

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.

Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	09/09/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	10/09/2026
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Application Ref:	3/2026/0603			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	19/08/26	Site Notice:	19/08/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Permission in principle application for two detached dwellings.
Site Address/Location:	Land adjacent to Fernhill, Ribchester Road, Clayton le Dale, BB1 9EG.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	Lancashire County Council acting as the highway authority does not consider that the site is in a sustainable location meaning that future occupants would be reliant on the use of private vehicles. Whilst the principle of development only is being dealt with by this application the authority's position is that, should permission be granted and a technical details consent application is submitted, if adequate access arrangements and visibility splays cannot be demonstrated then the authority will raise an objection.
LCC Historic Environment Team:	The site may be considered of potential archaeological interest. It is therefore advised that any groundworks across the front half of the site should be carried out under an archaeological watching brief.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Two letters of objection have been received. The concerns raised can be summarised as below: • Contrary to Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy; • Road safety; • Increased flood risk; • Impact on wildlife/ biodiversity; • Impact on rural character and landscape; • Loss of privacy and views; • Within 100m of an intensive broiler unit.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:**Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**

Key Statement DS1:	Development Strategy
Key Statement DS2:	Sustainable Development
Key Statement EN3:	Sustainable Development and Climate Change
Key Statement EN4:	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Key Statement DM12:	Transport Considerations

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

3/2026/0042: Outline application for the proposed erection of two dwellinghouses with access applied for (Refused).

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to an area of land located to the south-western side of Ribchester Road, adjacent to the residential properties known as Fernhill and Rose Garth, in Clayton le Dale. The proposal site is greenfield in nature and is situated outside of any defined settlement limits, being on land which benefits from an Open Countryside designation.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the erection of two detached dwellings. As the application relates solely to the principle of development, no details regarding the layout, design, scale, appearance or landscaping of the proposed dwellings are required to be submitted or considered at this stage.

A similar proposal was previously submitted under application reference 3/2026/0603, which sought outline planning permission for the erection of two dwellings, with access applied for. That application was refused for the following reasons:

The proposal is considered to be in direct conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) insofar that approval would lead to the creation of two new dwellings in an unsustainable location whereby there would be a reliance on private motor vehicles by occupiers of the dwellings to access key services and facilities.

The proposal also fails to adequately demonstrate that safe access points can be created to serve the development without resulting in an adverse impact upon highway safety, contrary to Policy DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 115 and 116 of the NPPF.

When applying Paragraph 11d) ii. of the NPPF, the resultant harm from granting outline planning permission for the development proposed is considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Since the determination of application 3/2026/0603, the National Planning Policy Framework has been updated (August 2026). Whilst the previous refusal remains a material consideration, the current proposal must be assessed against the provisions of the revised Framework and the planning policy context that is now in force.

Principle of Development:

Permission in Principle applications may only deal with the principle of development and are not applications for planning permission. Any other details relating to any other material planning considerations are to be dealt with as part of any future Technical Details application. Planning practice guidance confirms the scope of Permission in Principle as being limited to matters of location, land use and amount of development. As such, these matters have been assessed as follows:

Location

The application seeks Permission in Principle for the construction of two detached dwellings on land located outside of any defined settlement limits. As such, it is necessary to consider whether the location of the proposed new dwellings would be compatible with the overall spatial strategy for housing growth within the Borough as identified within the currently adopted development strategy.

When considering the principle of new residential development, Key Statement DS1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy outlines a spatial strategy for new housing developments which are to be directed to the strategic sites and Principal and Tier 1 settlements. Policies DMH3 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy seek to restrict residential development within the Open Countryside and National Landscape to that which meets a number of explicit criteria.

Policy DMG2 is two-fold in its approach to guiding development. The primary part of Policy DMG2 is engaged where development proposals are located in Principal and Tier 1 settlements with the second part of the Policy being engaged in circumstances when proposed development is located outside defined settlement areas or within Tier 2 villages, with each part of the Policy therefore being engaged in isolation and independent of the other, depending on the locational aspects of the proposal.

In this instance, the proposal is located outside of any defined settlement boundary and therefore when assessing the locational aspect of the development, it is the secondary element of Policy DMG2 that is engaged, which requires development to meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social wellbeing of the area.*
- 2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.*
- 3. The development is for local needs housing which meets an identified need and is secured as such.*
- 4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*
- 5. The development is for small scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated.*
- 6. The development is compatible with the enterprise zone designation.*

Given the site is located outside of any defined settlement limits, Policy DMH3 is also applicable, with the Policy being engaged in parallel with Policy DMG2. In this respect, Policy DMH3 states that residential development in the Open Countryside will be limited to:

- 1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.*
- 2. The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings provided they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.*
- 3. The rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings (subject to a number of criteria).*

The proposed development would not satisfy any of the forms of development identified within either Policy DMG2 or DMH3. The proposal is not essential to the rural economy, does not meet an identified local housing

need, does not involve the conversion of an existing building, and does not represent the replacement of an existing dwelling. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with both policies and the Development Plan's spatial strategy for directing residential growth.

Policy S5(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework (Updated 2026) similarly states that only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements and provides a list of exceptions. It also advises 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.

Relevant to this application is the following exception:

e. Limited infilling within groups of houses;

In this case, whilst the site comprises an undeveloped field, it is bounded by existing residential properties, including Rose Garth to the east and Fernhill to the west. To the north, on the opposite side of Ribchester Road, are the dwellings known as Ekuuse and Rockhaven. Having regard to the relationship between the site and the surrounding built form, the proposal is considered to constitute limited infilling within a group of houses. As such, it would accord with exception (e) of Policy S5(1) of the Framework.

Notwithstanding this, the accessibility and sustainability of the site must also be assessed. Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy require development to be located so as to minimise the need to travel, maximise opportunities for walking and cycling, and provide convenient access to public transport. Significant weight is to be attached to the availability and adequacy of public transport provision.

These objectives align with the sustainability principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Policy TR3 seeks to ensure that development is directed to sustainable locations that support sustainable patterns of movement, provide good accessibility for a range of users, and make effective use of existing and proposed transport infrastructure.

The site is situated within the Open Countryside between the settlements of Wilpshire and Copster Green, which are identified within the settlement hierarchy as Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements respectively.

Copster Green is predominantly residential in character and contains few services or facilities capable of meeting the day-to-day needs of future occupiers. Whilst Wilpshire benefits from a limited range of facilities, including a primary school, public house, post office and village hall, all of which are located within approximately a 20-minute walk of the site, the presence of these facilities alone does not render the location sustainable.

The nearest convenience store is approximately 40 minutes' walk from the site. Furthermore, pedestrian access between the site and Wilpshire is primarily via Ribchester Road, which is characterised by steep gradients and the absence of a continuous footway. As a result, pedestrians would be required to walk within the carriageway for parts of the journey, giving rise to highway safety concerns, particularly given the volume of traffic using this route. These constraints significantly reduce the attractiveness and practicality of walking and similarly limit the potential for cycling to serve as a realistic alternative to private car use.

Bus stops are located on Ribchester Road and provide access to key service centres offering a broader range of services and facilities, as well as connections to the wider public transport network. The nearest bus stop is situated approximately 250 metres to the north-west of the site. Lancashire County Council Highways have confirmed in their consultation response that this bus stop is served by a single subsidised route, Service 45 (Preston to Blackburn), which operates hourly between Monday and Saturday and every two hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Whilst the Local Highway Authority acknowledges that the bus stop lies within an acceptable walking distance of the site, it has also identified the absence of a continuous full-width footway along the route, resulting in highway safety concerns for pedestrians. The steep topography of the route further compounds

these issues. Such constraints are likely to be particularly challenging for vulnerable users and would diminish both the attractiveness and practicality of public transport as an alternative to the private car.

Taking these matters together, it is not considered that the site benefits from a level of accessibility or connectivity that would make travel by walking, cycling or public transport sufficiently safe, convenient or attractive to materially reduce reliance on the private car. Future occupants would remain heavily dependent on private vehicles to access secondary education, healthcare services, employment opportunities and larger retail facilities capable of meeting their day-to-day needs. Whilst some goods and services could be obtained through home delivery, this would generate additional vehicle movements and would not overcome the site's inherent locational shortcomings.

Accordingly, the proposal would fail to promote sustainable patterns of development and travel and would therefore conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, together with the sustainability objectives and policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Land Use

Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy requires development proposals to be sympathetic to existing and proposed surrounding land uses in terms of their size, intensity, nature, scale, massing, design, appearance and use of materials. The policy also emphasises the importance of density, layout and the relationship between buildings, with particular regard to visual appearance, the character of the surrounding area, and impacts on landscape character.

Policy DMG2 further requires development within the Open Countryside to respect and complement the character of the landscape, recognising the special qualities of the area through appropriate siting, scale, design, materials and landscaping.

Similarly, Policy DP3 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to ensure that development proposals respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.

In principle, the proposed residential use of the site would not be incompatible with the pattern of surrounding land uses. As mentioned elsewhere within this report, whilst the application site currently comprises an undeveloped field, it is bordered by existing residential properties, including Rose Garth to the east, Fernhill to the west and Ekuuse and Rockhaven to the north on the opposite side of Ribchester Road. Consequently, the development would be viewed in the context of the existing ribbon of residential properties that line this section of Ribchester Road and would appear as a logical extension of the established built form on the southern side of the highway.

Representations received in response to the application have highlighted the proximity of Low Farm, which comprises an intensive broiler unit located approximately 100 metres from the site. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact of existing agricultural activities on the living conditions of future occupants. However, the agricultural operation already exists in close proximity to other established residential properties within the locality, indicating that the uses are capable of coexisting.

Having regard to the site's relationship with the surrounding built form and land uses, it is considered that the proposed residential use would, in principle, represent an acceptable use of the land.

Amount of Development

Whilst matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are not for consideration at the Permission in Principle stage and would instead be assessed through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application, it is nevertheless necessary to consider whether the amount of development proposed is acceptable in principle.

The indicative site layout submitted in support of the application demonstrates that the site is capable of accommodating two detached dwellings, together with associated parking and private amenity space. Whilst the layout is illustrative only, it provides a useful indication that the proposed quantum of development could be accommodated within the site without resulting in a cramped form of development.

Furthermore, having regard to the size of the site and its relationship with adjoining residential properties, the proposed provision of two dwellings represents a modest scale of development that would broadly reflect the prevailing pattern and density of development in the immediate locality.

Accordingly, notwithstanding the need for detailed matters to be assessed through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application, no concerns are raised in principle to the amount of development proposed.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

It is noted that concerns have been raised through third-party representations regarding the potential impact of the development upon residential amenity, including the loss of privacy.

However, this application seeks Permission in Principle only and is concerned with establishing whether the proposed use of the land for residential development is acceptable in principle having regard to the spatial and locational strategy of the Borough.

Accordingly, the effects of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, including matters such as overlooking, overshadowing, relationships between buildings, and the detailed siting of dwellings, do not fall to be assessed as part of the current application. These matters would be considered in full at the Technical Details stage.

It is also acknowledged that concerns have been raised regarding the loss of views. However, the loss of a private view is not a material planning consideration.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

This application relates solely to the principle of development. Given the nature of a Permission in Principle application, detailed matters relating to the design, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the proposed development are not under consideration at this stage. Consequently, it is not possible to undertake a full assessment of the proposal's impact on the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area.

Any effects arising from the detailed design of the scheme fall outside the scope of the current application and would instead be considered through any subsequent Technical Details Consent application, at which stage a comprehensive assessment of the development's visual impacts and external appearance could be undertaken.

Highways and Parking:

Lancashire County Council Highways has been consulted on the application and has provided comments regarding the proposed means of access to the site.

The site would be accessed directly from Ribchester Road, a classified two-way highway subject to a 30mph speed limit. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) advises that, for roads subject to a 30mph speed limit, visibility splays of 43 metres in both directions are required from each proposed access. These splays should be measured to the nearside carriageway edge of Ribchester Road and kept free from any obstruction exceeding 0.9 metres in height above carriageway level. The required splays must be contained wholly within

land under the applicant's control and/or within the adopted highway, with no part extending across third-party land.

Having regard to the indicative site layout submitted, the Local Highway Authority considers that the required visibility splays cannot currently be achieved, as the visibility from both proposed access points would extend across third-party land. The LHA notes that the Proposed Site Plan is indicative only at this stage; however, unless suitable access arrangements can be achieved, potentially including the relocation of the proposed accesses, the Highway Authority advises that it would object to any subsequent Technical Details application where adequate visibility splays cannot be secured.

The Highway Authority has acknowledged that actual vehicle speeds on Ribchester Road may be lower than the posted speed limit, in which case reduced visibility splays may be acceptable. However, this would need to be evidenced through the submission of speed survey data obtained from an automated seven-day traffic survey.

Notwithstanding the above, the detailed design and suitability of the site's access arrangements, parking provision and internal highway layout are matters reserved for consideration as part of any future Technical Details Consent application.

The Highway Authority has also advised that, should Permission in Principle be granted, a number of issues would need to be addressed at the Technical Details stage. In particular, the submitted indicative site layout shows a footway/verge of up to two metres in width along the site frontage. However, the Highway Authority considers this to be inaccurate and advises that revised plans should accurately identify the width of the service verge, together with the location of highway infrastructure, including surface water gullies and street lighting columns within and adjacent to the site frontage.

The submission of site sections and cross-sections is also recommended in order to demonstrate how suitable vehicular accesses can be achieved, having regard to the difference in levels between Ribchester Road and the application site, which rises away from the highway. Any proposed access arrangements would need to ensure that driveway gradients are acceptable and do not prejudice highway safety. In addition, the first five metres of each access, measured from the rear edge of the highway verge, would need to be surfaced in a bound material to prevent loose material being deposited onto the highway. Appropriate drainage measures would also be required to ensure that surface water is collected within the site and discharged to a suitable outfall, thereby preventing runoff from entering the public highway.

Overall, whilst detailed highway matters fall to be considered at the Technical Details stage, the comments of the Local Highway Authority indicate concerns about the ability to achieve a safe and suitable means of access to the site, particularly in relation to visibility splays and the constraints imposed by the site's frontage and topography.

Landscape/Ecology:

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

In addition, at the 'Technical Matters' stage, the applicant would be required to demonstrate how the proposal would achieve the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net-Gain or provide an appropriate reason for exemption.

Other Matters:

Flood Risk and Drainage:

Concerns have been raised by third-party representations regarding drainage infrastructure and the management of surface water/ increased risk of localised flooding. However, the proposal site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not identified as being at risk of surface water flooding. Notwithstanding this, drainage is a matter that falls to be considered in detail at the Technical Details Consent stage rather than through the assessment of Permission in Principle.

Archaeology

Comments have been received from Lancashire County Council's Historic Environment Team.

In their response, the Historic Environment Team advises that the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 mapping, surveyed during the 1840s, shows the north-western corner of the application site to have been occupied by the western end of a building extending across the site's eastern boundary into the curtilage of Rose Garth. A well is also shown adjacent to the building. The part of the structure located within the application site included a rectangular enclosure attached to its western end, extending across the width of the site and into the front garden of Fernhill to the west. However, both the building and its associated features had disappeared by the time of the Ordnance Survey resurvey undertaken in the 1890s.

The Historic Environment Team advises that the building may have been an informal structure, commonly referred to as a 'squatter's cottage', which were often constructed on small intakes from common land or along the margins of wide highways. Consequently, the site has the potential to possess a degree of archaeological interest, although it is acknowledged that the likelihood of significant archaeological remains surviving is relatively low.

Notwithstanding this, the Historic Environment Team recommends that groundworks affecting the front half of the site should be undertaken under an archaeological watching brief. This would enable the recording of any surviving features or deposits that may provide evidence of the former building, enclosure and their function. This could be secured through the imposition of an appropriately worded planning condition on any subsequent Technical Matters approval.

Appeal Ref: 6002485 (Langho)

It is noted that the Planning Statement submitted in support of the application refers to the recent appeal decision at Land off Longsight Road, Langho (ref: 6002485), in which outline planning permission was granted for the development of up to 300 dwellings, with associated access, rail station car park, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage system (all matters reserved except for access).

However, the circumstances of that appeal are considered to be materially different from those of the current application, both in terms of the scale of development proposed and the locational context of the site. As such, the findings of the Langho appeal are not directly transferable to the circumstances of the present application and are afforded limited weight in the assessment of this proposal.

Conclusion and Planning Balance:

Policy S5(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development falling within one of the specified exceptions should be approved unless the benefits of the proposal are substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the Framework's national decision-making policies.

As set out elsewhere in this report, the proposed development is considered to fall within exception (e) of Policy S5(1), namely "*limited infilling within groups of houses*". Consequently, the proposal benefits from policy support in principle and should be approved unless any identified adverse impacts substantially outweigh its benefits.

In assessing the benefits of the proposal, it is important to note that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land. The Council's most recently published housing land supply position (base date 31 March 2026) confirms a supply of 2.24 years. As such, there is an identified shortfall in housing delivery within the Borough, and the provision of two additional dwellings would make a contribution towards meeting this need. However, the benefits of this would be relatively modest given the limited scale of the development.

The proposal would also generate temporary economic benefits during the construction phase, including expenditure within the local economy and support for the construction industry and associated supply chains. Whilst these benefits are recognised, only limited weight is attached to them given their modest scale and temporary duration.

Balanced against these benefits is the site's unsustainable location. As discussed above, the site does not benefit from a level of accessibility or connectivity that would make travel by walking, cycling or public transport sufficiently safe, convenient or attractive to materially reduce dependence on the private motor vehicle. Future occupants would therefore be heavily reliant on private car journeys to access employment opportunities, education, healthcare facilities, retail provision and other day-to-day services. This represents a significant adverse impact and results in conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, together with Policy TR3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Taking all of the above considerations into account, the Council acknowledges that the development would contribute towards addressing the Borough's housing shortfall. However, that contribution would be limited by the modest scale of the scheme. By contrast, the site's poor accessibility and consequent reliance on private car travel represent a significant harm. On balance, it is considered that this adverse effect would substantially outweigh the benefits of the development.

Accordingly, having regard to Policy S5(1) of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan as a whole, the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:	That Permission in Principle be refused for the following reasons:
01:	The proposed development would result in the creation of two new dwellings in an unsustainable location that is insufficiently accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. As a consequence, future occupiers would be heavily reliant upon private motor vehicles to access employment, education, healthcare, shops and other essential services. The proposal would therefore fail to promote sustainable patterns of development and travel and would be contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, as well as Policy TR3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.