the suggestion of planting trees in close proximity to the proposal is of notable concern given the potential for trees roots to, over time, jeopardise the integrity of a lagoon and its (unspecified) liner.

Pre-Application correspondence with the Environment Agency

The pre-application correspondence, with the Environment Agency (EA), refers to the earth bank lagoon being lined (and covered), however, no details as to the lining or cover appears to have been provided with the application.

The laboratory sample description sheet states sample depths at 0 metres based upon “B” (large disturbed (bulk) sample). There is no confirmation, therefore, as to the depth of the samples which have been tested in line with the guidance and advice provided by the EA prior to application. The submission states that test holes were excavated to 4 metres with samples taken at approximately 1 metre depth intervals for laboratory testing, however, only five laboratory samples are provided in terms of results which equates to 1 sample per test hole which does not match with the test hole approach stated within the overall submission.

The cross section of lagoon provided shows the lagoon to be in the region of 3.5 metres below the current ground level with trial holes stated to be undertaken to a depth of 4 metres. The Environment Agency was clear that testing was required to be undertaken for at least a metre below the lowest point of the lagoon to ensure appropriate ground type.

Other information requested, by the Environment Agency, has not been provided such as an assessment of groundwater, details as to weather, soil stratification or seepage etc.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in assessing ground water an assessment of local vegetation should reasonably be undertaken. The proposal is only accompanied by a baseline assessment for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain. There are at least two badger setts within 50m of the application site – the extent of which is unknown underground. Working within 30m of an active badger sett is strictly restricted under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

In the absence of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal such implications have not been appropriately considered and the presence of a badger sett, or badgers in the area, could also further result in an earth bank lagoon being structurally compromised as a result of movement. Badgers generally shift, expand and rotate usage of tunnels within a territory with setts capable of extending notable distances from known points of entry.

There are trees adjacent to the application site that could reasonably be considered as important as part of the wider landscape taking into account the site stands within a National Landscape (contrary to the statement within the application form). There is an Alder wood adjacent to the application site with alder thriving in waterlogged ground, as is there, with reeds being prevalent between the trees. High water tables and waterlogged soils suit common alder exceptionally well, as its roots can survive permanently submerged. Lined lagoons are not suitable for sites with high water tables as noted within the EA correspondence and no groundwater vulnerability assessment has been undertaken nor any assessment as to groundwater levels.

The last email, from the EA is dated 6 May 2025 which is some ten months prior to the test holes stated to have been undertaken in March 2026. The pre-application correspondence, with the EA, does not therefore confirm the new location as suitable – just that an (unspecified) location (the attachments to the emails have not been provided) looks more favourable for investigation.

Proposal Justification

There are some potential discrepancies between the submission and previous (recent) planning history. The current application refers to the site as extending to 57 hectares, however, an earlier application this year refers to the area of the holding extending to 52.61 hectares of permanent grassland. The additional information required for agricultural applications (form) completed as part of application 3/2026/0106 also refers to those 52.61 hectares (as being owned) with no mention of rented land which is stated within the current application.

3/2026/0106 also makes reference (in the agricultural information form) to the site already benefitting from two to three months existing slurry capacity which is, presumably, provided as a result of a 27 metres x 9.4 metres covered slurry store. Based upon the location plan for application 3/2019/0541 the roofed cattle slurry storage facility is located on the other side of the road immediately adjacent to the existing farm buildings as well as the silage clamp. There seems to be limited justification as to why the proposal needs to be sited at one of the furthest points from the farmyard which is the closest point to protected dwellings (i.e. residential units not associated with the farm).

The same form confirms that this capacity was associated with 125/130 cows and 550 sows as of February 2026. Based upon 3/2026/0106 the current proposal should, therefore, only be required to provide a further three to four months storage capacity on the basis the applicant has stated they are aiming towards six months storage capacity (on the basis this is anticipated

to become a requirement in the future). There is therefore concern as to the potential over capacity being proposed to enable importation of slurry from other farms within the locality as a service for other farmers which is known to happen within the locality. The proposal should, therefore, be carefully considered and any permissions potentially granted on the basis of being for use of this farm holding only. Despite this, even with such conditions, for the reasons set out within the letter the proposal is still unacceptable as currently submitted for determination.

There are discrepancies, discussed below in the context of odour, as to the management of the slurry associated with the holding and the proposed lagoon. One document states the agitation of the slurry for the proposed covered store would be via an aeration bubbling system whilst contained within the covered lagoon, however, another document refers to access to the lagoon (for stirring) being via low pressure tyred vehicles to avoid soil damage with the requirement for the stone service track around the lagoon.

The proposal is submitted on the basis of not requiring tankers, however, due to the ambiguity within the submissions it would appear that this cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, the proposal utilising an umbilical system, will presumably raise a requirement for pipes to be placed across the road. No details as to the regularity of such actions are available as part of the application which, due to a potential requirement to cross the road with pipes, rubber ramps etc., means management of the proposal in its proposed location is insufficiently clarified as part of the impacts of the proposal. If pipework was to be installed under the road, then this is intrinsically linked, falls within the definition of development, and should be included on the application and/or form part of a separate (concurrent) planning application.

Odour

It stated that Plane Tree Farm is a 57 hectares all grass unit comprising of a Holstein Dairy Herd and a contract pig fattening unit. The SCAIL assessment has been completed, in terms of source details, based upon cattle only and no pigs and refers to a tank with a floating cover (again unspecified in terms of the specification of the cover).

The submitted odour assessment refers to the lagoon providing storage of cattle slurry from 120 milking cows. The planning statement, comparably, refers to the proposal being utilised for storage of pig slurry with pig slurry having a much higher concentration of odorous compounds. Pig manure breaks down to release a high volume of sharp ammonia and rotten egg smelling hydrogen sulphide largely due to diet differences with a protein rich diet for a pig creating a much more intense and nauseating odour profile during anaerobic (oxygen free) digestion in slurry pits compared to the herbivorous diet of cows. Pig slurry produces a higher overall odour emission per unit and releases smells more rapidly into the air than cattle slurry.

The submitted odour assessment is, therefore, actually incorrect and notably underestimates the potential impact and sensitivity with regard to residential guidelines and further calculations based upon the level of emissions using the data provided puts the level above the moderate level.

The odour assessment also refers to the proposed store being lined (again there are no details as to the liner) with the installation of a fixed floating cover (no details provided) stating that it would ensure no unpleasant or odours affect nearby residences.

A revised odour calculation is included with this letter. This demonstrates that, at the edge of the lagoon, the odour would be in the region of 75 OUg/m³ which is 25 times the allowable moderate level (3 OUg/m³). The proposal cannot, as submitted, be reasonably stated to have negligible implications with regard to odour taking into account its location in close proximity to protected residential dwellings (those occupied by parties unconnected to the farm).

The slurry lagoon would be located right on the boundary of the applicant's land ownership as demonstrated by the blue line on the location plan. To the west of the proposed application site is the land ownership of the property known as the Old Barn, Walker Fold (BB7 3LU). The lagoon would be within 80 metres of the residential curtilage of properties to the northwest.

There are further discrepancies between the submitted planning statement and the odour assessment with the latter stating that the agitation of the slurry for the proposed covered store would be via an aeration bubbling system where air is pumped into the slurry to effectively mix solids and liquids whilst contained within the covered lagoon. The submitted design and access statement does, however, refer to access to the lagoon (for stirring) being via low pressure tyred vehicles to avoid soil damage with the requirement for the stone service track around the lagoon being based upon the same reasoning.

Planning Policy

The starting point for determination of all applications should be the Local Plan in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 unless there is conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in which case the Framework takes priority. For Ribble Valley Borough Council the Local Plan is the Core Strategy (adopted December 2014) (CS). The CS forms the central document of the Local Development Framework and is the basis against which the proposal should be assessed.

CS Policy DMG2 is noted to allow, outside the defined settlement areas, development that is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture. It is not considered, based upon the current evidence, that development of the scale (or location) proposed is reasonably needed for the purposes of agriculture. The requirement for some form of storage is acknowledged, however, the location for the proposal is wholly inappropriate and there are notable inconsistencies throughout the submission which raise serious concern and point to the proposal needing to be revised in its current format.

Key Statement EN2 outlines that the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now known as National Landscapes) will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area.

National Policy S5 confirms certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements as set out within the list which includes development for agriculture. The policy states that these should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework.



Figure 1: Application site context (red arrow to site for ease of reference)

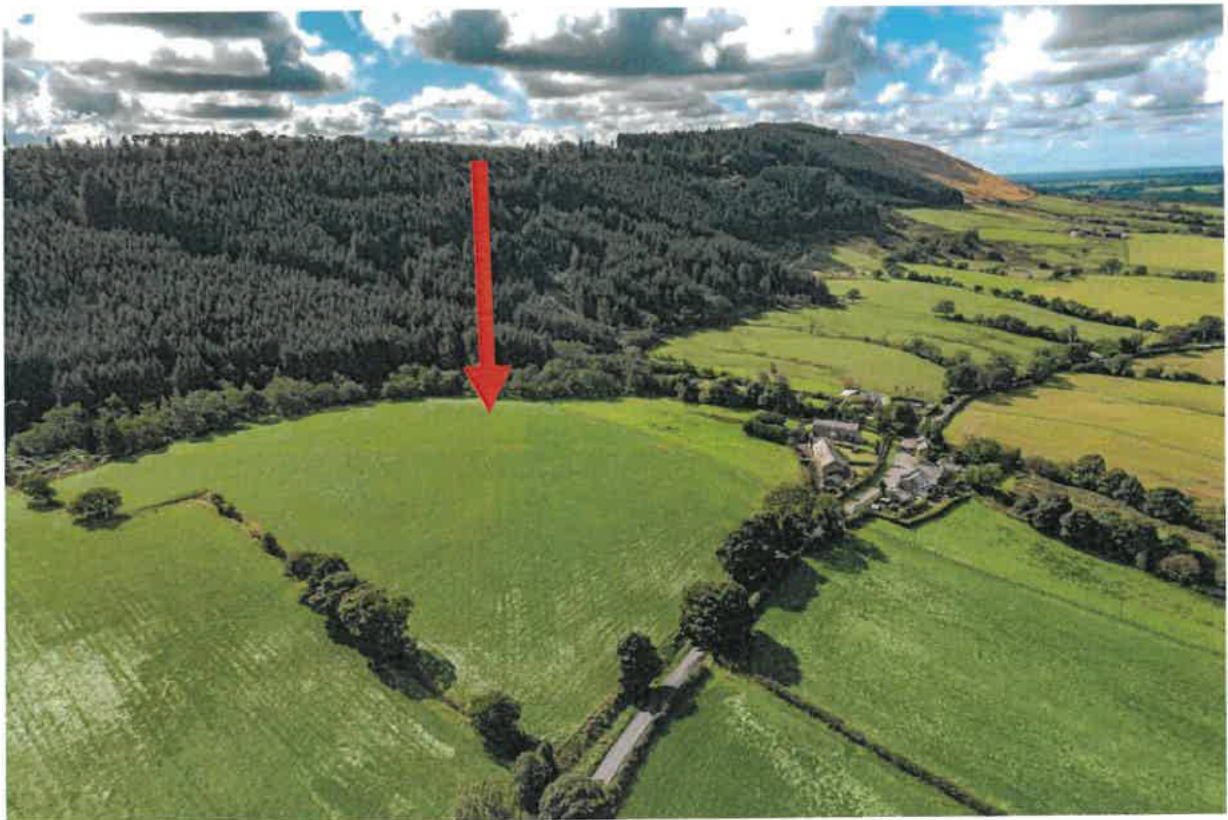


Figure 2: Application site context (red arrow to site for ease of reference)

Annex B (Glossary) of the Framework, defines protected landscapes as referring to National Landscapes in England. Framework policy N4 states that development proposals within protected landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the protected landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.

The current submission fails to demonstrate that the proposal has been sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the protected landscape. The submitted design and access statement acknowledges that the proposal is within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, however, does little to go on and define or discuss the impact or justify the location at the furthest point of the farm, close to residential properties on the top of a hill which will be highly visible within wider views as can be appreciated from figure 1 and 2 above.

The statement states that the external bunds will be managed as neutral grassland and have the appearance of such, however, regardless of the fencing material it is evident that the alteration to the land levels and introduction of fencing will create a notable feature visible well beyond the boundary of the application site and from public vantage points.

CS Policy DMG1 requires proposals to not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area and, furthermore, requires that they should consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible. Due to the submitted odour assessment, failing to account for utilisation of the proposal for pig slurry and given the proximity to residential properties, the proposal is contrary to CS Policy DMG1.

Overall, the proposal, as submitted, lacks justification for its location with the selected location being wholly inappropriate from a management perspective in such close proximity to residential dwellings. There are notable discrepancies within the submission documents which raise concern as to the safety of the proposal as well as its claimed impact in all regards.

The proposal should be refused in its current format.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ENC. – Odour Assessment

Odour Assessment

Given data for emissions	3.6	Oug/m2/s
Standard deviation	1.7	Oug/m2/s
98th percentile	7.09	Oug/m2/s

Area of Lagoon	1500	m2
Total potential emission	10635	Oug/s
Floating cover efficiency	61%	

Actual emissions	4147.65	Oug/s
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If wind is easterly towards Walker fold

Width of Lagoon presented to wind	25	m
Wind speed	5	mph
	2.2	m/s

Each linear meter presented to the wind every second will have a mass of	165.9	Oug
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Assume that the rising gas gets taken by the first meter of air passing over the lagoon every second this mass will be taken by 2.2m3.	75.4	Oug/m3	This is 25 times more than the allowance
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This would be the level of emission for a person standing on the embankment

Moderate impact which is regarded as significant for the purposes of environmental assessment when considering planning balance	3	Oug/m3
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As you move away from the lagoon the smell will get dispersed but topography, temperature inversions could limit this

