

Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.								
Signed:	Officer:	LW	Date:	23/09/26	Manager:	LH	Date:	25/9/26

Application Ref:	3/2026/0645			 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk
Date Inspected:	04/09/26	Site Notice:	04/09/26	
Officer:	LW			
DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:				REFUSAL

Development Description:	Permission in principle for one detached dwelling.
Site Address/Location:	Land adjacent to 7 Higher Ramsgreave Road, Ramsgreave, BB1 9DJ.

CONSULTATIONS:	Parish/Town Council
No comments received.	

CONSULTATIONS:	Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies
LCC Highways:	No objection in principle.

CONSULTATIONS:	Additional Representations.
Four letters of objection have been received with respect to the proposed development. The concerns raised can be summarised as follows: • Inappropriate development in the Green Belt; • Unable to see any plans for the development; • Not located in an established residential area; • Loss of privacy and impact on residential amenity; • The dwelling would occupy a prominent position and be of detriment to the landscape; • Highway safety/ disruption during construction works; • Approval would set a precedent for further residential development.	

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:
Ribble Valley Core Strategy: Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable Development Key Statement EN4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Key Statement H1: Housing Provision Key Statement H2: Housing Balance Key Statement DMI2: Transport Considerations Policy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3: Transport & Mobility Policy DME1: Protecting Trees & Woodland Policy DME3: Site and Species Protection and Conservation Policy DME6: Water Management Policy DMH3: Dwellings in the Open Countryside and AONB

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Relevant Planning History:

No planning history relevant to the determination of this application.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a parcel of undeveloped greenfield land located immediately to the north-east of the residential property at No. 7 Higher Ramsgreave Road. The site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is situated within an area designated as Open Countryside. Land to the south of the site, on the opposite side of Higher Ramsgreave Road, falls within the Green Belt designation; however, the application site itself is not included within the Green Belt.

Proposed Development for which consent is sought:

The application seeks 'Permission in Principle' for the construction of one detached dwelling. Given the application seeks consent solely for matters pertaining to the principle of development, no details in respect of the proposed layout, configuration, nor external appearance of the dwelling are required to be submitted for consideration at this stage.

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 other material planning considerations are to be dealt with during 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 one detached dwelling. As such, it is necessary to consider whether the location of the proposed new dwelling 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 DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy seeks to restrict residential development within the Open Countryside to that which meets a number of explicit criteria.

Policy DMG2 is two-fold in its approach to guiding development. The primary part of the Policy DMG2 is engaged where development proposals are located 'in' Principal and Tier 1 settlements with the second part of the Policy DMG2 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 a proposal.

The proposal is located outside of any defined settlement boundary. In this respect, when assessing the location aspects of the development, it is the secondary element of Policy DMG2 that is engaged, which states that:

Within the Tier 2 villages and outside the defined settlement areas, development must meet at least one of the following considerations:

- 1. The development should be essential to the local economy or social well-being 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 within the Open Countryside, Policy DMH3 of the Core Strategy is also applicable, with the policy being engaged in parallel with Policy DMG2. In this respect, Policy DMH3 states that:

Within areas defined as Open Countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to:

- 1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposals 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 development 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 (NPPF), updated August 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 are the following exceptions:

e. Limited infilling within groups of houses;

h. Residential and mixed-use development which would:

- i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);*
- ii. Be physically well-related to the station of the settlement within which the station is located;*
- iii. Be of a scale which be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; and*
- iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location.*

j. Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would:

- i. Be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; or*
- ii. Comprise major development for freight and logistics purposes which accords with policy E3.*

In this case, whilst the site is located directly adjacent to a row of residential properties fronting Higher Ramsgreave Road, it is bounded by undeveloped agricultural land to the north, east and south. As such, the proposal is not considered to constitute limited infilling within a group of houses and therefore would not accord with exception (e) of Policy S5(1) of the NPPF.

In relation to exception (h), Annex B of the NPPF defines a 'reasonable walking distance' for the purposes of Policy S5 to be *'around 800 metres, or around 10-minutes' walk time if topography, route availability and quality or physical barriers would prevent or discourage walking from up to 800 metres away [...]. Where a reasonable walking distance is required to be calculated when applying Policy S5 (1) (h), and only part of the site falls within the reasonable walking distance, the sub paragraph of policy S5 only apply to the area of the site within that reasonable walking distance.'*

It also defines a well-connected station to be *'railway stations and underground, tram and light rail stops located within a top 80 Travel to Work Area location partially or fully within England by Gross Value Added (GVA) and which, in the normal weekday timetable, are served (or have a reasonable prospect of being served due to planning upgrades or through agreement with the rail operator) through the daytime by at least four train or trams per hour overall, or at least two trains or trams per hour in any one direction'.*

The proposal site lies approximately 1.9km from Ramsgreave and Wilpshire railway station, equating to a walking time of approximately 29 minutes. The site therefore falls significantly beyond the reasonable walking distance threshold identified in the NPPF.

In addition, Ramsgreave and Wilpshire railway station is not considered to be a well-connected station for the purposes of Policy S5, as it is not located within a top 80 Travel to Work Area by GVA. The proposal therefore fails to satisfy exception (h).

Exception (j) relates to development addressing an evidenced unmet need. The most recently published five-year housing land supply figure (base date 31st March 2026) indicates that the Council has a housing land supply of 2.24 years. The Council is therefore currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land and accordingly, there is an evidenced unmet need for additional housing in the Borough.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal site is not physically well-related to an existing settlement. The intervening areas of undeveloped land, creates a clear and appreciable degree of physical separation between the site and the nearest settlements.

Accordingly, whilst the proposal would make a modest contribution towards meeting the Borough's housing needs, it would fail to satisfy criterion i. of exception (j). The proposal therefore cannot be regarded as compliant with Policy S5(1) (j) of the NPPF.

Having regard to the above, the proposal is not considered to fall within any of the categories of development identified in Policy S5(1). In such circumstances, paragraph 4 of Policy S5 provides that development proposals outside those categories should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including impacts on the character of the countryside and the promotion of sustainable patterns of movement.

Furthermore, the accessibility and sustainability of the site's location must also be assessed. Key Statement DM12 and Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy requires 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 NPPF. Policy TR3 of the NPPF 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 located within the Open Countryside, approximately 1.2km from the defined settlement boundary of Mellor and 1.3km from Wilpshire, both of which are identified as Tier 1 settlements. Whilst these settlements benefit from a range of services and facilities, with Blackburn to the south providing access to a wider range of facilities, the site's relationship to these destinations must be assessed in terms of accessibility by sustainable modes of transport.

Mellor benefits from a convenience store with post office facilities, a community centre, place of worship, primary school, public house and doctor's surgery. Although pedestrian access to these facilities is possible via a continuous footway network, they are located approximately 25 to 30 minutes' walk from the site. Such distances are not considered sufficiently convenient to encourage walking as an attractive or realistic option for many day-to-day journeys.

Additional services and facilities are available within Wilpshire and Brownhill to the east. However, these destinations are in excess of 30 minutes' walk from the site. Furthermore, the route along Ramsgreave Road is constrained by the absence of a continuous full-width footway and includes sections with a steep gradient. Consequently, access on foot would not be particularly convenient or attractive to future occupiers, especially more vulnerable road users.

Similarly, although some services and facilities are also available within the Pleckgate/ Lammack areas of Blackburn to the south of the site, pedestrian access to these destinations is via Barker Lane, which lacks a continuous footway and is characterised by a steep gradient, thereby limiting its attractiveness and convenience for pedestrians.

It is acknowledged that a bus stop is located approximately 130m from the site, adjacent to the Spread Eagle public house. The stop is served by the 25 and 25A bus services, providing connections to Blackburn and the surrounding settlements. Combined, these services provide an hourly service between Monday and Saturday and a two hourly service on Sundays. Whilst these services would enable access to larger centres offering a greater range of services and facilities together with onward public transport connections, the relatively limited frequency of service, particularly during evenings and on Sundays, reduces their attractiveness as an alternative to private car travel. As such, the public transport available to future occupiers is not considered sufficiently frequent or convenient to provide a realistic alternative to private car use for many routine journeys.

Consequently, the site is not considered to benefit from a level of accessibility and connectivity that would make travel by sustainable modes an attractive and convenient choice. The lack of services and facilities within a reasonable walking distance of the site, together with the relatively limited frequency of bus services, would likely result in a reliance on the private car to access a range of essential services and facilities, including employment opportunities, secondary education and retail destinations capable of meeting day-to-day needs.

Having regard to the above factors, it is not considered that the site is situated in a location which would minimise the need to travel or effectively support sustainable patterns of movement. The development

would therefore conflict with Key Statement DM12 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, as well as the sustainability objectives 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. Whilst the application site currently comprises undeveloped land, it is bordered directly to the west by existing residential properties. Consequently, the development would be viewed in the context of the existing ribbon of residential properties that line this section of Higher Ramsgreave Road and would appear as a modest extension of this established built form on the norther side of the highway.

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 application, it is nevertheless necessary to consider whether the amount of development proposed is acceptable in principle.

Although an indicative site layout plan has not been submitted in support of the application, the plot is considered capable of accommodating a single detached dwelling, together with associated parking and private amenity space. It is therefore considered 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 adjacent residential properties, the proposed provision of a new dwelling 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 application, no concerns are raised in principle to the amount of development proposed.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

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 the dwelling, do not fall to be assessed as part of the current application. These matters would be considered in full at the Technical Details stage.

Visual Amenity/External Appearance:

It is noted that concerns have been raised through third-party representations regarding the potential visual impact of the development upon the surrounding rural countryside landscape.

Whilst these concerns are acknowledged, 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.

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 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 raises no objection to the principle of the proposed development. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) is satisfied that the proposal would not result in a significant adverse impact on highway safety or capacity in the vicinity of the site. However, advice has been provided on a number of matters that would need to be addressed as part of any subsequent Technical Details application.

The LHA advises that the development would require the provision of a new vehicular access onto Higher Ramsgreave Road to serve the site. While the detailed design of the access would be considered at the Technical Details stage, should Permission in Principle be granted, the LHA has indicated that the access should be a minimum of 3.2 metres in width and provide visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 215 metres in both directions, based on the posted speed limit of the adjacent highway.

Alternatively, the LHA may accept reduced visibility splays where evidence demonstrates that actual vehicle speeds are lower than the posted speed limit. In such circumstances, the applicant would be required to undertake a traffic speed survey to establish the 85th percentile speeds and inform the appropriate visibility requirements.

The LHA also advises that the first five metres of the access, measured from the highway boundary, should be surfaced in a bound porous material to prevent debris from being carried onto the public highway. Any access gates should be positioned at least five metres back from the highway edge to allow vehicles to stand clear of the carriageway whilst the gates are opened and closed. Additional guidance has also been provided in relation to parking provision and surface water drainage.

It is acknowledged that concerns have been raised through third-party representations regarding the potential impact of the proposed development on the local highway network during the construction phase. However, some degree of disruption arising from construction activity is an inevitable and temporary consequence of the development process and would cease upon completion of the works. Furthermore, should Technical Details Consent be granted, a planning condition could be imposed requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan. This would provide appropriate controls over construction traffic, vehicle routing, delivery times and contractor parking, thereby minimising potential impacts on the highway network and the amenity of surrounding occupiers during the construction period.

Having regard to the above and noting that detailed highways matters would be considered at the Technical Details stage, no significant highways concerns are raised at this Permission in Principle stage.

Landscape/Ecology:

Appropriate surveys would be required to be undertaken (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) and submitted in support of any subsequent Technical Details 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 Details 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: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.

Precedent for Future Development

Concern has been expressed that the approval of this proposal could set a precedent for further development in the area. However, each planning application must be determined on its own merits, having regard to the specific characteristics of the site and the relevant provisions of the development plan and other material considerations in force at the time of determination.

Accordingly, the granting of this Permission in Principle would not automatically establish a precedent for future development on adjoining or nearby land. Any subsequent proposals would require the submission of separate planning applications and would be subject to their own assessment against the relevant planning policies and site-specific circumstances.

Conclusion and Planning Balance:

Paragraph 1 of NPPF Policy S5 provides that development falling within one of the identified exceptions should be approved unless the adverse effects would substantially outweigh the benefits when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. For the reasons set out above, the Council does not consider that the proposed development falls within any of the exceptions identified in Policy S5(1).

Accordingly, paragraph 4 of Policy S5 is engaged. This states that development proposals falling outside the identified exceptions should only be approved in exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of the proposal substantially outweigh the adverse effects.

In support of the proposal, the development would provide one new dwelling, thereby making a contribution towards the Borough's housing supply. This benefit attracts weight in favour of the proposal, particularly given the Council's current five-year housing land supply position. However, having regard to the small scale of the scheme, its contribution would be limited.

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.

Set against these benefits, the proposal site is considered to occupy an unsustainable location. The range of services and facilities available with a reasonable walking distance of the site are limited and whilst bus services are available from the nearby stop on Mellor Lane, the overall level of accessibility and connectivity of the site is not considered sufficient to materially reduce reliance on the private car for journeys to employment, education, retail, leisure and other essential services.

Taking the above into account, the grant of Permission in Principle would result in residential development within the Open Countryside, outside a defined settlement boundary, in a location that does not adequately support sustainable patterns of development and movement. As such, it is not considered that the benefits of the proposal would substantially outweigh the adverse effects so as to justify the approval of the application in this case.

As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised, the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION:	That planning consent be refused for the following reason:
01:	The proposed development would result in the creation of a new dwellinghouse in an unsustainable location that is not sufficiently accessible by sustainable modes of transport to materially reduce reliance on the private car for journeys to essential services and facilities. The proposal would therefore fail to minimise the need to travel or encourage travel by sustainable modes and would conflict with Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, as well as Policy TR3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.