



ROMAN SUMMER



PLANNING STATEMENT

DOCKBER LAITHE FARM, SAWLEY OLD BROW, SAWLEY, BB7 4LF

SEPTEMBER 2026

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Appendix 1

Confirmation from the applicant's landlord explaining why he will not permit the installation of a flue at the Company's HQ

Appendix 2

Certification from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports a full S73A planning application submitted by Beloved Pets Limited, which seeks retrospective planning permission for the construction of a steel portal framed building with associated chimney stack, to be used as a pet crematorium at Dockber Laithe Farm, Sawley Old Brow, Sawley, BB7 4LF.
- 1.2 The application follows recent refusal of two broadly similar applications, namely refs 3/2025/0517 (refused 18th December 2025) and 3/2026/0154 (refused 8th May 2026).
- 1.3 Following the second of those approvals, and in an attempt to resolve matters and hopefully avoid a third refusal and an associated appeal, our client sought formal advice from the LPA in June 2026. A site meeting was held on 1st July 2026, and the LPA issued its written feedback on 9th July 2026 (ref: RV/2026/ENQ/00063).
- 1.4 This third planning application seeks to respond as positively and pragmatically as possible to the above background. It introduces adjustment to the scheme details in respect of a modest increase in the building in an attempt to address the concern expressed about the extraction flue. It also supplements our client's previous planning case in response to certain comments from the LPA during the course of our recent discussions.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement summarises the content of the application and sets out our response to the reasons for refusing the previous application. It assesses the merits of the proposal against relevant planning policies at both the national and local level, and discusses other material factors that call for consideration as part of the overall planning balance.
- 1.6 The application is supported by the following materials:
- Application form and ownership certificate
 - This Planning Statement

- Consideration of Potential Odour Impact (February 2026) (Martin Environmental Solutions Ltd)
- The following drawings:
 - RS/JB/Loc01 – Site Location Plan
 - RS/JB/PostD-01 – As Built Site Block Plan
 - RS/JB/Own01 – Plan showing extent of agricultural unit
 - Access Route Plan
 - RS/JB/ELV01/V2 – North Elevation: Pre-Development and Post-Development – Revision V2
 - RS/JB/ELV02/V2 – West and East Elevations: Pre-Development and Post-Development – Revision V2
 - RS/JB/FLOOR 01/V2 – Floor Plan – Revision V2
 - RS/JB/ROOF 01/V2 – Roof Plan – Revision V2

1.7 The remainder of this Statement is structured as below:

- Section 2.0 summarises the recent planning history.
- Section 3.0 explains the Applicant's business and the need for / details of the revised proposal.
- Section 4.0 explains why this site has been selected for the proposed facility.
- Section 5.0 discusses the consistency of the proposal with the Development Plan
- Section 6.0 discusses its consistency with the recently revised NPPF as "*a material consideration of critical importance*".
- Section 7.0 sets out the overall planning balance and our conclusions.

2.0 Recent Planning History

- 2.1 The first of the previous planning applications (3/2025/0517) was submitted retrospectively in July 2025 in an attempt to regularise the construction of the steel portal framed building and associated chimney stack for use as a pet cremation facility.
- 2.2 It was accompanied by a short covering letter prepared by the Applicant's former agent, explaining that the building had already been constructed and was intended to support a small scale pet crematorium associated with an established business based in Burnley. The submission also included the application form, an Odour Assessment, agricultural holding maps, site location plans and elevation drawings.
- 2.3 The applicant explained that the operational model involved the collection of deceased pets from clients' homes, transfer to the Company's HQ at Burnley and then – in order to minimise journeys – transport to the cremation facility at Dockber Laithe. Following cremation, the ashes are returned to Burnley for packaging and delivery to customers.
- 2.4 It was confirmed that the Dockber Laithe site is not open to the public, that all waste materials would be removed from the site, and that vehicle movements would be limited to those of the site operators - not anticipated to exceed four journeys per day.
- 2.5 It was explained that the cremator, chimney and associated equipment are fully licensed and certified by DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency.
- 2.6 The development was presented as a rural diversification proposal intended to support the viability of the agricultural enterprise in which it sits, with the building designed specifically for its use and constructed in materials consistent with surrounding farm buildings.
- 2.7 The application was refused in December 2025 for the following reasons:
1. *The application fails to sufficiently evidence how the development is a genuine farm diversification scheme and the development is not considered to constitute a small-*

scale use that is appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated, contrary to Key Statement EC1 and Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

2. *The development is not considered to be a sustainable use due to the involvement of travelling between two sites, with the application site being located in the rural location of Sawley, which is not considered to be a sustainable location and does not minimise the need to travel, whereby the business relies on the use of private motor vehicle use. No information has been submitted to demonstrate why the businesses cannot be operated from one premises or in a more sustainable location closer to the applicant's other site, contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.*
3. *The application fails to demonstrate that the development can be appropriately mitigated to avoid future incidents of adverse smoke and odour emissions from the development. Therefore the development fails to protect the amenities of nearby surrounding residential properties from adverse odour and smoke pollution, contrary to Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.*
4. *The proposed development, specifically the erection of an industrial flue/chimney, is considered to introduce an alien feature which is not appropriate to the agricultural character of the surrounding landscape, failing to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, contrary to the requirements of Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF.*

- 2.8 Following that refusal, a second application (supported by further information) was submitted, which was refused on 8th May 2026 (ref 3/2026/0154). That sought to address the above reasons, and indeed succeeded in part (in respect of Reason 3 - odour), but the application was ultimately refused for essentially the same reasons 1, 2 and 4 above).

2.9 Following that second refusal, and in an attempt to resolve matters and avoid a third refusal, our client sought formal advice from the LPA in June 2026. A site meeting was held on 1st July 2026, and the LPA issued its written feedback on 9th July 2026 (ref: RV/2026/ENQ/00063).

2.10 In its letter, the LPA maintained concerns regarding the principle and sustainability of the development, but at the same time provided guidance as to the evidence and amendments that could potentially assist in addressing the previous reasons for refusal. In particular:

- **Landscape and visual impact:** the LPA indicated that increasing the height of the crematorium building could potentially reduce the visual impact of the flue to an acceptable level, provided that the building remains subservient to the adjoining agricultural building.
- **Farm diversification:** it was suggested that further evidence might be provided to clearly establish the nature and scale of the existing agricultural enterprise, including stocking levels, agricultural activities and accounts, existing diversification income streams and the relative proportions of agricultural and diversification income. The LPA nevertheless advised that establishing genuine farm diversification would not, by itself, overcome the separate requirements of Policy DMG2 concerning local need and benefit.
- **Local need and benefit:** the LPA suggested that evidence be submitted to demonstrate that the business meets an identifiable local need or provides a local benefit. The LPA suggested evidence concerning the availability of comparable services from veterinary practices within the Ribble Valley and wider East Lancashire area, confirmation regarding the services provided by the previously identified Crawshawbooth facility, and comprehensive information regarding the geographical distribution of the Applicant's customer base.

- **Alternative sites and the two-site operation:** the LPA maintained its view that the activities are inherently industrial in nature and that a consolidated operation would generally be better suited to an industrial or commercial setting. It also maintained its concern that operating between Burnley and Sawley generates additional vehicle movements compared with a single-site operation.

2.11 This third application seeks to address the expressed concerns insofar as possible, notwithstanding that the Applicant respectfully continues to not agree with the LPA on all aspects of the previous refusals.

3.0 About the Applicant and the Need for / Details of the Proposal

- 3.1 Beloved Pets Limited is a small licensed independent pet crematorium business providing home euthanasia and cremation services across Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and beyond.
- 3.2 The Company has recently been shortlisted as a finalist in two categories at the Lancashire Red Rose Business Awards and has received in excess of 1,000 five-star Google reviews. The Company operates with a strong commitment to its core values, sustainable practices, and active community engagement, and strives to deliver a dignified and meaningful service to pets and their owners.
- 3.3 Through its operations, the Company supports environmental initiatives and is committed to engaging exclusively in ethical business practices. Community support is central to the Company's ethos. It actively contributes to a range of charitable organisations, local businesses, and initiatives that align with its values, including the sponsorship of local animal charities and the provision of care for pets in need. These efforts are designed to support pets and their owners during challenging times.
- 3.4 In addition, the Company encourages employees to volunteer their time and skills to causes they are passionate about, fostering a culture of generosity, compassion, and social responsibility throughout the organisation.
- 3.5 Its headquarters is at Burnley Bridge Business Park in Burnley, but there is no scope to provide a crematorium facility at that location. The landlord will not permit it (see evidence at *Appendix 1*).
- 3.6 The business offers a home collection service for pets which have died at home or where owners have taken the difficult decision to euthanise.
- 3.7 The business collects pets from either homes or veterinary practices; transports the deceased to either its Burnley HQ for preparation or directly to the cremator facility;

sensitively, quickly and hygienically undertakes cremation; and reunites owners with pet ashes within a few days.

- 3.8 It is important to highlight that the facility will not be visited by any customers, and no 'waste' materials will be stored on the site. The only vehicle movements will be negligible – around 4 journeys per day - and those of employees of the business. Due to the small size and capacity of the facility, only one member of staff will usually attend the site.
- 3.9 One cremator sits inside the building, containing two chambers – one for small pets and one for larger pets (as seen on the photograph below).



- 3.10 Modern cremators such as these function in a straightforward and carefully controlled way. The pet is placed into the fully sealed cremation chamber, where burners gradually raise the temperature to a very high level. The secondary chamber is generally maintained at a temperature of around 850 degrees Celsius, whilst the primary chambers will vary in temperature dependant upon factors such as the size of the deceased pet – normally between 850 to 1,000 degrees.
- 3.11 At such temperatures, the natural organic material is completely broken down by heat in a controlled supply of oxygen.
- 3.12 What remains at the end of the process are clean, dry bone fragments, which are allowed to cool and then be processed into ashes, to be returned to customers.
- 3.13 Such equipment used in the UK is specifically designed for small animal cremation and must meet strict manufacturing and safety standards. Pet cremators are designed to be clean, efficient and environmentally responsible. They use precise temperature controls and advanced chamber design to ensure that combustion is complete, meaning gases are fully burned before leaving the system out of the flue (with cowel) that projects from the roof.
- 3.14 Units include secondary combustion or “afterburn” zones, which reheat exhaust gases to remove odour, smoke and unburnt particles. As a result, when operated correctly and in line with conditions, modern pet cremators do not produce noticeable odour, visible smoke or harmful pollutants. This technology ensures that pet cremation is a discrete, hygienic and low-impact process that is entirely unharful.
- 3.15 The cremators installed inside the building are licensed and certified by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) (see *Appendix 2*). APHA is part of DEFRA, responsible for protecting animal and plant health and safeguarding the agricultural and food industries. It oversees and enforces rules relating to animal health, welfare and biosecurity. This includes regulating activities such as the handling and disposal of animal by-products, disease control, livestock identification and movements, and approving and monitoring facilities such as animal crematoria and incinerators. Its role is to ensure that these

activities are carried out safely, hygienically and in a way that protects public health, animal health and the environment.

- 3.16 The small building has been designed specifically for its intended use, in contextual materials that reflect the immediate agricultural surroundings / buildings.
- 3.17 A cowl is fitted above the stack. The purpose of that is to help the flue system work safely, efficiently and consistently. In simple terms, the cowl helps to control how air and exhaust gases move in and out of the chimney. By shaping the airflow at the top of the flue, it assists in maintaining a steady upward draw, which is important for ensuring that combustion gases are carried away properly and do not linger or fall back down the chimney.
- 3.18 The cowl also helps protect the system from external influences such as wind and weather. In windy conditions, downdraughts can disrupt the normal flow of gases and potentially affect how efficiently the cremator operates. The cowl is designed to minimise these effects by deflecting wind and stabilising airflow, helping the cremator maintain the correct operating conditions.
- 3.19 In addition, it prevents rain, debris or birds from entering the flue, which could otherwise interfere with the equipment.
- 3.20 The cowl is therefore a standard and practical component that supports safe operation, efficiency and environmental control.

4.0 Site Selection

- 4.1 For understandable reasons, and while the cremation operation is fully licenced / regulated, small scale, safe, hygienic and generates practically no smoke or odour, there is inevitable sensitivity about locating such facilities very close to homes, businesses, schools and suchlike.
- 4.2 Without a cremation facility, our client's business cannot operate, and as such it is crucial to the business to have identified an appropriate site.
- 4.3 Due to the above factors, a site in the rural area – distant from homes and other sensitive uses – naturally lends itself to such activities.
- 4.4 The location must also be located to serve the business's natural catchment and its core customer base across the whole of Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester (indeed beyond that). However, it is worth highlighting that – currently – around 85% of Company business is undertaken in the East Lancashire area.
- 4.5 The subject site is ideal in many respects, as explained below.
- 4.6 First, it forms part of a large working farm with an array of large agricultural / quasi industrial 'sheds'. The proposal is a small single storey structure that has been bolted discretely onto one such large shed (as shown on the photographs that follow), with little visibility beyond the immediate confines of the farm. Whilst open countryside and National Landscape, the immediate context of the location is far from beautiful, in the midst of much larger utilitarian structures, to such extent that the building is largely 'lost' within that context. Here we would highlight that the LPA has raised no previous concerns about the building itself. Its only expressed concerns relate to the flue that emerges from its roof.

Photographs taken in February 2026:







- 4.7 Wider public vantage points are limited and from some distance. The closest such viewpoint is a quite narrow view from bridleway BW0339020 as seen below.



- 4.8 That viewpoint is seen in the context of the wider farmstead and is hardly offensive (as below).



- 4.9 Here we note during the course of the two previous application Lancashire County Council Public Rights of Way Team raised no objection, confirming that the development does not cause a significant impact to bridleway BW0339020.
- 4.10 In positive response to the LPA's comments during recent pre-application dialogue, it is now proposed to modestly increase the height of the building to screen the lower part of the flue. Here we again note that the previous applications were not refused on the basis of the building itself, but solely in respect of the flue.
- 4.11 The selected site is some distance from sensitive receptors. The closest of those is the landowner's / farmer's house, over 100 metres distance. The next closest dwellings are circa 205 metres distance, with no direct intervisibility and sizeable buildings in between.



- 4.11 Prevailing wind conditions are from west to west-south-westerly, meaning any emissions are carried away from residential receptors across open agricultural land.

- 4.12 Notwithstanding that, given the absence of ‘smoke’, the overwhelming absence of odour arising from the facility and the total absence of hazardous emissions, it is evident that no material harm does or can arise from such a small facility in this location. That absence of harm – arising from its location – is a further locational benefit.
- 4.13 Given the wide geographical area serviced by the business – ie the entirety of Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and beyond (such as parts of Cheshire, Cumbria and West Yorkshire), there is no one obvious or ‘ideal’ site to locate the facility. The extent of traffic / journey will be the same irrespective of where it is located, be that in Burnley (where the applicant has been advised by the landowner that he cannot install a flue); in central Liverpool, Manchester; or anywhere else in North West England.
- 4.14 Furthermore, it is important that the facility is located within reasonable distance of the Company’s headquarters in Burnley around 9 miles away, which is a perfectly serviceable distance. When deceased pets are collected, they are transported to the Burnley HQ for storage in a controlled cool area, and then transported to Sawley for cremation within 24 hours.
- 4.15 The selected location is also suitable in respect of its positive contribution to the diversification of the rural economy. Locating the facility in the rural area and within the context of a working farm has synergy with policies at local and national level that seek to diversify and strengthen the rural economy.
- 4.16 The proposal is presented as one of the diversification of the rural economy. The facility is located within part of a long established agricultural enterprise that – like most such enterprises – faces ongoing financial pressures. Those challenges stem in part from the phased reduction of Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) support, rising production costs, and heightened market volatility.

4.17 The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) has long acted as a key safety net for farmers by supplementing core agricultural income, with payments historically making up a significant proportion of total farm business income and helping many enterprises remain viable while market returns fluctuate. BPS payments were phased out as part of the agricultural transition and replaced by delinked payments and other support schemes, but these are being progressively reduced each year, with the last full BPS year in 2023 and direct support expected to diminish further through to 2027 and beyond.

4.18 This shift has led to reduced and less predictable direct income for farms, undermining cash flow planning and placing heightened emphasis on the need to generate income from non-traditional activities on the holding. The website link below provides a clear explanation.

<https://www.edwinthompson.co.uk/end-of-basic-payment-scheme-2026/>

4.19 This reduction in direct support coincides with broader and much publicised financial pressures in UK agriculture, including rising input costs and volatile commodity markets, contributing to a challenging economic environment in which many farms are struggling to generate profit from production alone. Recent national data and industry reports show significant declines in farm business income for major farm types, with a substantial proportion of farms making losses or very low net returns, and the relative importance of traditional subsidies such as BPS to overall profitability has declined sharply.

4.20 These trends are mirrored across England, reflecting a sector increasingly reliant on diversified activities to sustain farm businesses, with many farmers exploring alternative income streams to supplement core farming activity.

4.21 In this context, locating the proposed facility in the rural area and within a working farm environment not only aligns with national and local planning policy support for rural diversification and strengthening of the rural economy, but also represents a justified and innovative response to real economic pressures facing farming businesses.

- 4.22 This farmer in question has of course made other successful attempts to secure non-agricultural income streams. Most notably is the annual ‘Beatherder’ event - a boutique music and arts festival hosted at the farm. The event makes use of existing fields and infrastructure on a temporary basis, with the site reverting fully to agricultural use once the event has concluded.

<https://beatherder.co.uk/#content>

- 4.23 This planning proposal is a further effort to diversify income streams, and the additional revenue (ie rental payments received from the Applicant) will play an important role in sustaining the core agricultural operation and in turn ensuring longevity of the farm business.

- 4.24 The Ribble Valley Core Strategy places importance on supporting and diversifying the rural economy, recognising that rural areas must adapt beyond traditional agricultural activity to remain sustainable. For example, within the economic strategy, the Core Strategy states that:

“developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies ... will be supported in principle”.

- 4.25 That establishes a positive policy framework for proposals that introduce new or expanded rural enterprises, including diversification projects that provide additional income streams, employment opportunities and economic resilience for farms and rural communities.

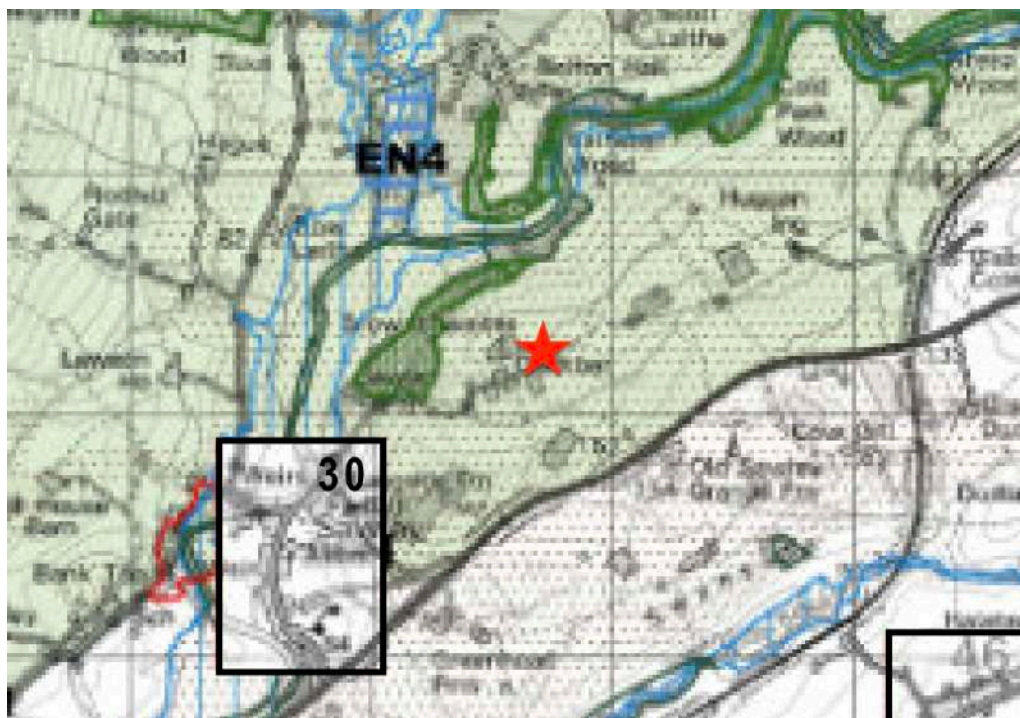
- 4.26 Of note is that the policy is not ‘just’ about agricultural diversification. It goes wider in facilitating the ‘*strengthening of the wider rural.*’

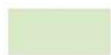
- 4.27 This is also reflected in revised NPPF (August 2026), which is reviewed later in this Statement.

- 4.28 That extent of policy support at both local and national levels reflects the practical realities of rural enterprise and farm-based diversification, which – by definition – are not located inside settlements and will always be in the countryside.
- 4.29 Taken together, the recently revised NPPF and the development plan demonstrate a consistent policy position that positively encourages appropriate, innovative forms of rural diversification as a means of supporting farm viability and strengthening the rural economy.
- 4.30 This is a further reason why locating this proposal on this site is appropriate.

5.0 Consistency with the Development Plan

- 5.1 The Development Plan comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted December 2014).
- 5.2 The online Policies Map is poor resolution, but the extract below confirms that the site is located outside of any defined settlement area (the closest being Sawley) and as such it lies within the open countryside and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.



 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONB] (EN2)

- 5.3 The following assessment against the provisions of the development plan is proportionate to the scale and details of the proposal, and focuses largely on those policies cited to be specifically breached in the refusal notice of the previous application.

Reason for Refusal 1

The development is not considered to constitute a small-scale use that is appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated, contrary to Policy DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

- 5.5 Before turning to policy DMG2, we highlight **Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development**. This sets out the strategic approach to employment development across the borough and makes clear that, whilst the main settlements are the preferred locations for larger-scale employment growth:

“developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies ... will be supported in principle”.

- 5.7 That wording provides explicit and unambiguous policy support for appropriately scaled economic activity within rural areas where it contributes to the resilience and viability of agricultural enterprises and / or the wider rural economy.
- 5.8 This proposal clearly accords with that support. It comprises a small, discrete building located within an established working farmstead, attached to a much larger existing agricultural portal-framed shed.
- 5.9 The use will generate a stable rental income that directly assists the ongoing viability of the farm business at a time when agricultural enterprises are facing increasing financial pressures, including (as explained earlier) the withdrawal of Basic Payment Scheme support, rising production costs and market volatility. The development does not displace agricultural activity. Nor does it introduce a dominant, unrelated commercial use. Rather, it represents modest and proportionate rural diversification enterprise, consistent with the clear intent of Key Statement EC1.
- 5.10 This application seeks to address that concern by explaining the diversification rationale, the limited ‘small scale’ of the operation, and why this is a logical and appropriate site. We suggest that it is surely obvious that, at a time that the agricultural sector is struggling,

any additional income that might be derived from diversification of the rural economy will assist in sustaining this agricultural enterprise.

- 5.11 The proposal introduces no public or customer access; employs only a single staff member directly at the facility; and generates negligible vehicle movements. When considered in the context of the scale and character of the wider farmstead, the development is demonstrably small scale, proportionate and supportive of the wider agricultural holding, fully consistent with the objectives of Key Statement EC1.
- 5.12 **Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations** governs development in the open countryside and allows for development outside defined settlement boundaries where ‘*at least one*’ specific criteria is met.
- 5.13 Criterion 2 is where ‘*the development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture*’. We have explained the importance of this project to the agricultural unit / farmer in question, deriving additional income (in terms of rental payments) at a very difficult economic time for the agricultural industry. The proposal therefore accords with that policy criteria.
- 5.14 Furthermore, criterion 5 supports:
- “small-scale uses appropriate to a rural area where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated”.*
- 5.15 We suggest that the proposal also satisfies this criterion. The building is clearly ‘*small-scale*’ with a footprint of just 40.7 sqm. It is low in intensity. And its operation is inherently quiet and discrete. It provides a direct ‘*local*’ benefit by supporting the diversification and long term sustainability of a working farm, thereby contributing to the rural economy in a manner expressly encouraged by the Core Strategy.

- 5.16 The suggestion in the previous refusal that the use would be more appropriate in an industrial estate fails to reflect both policy and operational reality. Rural diversification uses are, by definition, in rural locations, and national and local policy recognises that such uses will need to be located outside settlement boundaries.
- 5.17 Furthermore, the operational characteristics of the proposal reinforce its suitability to a rural setting. There is no customer access to the site; no on-site waste storage; minimal staff presence; and extremely low traffic generation. The cremation equipment is fully licensed and regulated by DEFRA and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, ensuring that it operates in a clean, controlled and environmentally responsible manner. In this context, the use cannot reasonably be characterised as inappropriate to the rural area.
- 5.18 When assessed against both the wording and purpose of Policy DMG2, the proposal constitutes a small scale rural use delivering a clear and tangible benefit, and therefore complies with the policy.
- 5.19 Furthermore, when considering demonstration of *local need or benefit*, it is worth highlighting the high level of pet ownership across the country. Recent data show that around half of UK adults currently own a pet, with dogs and cats being the most common companion animals. In 2024, approximately 51% of UK adults reported owning a pet of some type, reflecting a substantial population of animals that may require responsible end-of-life services.
- 5.20 Pet ownership significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first year of the pandemic an estimated 3.2 million households in the UK acquired a pet, illustrating a marked rise in pet ownership associated with lockdowns and changes in work and lifestyle patterns.
- 5.21 In England and the wider UK, millions of companion animals die each year through natural causes, age-related conditions, accidents or euthanasia. While precise up-to-date annual mortality figures for all domestic pets are not routinely published, historical estimates have placed the number of cat and dog deaths in the UK in the order of millions

annually. Many of these animals will have been euthanised at the end of life, and all require disposal in a responsible and dignified way.

- 5.22 There is accordingly a demonstrable need for facilities that provide respectful, professional end-of-life care for companion animals. The type of service offered by the applicant responds directly to this ongoing need in the community, supporting owners who wish to ensure that their pets are treated with dignity at the end of life and that their remains are managed appropriately.
- 5.23 The impact of deceased pets on their owners' mental health cannot be underestimated. Most pet owners regard their pets as family members who provide years of pleasure, companionship and emotional support, and the loss of a pet is therefore experienced as a genuine bereavement. For many people, particularly those living alone, older residents or individuals with limited social networks, pets play a central role in daily life and emotional wellbeing.
- 5.24 The death of a companion animal can lead to significant feelings of grief, anxiety and distress, and in some cases can have a lasting impact on mental health. The availability of compassionate, respectful end-of-life services can play an important role in helping owners process their loss, offering reassurance that their pet has been treated with dignity and care. Services that acknowledge the emotional significance of pet loss therefore provide a clear social and wellbeing benefit, supporting owners at a vulnerable time and helping them to achieve a sense of closure.
- 5.25 Customer feedback relating to the services provided by Beloved Pets consistently highlights the care, respect and professionalism shown by the applicant at a very difficult time for pet owners. Reviews describe a service delivered with sensitivity and compassion, with clear communication throughout each stage of the process. Customers have commented that arrangements were fully explained, handled gently and carried out in a respectful manner from first contact through to the return of their pet.
- 5.26 Several reviewers have expressed gratitude for the reassurance they felt, noting that the staff treated their pets with dignity and kindness and provided comfort during moments

of loss. Feedback also reflects appreciation for the thoughtful touches and keepsakes provided, which customers describe as meaningful and comforting. Those reviews demonstrate trust in the service and a strong sense that their pets were cared for properly and respectfully.

- 5.27 The comments show that customers value the service not only for its practical support, but for the compassion and understanding shown throughout. Reviewers frequently recommend the service to others, describing it as supportive, caring and reliable, and expressing thanks for the way their experience was handled during an emotionally challenging time.
- 5.28 Until around 2013, the veterinary sector in the UK was predominantly made up of independently owned local practices, with estimates suggesting that approximately 90% of practices were small, standalone businesses. Since that time, the structure of the industry has changed significantly. It is now widely reported that around 60% of veterinary practices are owned by a small number of large corporate groups, following extensive consolidation and acquisition of traditional local practices.
- 5.29 This shift towards corporatisation has been accompanied by well publicised concerns regarding rising costs, reduced choice for consumers and the standardisation of services. There have also been allegations of anti-competitive behaviour and price inflation within the sector, which have attracted national media attention. Following a detailed market investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority found significant and widespread problems in the sector. Average veterinary prices increased by 63% between 2016 and 2023, compared with general inflation of 32%. Large group practices charged approximately 16.6% more on average than independent practices during the period examined, and the CMA found that acquisitions by several large groups had resulted in higher average prices than would otherwise have been expected.
- 5.30 One practical consequence of this change is that many veterinary practices no longer routinely offer home visits for euthanasia or provide collection services for deceased pets. As a result, pet owners are often required to transport their animals to veterinary premises, which can present significant practical and emotional difficulties. This is particularly
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challenging when dealing with very ill, elderly or incapacitated animals. In addition, a substantial proportion of pet owners are elderly themselves and may struggle to lift or carry larger animals. Others may not have access to private transport, and the use of public transport, where available, is clearly inappropriate and distressing when travelling with a seriously unwell animal or a deceased pet.

- 5.31 The applicant has identified a gap in the market and an unmet local need arising from these changes within the veterinary sector. The service offered focuses on providing a bespoke, highly personal and sensitive alternative, tailored to the needs of pet owners at a vulnerable time. Approximately 95% of the applicant's business involves home visits, enabling animals to remain in familiar surroundings and removing the practical and emotional burden associated with transporting sick or deceased pets. This approach delivers a tangible welfare and wellbeing benefit for both animals and their owners.
- 5.32 The nearest dedicated pet crematorium facility to the applicant's core operating area (east Lancashire) is Leyland Pet Crematorium & Cemetery, located on Wigan Road, Leyland (PR25 5DA). That facility is well located to serve west Lancashire and neighbouring areas, including Leyland, Chorley and Preston, and accordingly provides an appropriate level of coverage for those parts of the county.
- 5.33 By contrast, east Lancashire is not well served by dedicated pet cremation facilities. Aside from the applicant's service, there is no comparably located pet crematorium within east Lancashire itself, despite the area comprising a substantial population across towns such as Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn. For many residents in these areas, travel to Leyland involves a lengthy journey across the county, which is particularly impractical at a time of bereavement or when dealing with a deceased animal.
- 5.34 Further east and south, there are pet cremation facilities located within Greater Manchester, including providers based in Manchester, Bury, Sale, Stockport and Worsley. While these facilities are suitable for their local catchments, they are not well positioned to serve east Lancashire as a primary market.

- 5.35 In practical terms, the existence of facilities in west Lancashire and Greater Manchester does not adequately meet the ‘*local*’ needs of east Lancashire residents. The applicant’s business therefore addresses a clear geographic gap in provision, offering a locally focused, accessible service tailored to an area that is otherwise underserved. This is particularly relevant given the applicant’s emphasis on home visits and personal support, which reduces the need for distressed owners to undertake long or difficult journeys at a vulnerable time.
- 5.36 Taken as a whole, the evidence clearly demonstrates that a local need and benefit is established in this case. The policies relied upon do not define “*local*” in narrow or fixed geographic terms, and it is reasonable to interpret locality flexibly having regard to the nature of the use and the need it serves. Depending on the circumstances and context, “*local*” may refer to the immediate vicinity of Sawley, to this part of the Ribble Valley, or to the borough as a whole. Equally, given the specialist and sensitive nature of the service, and the complete absence of comparable provision across east Lancashire, it is entirely reasonable to regard that wider area as the relevant “*local*” catchment.
- 5.37 The proposal responds to a demonstrable and growing demand arising from high levels of pet ownership, increased end-of-life need, changes in veterinary practice and a clear geographic gap in provision. It delivers a tangible “*local*” benefit by supporting rural diversification, helping to sustain an agricultural enterprise, and providing an accessible, compassionate service to an underserved population. When assessed in the round, the proposal plainly satisfies the requirement of Policy DMG2 for a small-scale rural use where a local need or benefit can be demonstrated, and accordingly complies with the development plan when read as a whole.

Reason for Refusal 2

The development is not considered to be a sustainable use due to the involvement of travelling between two sites, with the application site being located in the rural location of Sawley, which is not considered to be a sustainable location and does not minimise the need to travel, whereby the business relies on the use of private motor vehicle use. No information has been submitted to demonstrate why the businesses cannot be operated from one premises or in a more sustainable location closer to the applicant's other site, contrary to Key Statement DMI2 and Policy DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy.

- 5.20 **Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations** seeks to ensure that new development is located so as to minimise the need to travel, particularly by private car, and encourages access by more sustainable modes where possible. However, this policy must be applied proportionately and in a manner that reflects the nature, scale and operational characteristics of the proposal.
- 5.21 In this case, the proposal is a small scale use with no public or customer access; a single employee; and extremely limited vehicle movements. The business model involves the collection of deceased pets from homes or veterinary practices across a wide regional catchment, with a very small number of daily journeys between the applicant's Burnley headquarters and the application site. These movements require use of the company van, and it is an obvious point that dead animals can hardly be transported using sustainable transport modes – ie it would be impossible and entirely inappropriate to transport deceased pets by foot, cycle, bus or train. That said, even if the facility was to be promoted in Manchester or Liverpool City Centre with an array of good quality sustainable transport options, it would not be possible to use those. It will always involve one company operative driving the company van, so in that context it is entirely irrelevant that the site might not be well blessed with sustainable transport options.
- 5.22 Those very limited travel movements are an inherent and unavoidable characteristic of the service provided and would occur irrespective of the precise location of the

cremation facility. Relocating the facility to an alternative location would not reduce travel distances or vehicle movements, given the geographically dispersed nature of the customer base.

- 5.23 Furthermore, the suggestion that the use should be located in a more “sustainable” location closer to the Burnley site does not reflect practical or planning realities. The applicant has demonstrated that the Burnley premises cannot accommodate a cremation facility due to landlord restrictions, and as such there is no reasonable prospect of consolidating all operations onto a single site. In these circumstances, the policy requirement to “minimise” travel cannot be interpreted as requiring an impossible or impractical alternative, particularly where the scale of travel involved is so very modest and tightly controlled.
- 5.24 Given the very limited scale of activity, the absence of public / customer trips to the site, and the negligible number of vehicle movements, the proposal does not give rise to unsustainable travel patterns when assessed in a proportionate manner. The development therefore accords with the intent of Key Statement DMI2.
- 5.25 **Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility** sets out a range of considerations primarily aimed at developments that generate significant travel demand or involve regular movements by employees, customers or the public. Many of the criteria within the policy relate to major generators of travel, town centre uses, public transport accessibility, and developments intended to reduce reliance on the private car for regular everyday journeys.
- 5.26 The proposal does not fall within those categories. It is not a major generator of travel demand, does not attract visitors, and does not involve routine daily trips by multiple employees. Instead, it involves a single staff member and a small number of operational vehicle movements that are already accounted for within the existing business model. The Local Highway Authority has confirmed that these movements would have a negligible impact on highway safety, capacity and amenity, and has raised no objection to the proposal.

- 5.27 While the site is in a rural location with limited access to public transport, this is neither unusual nor inappropriate for a small-scale rural diversification use. The policy clearly does not impose an absolute requirement for rural developments to be accessible by non-car modes where that is unrealistic or disproportionate. That would be counter intuitive when promoting the diversification of the rural area, bearing in mind that many parts of the rural area are simply not well served by sustainable transport options. Crucially, no customers will ever visit the site, and therefore there is no need or demand for public transport access, pedestrian connectivity or cycling infrastructure. Adequate on-site parking and servicing provision (for a single company van) is available, fully satisfying the relevant requirements of Policy DMG3.
- 5.28 The previous refusals also places weight on the existence of travel between two sites. However, the policy does not prohibit multi-site operations. Nor does it require businesses to operate from a single premises where this is not feasible. With respect, it is not the role of a LPA to dictate how bespoke small businesses such as this ought to operate. In this case, the separation of functions between the Burnley headquarters and the rural cremation facility is operationally necessary and does not result in excessive or unreasonable travel demand.
- 5.29 When applied proportionately and in the context of the scale and nature of the development, the proposal does not conflict with either Key Statement DMI2 or Policy DMG3. The development generates minimal vehicle movements, involves no public / customer access, has already been accepted by the Highway Authority as having negligible transport impacts, and reflects the operational realities of a specialist rural diversification use. The second reason for refusal is therefore not supported by the development plan and we suggest ought now to be set aside.

Reason for Refusal 3

The proposed development, specifically the erection of an industrial flue/cowl, is considered to introduce an alien feature which is not appropriate to the agricultural character of the surrounding landscape, failing to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, contrary to the requirements of Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy and paragraphs 135 (C) and 189 of the NPPF.

- 5.40 **Key Statement EN2 – Landscape and Character (Forest of Bowland National Landscape)** seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, requiring development to be in keeping with the character of the area, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, features and building materials. It does not impose a blanket prohibition on development, but requires a balanced assessment of scale, siting, context and visual effect.
- 5.41 The proposal complies with these objectives. The crematorium building is a small, single-storey portal-framed structure physically attached to an existing large agricultural shed within the confines of an established farmstead. The immediate context of the site is therefore not beautiful, open, undeveloped countryside, but rather a built up working agricultural complex characterised by large utilitarian farm buildings / sheds and associated hardstanding infrastructure. Within this context, the modest addition and its flue are read as part of the wider farmstead grouping rather than as an isolated or prominent feature within the landscape.
- 5.42 The flue (with cowl) is of limited height, quite slender profile and functional appearance, consistent with other more substantial and imposing agricultural features in this farm setting, and in line with common agricultural features such as grain vents, silos, extractor stacks and ventilation pipes. Its purpose is directly related to the safe and efficient operation of the building it serves, and it does not introduce a scale, mass or visual dominance that would materially alter the character of the landscape.

- 5.43 **Policy DMG1 – General Considerations (Design and Landscape Impact)** requires development to be sympathetic to existing land uses and to have particular regard to visual appearance and impact on landscape character. In this instance, the building materials and form reflect those of surrounding agricultural structures, and the flue is hardly excessive and is visually subordinate to the adjacent, significantly larger farm shed it sits against.
- 5.44 While the flue has been described by the LPA as “industrial” in character, that description must be considered in proper context. Modern agricultural landscapes frequently contain sizeable functional, quasi-industrial structures whose appearance is driven by operational necessity rather than domestic design. The policy does not require rural development to replicate traditional vernacular forms where that would be inappropriate or impractical, particularly for specialist uses. The test is whether the development causes material harm to visual amenity, not whether it is entirely invisible or stylistically traditional.
- 5.45 Views of the flue are limited and mainly at distance. Wider public vantage points are constrained by distance, intervening buildings and landform, and the closest public right of way experiences only fleeting, filtered views of the structure within the context of the farmstead as a whole. In these circumstances, any visual change is localised and modest, and does not undermine the overall character or scenic quality of the National Landscape.
- 5.46 We note that the LPA has raised no concerns about the building itself, and is solely concerned with the flue. In positive response to our recent discussions with the LPA, this proposal indicates a modest increase in the height of the building, such that the lower part of the flue will be screened. We are hopeful that the LPA will view that as a pragmatic attempt by the Applicant to address its concerns.

- 5.46 **Policy DMG2 – Development in the Open Countryside** allows for appropriate development in the open countryside where it meets specified criteria and is compatible with its rural setting. As set out under our comments on Reason for Refusal 1, the development constitutes a small-scale, appropriate rural use linked to diversification of a working farm. The flue is an integral and necessary component of that use and cannot reasonably be separated from the building without compromising its function.
- 5.47 The policy does not preclude functional features where they are proportionate and appropriately sited. In this case, the flue is located within an existing cluster of agricultural buildings and does not extend development into open or visually sensitive parts of the landscape. Its presence does not erode countryside character or lead to encroachment beyond the established farm envelope.
- 5.48 When assessed against Key Statement EN2, Policies DMG1 and DMG2, the proposed flue does not constitute an ‘alien’ or inappropriate feature in landscape terms. It is a modest, functional element of a small building located quite discretely within the confines of an established agricultural complex, with very limited visibility and no material impact on the wider landscape or public views. The proposal therefore protects and conserves the character of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and complies with the development plan and national policy.

6.0 Consistency with the Revised NPPF (August 2026)

6.1 The only references to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) cited in the reasons for refusal of the previous application are paragraphs 135(c) and 189 (in respect of the third reason for refusal).

6.2 Since the refusal of planning permission, the NPPF has been updated (in August 2026), and as such the above two references from the former NPPF have been superseded. Those stated:

Former NPPF Paragraph 135(c) - planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are *“sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”*.

Former NPPF Paragraph 189 - *“great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty”* (the latter now referred to as National Landscapes).

6.3 Moving forward, we explain below why we consider the proposal to be consistent with the provisions of the new version of NPPF (August 2026).

6.4 The revised NPPF describes itself as ***“a material consideration of critical importance”*** in decision-taking. It is therefore central to the determination of this application.

6.5 Policy S3 ‘Presumption in favour of sustainable development’ establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development as the starting point for decision-making on development proposals. For proposals *within* settlements, Policy S4 applies, whilst proposals *outside* settlements are directed to Policy S5. In all locations, proposals which accord with both an up-to-date development plan and the decision-making policies of the NPPF should be approved without delay.

- 6.6 The application site lies outside a settlement and the proposal therefore falls to be considered against Policy S5.
- 6.7 Policy S5 'Principle of development outside settlements' states that the forms of development identified at parts (a)-(j) "*should be approved*", unless the benefits of doing so would be "*substantially outweighed*" by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the NPPF. Accordingly, where a proposal falls within one of the identified categories, the starting point is one of support, subject to the specific planning balance established by Policy S5(1).
- 6.8 There are two categories within Policy S5(1) which are of particular relevance to this proposal.
- 6.9 First, Policy S5(1)(b) includes development for rural businesses and services, where a location outside settlements is shown to be necessary. The proposal is for a small, specialist pet cremation facility forming part of the diversification of an established working farm. The building is exceptionally modest, with a footprint of only 40.7 sq m, and is located within the existing farmstead, attached to a much larger quasi-industrial portal-framed building. The operation itself is quiet and low intensity, with no customer access, no on-site waste storage, minimal staff presence and extremely limited traffic generation.
- 6.10 As previously explained, there are sound reasons why a location of this nature is appropriate to the particular operation. The Applicant's headquarters are located at Burnley Bridge Business Park, but the cremation facility cannot be accommodated there because the landlord will not permit the necessary flue to be installed. The Applicant therefore cannot simply consolidate the cremation operation at its existing premises.
- 6.11 Furthermore, the particular nature of the activity lends itself to a location separated from concentrations of residential and other sensitive uses. The proposal provides that separation within the context of an established working farmstead whilst remaining

within a reasonable operational distance of the Applicant's headquarters. The application site is approximately 9 miles from the Burnley headquarters, allowing deceased pets to be collected, stored at the headquarters in a controlled cool area where necessary and transported to Sawley for cremation within 24 hours.

- 6.12 As explained, the location also performs an important rural economic function. The facility forms part of the diversification of a long-established agricultural enterprise and provides rental income which assists the continued viability of that enterprise at a time when agricultural businesses face significant financial pressures associated with the reduction of Basic Payment Scheme support, rising production costs and market volatility. The proposal does not displace agricultural activity and does not introduce a dominant or disproportionate commercial use into the farmstead. Rather, it represents a modest and proportionate diversification enterprise which strengthens the rural economy.
- 6.13 The proposal therefore falls within the purpose of Policy S5(1)(b) - ie it is development for a rural business / service for which there is a clear and evidenced justification for a location outside a settlement.
- 6.14 Secondly, and independently, Policy S5(1)(j) provides for development which would address an evidenced unmet need.
- 6.15 As explained elsewhere, there is compelling evidence of such an unmet need in this case. East Lancashire is not well served by dedicated pet cremation facilities. In fact, this part of Lancashire is not served by *any* other such facility beyond that operated by the Applicant. The nearest dedicated pet crematorium identified to the Applicant's core east Lancashire operating area is Leyland Pet Crematorium & Cemetery. That facility is a considerable distance, situated so as to naturally serve west Lancashire and neighbouring areas, including Leyland, Chorley and Preston. By contrast, there is no comparably located dedicated pet crematorium within east Lancashire itself, notwithstanding the

substantial population concentrated across Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn.

- 6.16 Facilities also exist further south and east within Greater Manchester, including providers in Manchester, Bury, Sale, Stockport and Worsley. Those facilities may appropriately serve their respective local catchments, but they are not well positioned to serve east Lancashire as their primary market. The existence of facilities in west Lancashire and Greater Manchester therefore does not adequately meet the local needs of east Lancashire residents. The Applicant's business addresses that clear geographical gap by providing a locally focused and accessible service to an otherwise underserved population.
- 6.17 The position is therefore compelling, namely that this proposal represents the only dedicated facility carrying out pet cremations within the whole of east Lancashire. The proposal therefore addresses a genuine geographic deficiency in provision rather than merely adding another operator to an already well-served local market.
- 6.18 There is, in any event, a further important point of principle. Even if there were one or more other comparable pet cremation facilities serving east Lancashire, which there are not, that would not of itself establish an absence of unmet need or provide a proper planning basis for resisting the proposal. Policy S5(1)(j) asks whether the development would address an evidenced unmet need. It does not require an applicant to demonstrate that it would be the sole provider of a particular service or that no competing business operates within a particular geographical area.
- 6.19 Nor is it the function of the planning system to protect an existing commercial operator from legitimate competition, to stymie market competition or, conversely, to use planning controls to create or preserve a local monopoly. The relevant planning considerations are whether there is an evidenced need which the proposal would help to meet and whether the development is acceptable when assessed against the applicable development plan and national decision-making policies. The commercial

consequences of competition between individual operators are not, in themselves, a proper basis upon which to resist an otherwise acceptable development proposal.

- 6.20 In this case, however, that point is ultimately secondary because the evidence demonstrates an actual deficiency in comparable provision. The proposal responds to demonstrable and growing demand arising from high levels of pet ownership, increased end-of-life need, changes in veterinary practice and a clear geographic gap in provision. It also delivers wider local benefits through its support for rural diversification, the continued sustainability of the agricultural enterprise and the provision of an accessible and compassionate service to an underserved population.
- 6.21 Policy S5(1)(j)(i) requires the development to be physically well-related to an existing settlement, unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate, and to be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure.
- 6.22 The qualification “*unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate*” is particularly relevant here. This is not a facility to which members of the public travel. The Applicant collects deceased pets from homes or veterinary practices and transports them either to its Burnley headquarters for preparation or directly to the cremation facility. There is no public or customer access to the application site, no waste storage and usually only one member of staff present. The operation generates only around four vehicle journeys per day.
- 6.23 The absence of conventional sustainable transport choices at the application site is therefore of very limited relevance to the sustainability of this particular use. Deceased animals cannot reasonably or appropriately be transported by walking, cycling, bus or train. The limited journeys associated with the operation necessarily require use of the Applicant’s company vehicle and would continue to do so irrespective of whether the cremation facility were located at Sawley, Burnley or within a highly accessible urban location. Relocating the facility would therefore not remove the fundamental

requirement for vehicle movements associated with collecting and transporting deceased pets.

- 6.24 Furthermore, the suggestion that the facility should necessarily be situated closer to the Applicant's Burnley headquarters does not reflect the practical circumstances. The existing headquarters cannot accommodate the cremation facility because of the landlord's refusal to permit the required flue. The two-site arrangement is therefore not simply a matter of commercial preference. At approximately 9 miles, the relationship between Burnley and the application site is operationally entirely reasonable given the nature of the business.
- 6.25 Policy S5(1)(j)(i) also requires the development to be of a scale which can be accommodated having regard to existing or proposed infrastructure. The proposal satisfies that requirement. The building has a footprint of only 40.7 sq m; there is no customer access; only one employee will usually attend the facility; and traffic generation is negligible. The proposal therefore places correspondingly limited demands upon the existing access and infrastructure serving the established farmstead and does not depend upon significant new infrastructure in order to operate.
- 6.26 The proposal therefore satisfies Policy S5(1)(j)(i). It addresses a clearly evidenced unmet need and, insofar as its relationship to a settlement is concerned, the specialist nature and operational requirements of the development, located away from sensitive housing areas, provide a clear justification for its particular location. It is also exceptionally small scale and capable of being accommodated by the infrastructure available to it.
- 6.27 The consequence of compliance with Policy S5(1) is important. The proposal falls within forms of development which the NPPF expressly states "*should be approved*", unless the benefits of approval would be "*substantially outweighed*" by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies. This is a materially different test from simply asking whether the development would cause *any* adverse effect. Some degree of adverse effect would not, of itself, justify refusal. The policy requires the

adverse effects to be of sufficient weight to “*substantially outweigh*” the benefits of approving the proposal.

- 6.28 Policy S5(2) further explains that circumstances in which the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed include, but are not restricted to, situations where a proposal would fail to comply with a national decision-making policy which expressly states that development should be refused in specified circumstances (Policy S5(2)). As demonstrated through the assessment of the relevant national decision-making policies which follows, no such circumstance arises in this case.
- 6.29 The planning balance established by Policies S3 and S5 is therefore a positive one. The proposal meets an evidenced unmet need for dedicated pet cremation provision in east Lancashire; provides a specialist and compassionate service to a substantial underserved population; supports the diversification and continued viability of an established working agricultural enterprise; is exceptionally small-scale and low intensity; generates no customer trips and negligible operational traffic; and can readily be accommodated within the existing farmstead and its infrastructure.
- 6.30 Accordingly, we suggest that the proposal accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development established by Policy S3 and with the specific principles governing development outside settlements established by Policy S5.
- 6.31 The site is located within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, formerly referred to as the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. National Landscapes fall within the NPPF definition of “Protected Landscapes”.
- 6.32 Policy N4 states that development 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 is to be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas.

- 6.33 The proposal has proper regard to those requirements. It comprises a very small, single-storey building (which the LPA has expressed no concerns about) located within and physically attached to an established complex of substantially larger agricultural buildings. It does not extend development into an undeveloped or visually sensitive part of the National Landscape and is experienced visually as part of the existing farmstead rather than as an isolated feature in the wider countryside.
- 6.34 The building itself has not been identified by the LPA as causing unacceptable landscape harm. The only outstanding visual concern relates specifically to the appearance of the flue. That feature is narrow and functional in character and is seen against the considerably greater scale and mass of the adjoining agricultural buildings. Public views are limited by distance, intervening development and landform, and the closest public right of way provides only limited views of the development within the context of the farmstead as a whole.
- 6.35 Moreover, in direct response to the LPA's recent pre-application advice, the proposal now incorporates a modest increase in the height of the building so that a greater proportion of the flue is screened by the building itself. This represents a positive design response intended specifically to reduce its visual prominence.
- 6.36 The development is consequently limited in both scale and extent, is sensitively located within an established group of farm buildings and has been designed and amended so as to minimise its visual effect. It would not harm the landscape character, scenic quality or identified special qualities of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. Substantial weight has nevertheless been afforded to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the designation, as required by Policy N4.
- 6.37 There is also a relevant statutory duty under section 85(A1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. In exercising functions which affect land within a National Landscape, the Council must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing its natural beauty. The proposal has been deliberately contained within the existing farmstead, uses

a modest building of agricultural form and materials, and has been amended specifically to reduce the visual prominence of the flue. There is therefore no conflict between the proposal and the statutory purpose of the designation.

- 6.38 Policy E2 'Meeting the need for business land and premises' provides strong support for business growth. Policy E2(1)(a) states that substantial weight should be given to the economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt. This is directly applicable to the proposal. Beloved Pets Limited is an established independent business providing home euthanasia and pet cremation services across Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and beyond. The proposed facility enables that established business to continue and develop its specialist service in response to an identified demand.
- 6.39 The economic benefits extend beyond the Applicant's own business. The proposal is located within an established working agricultural enterprise and provides a stable rental income to that enterprise. As explained elsewhere in this Statement, this assists the continued viability of the farm at a time when agricultural businesses face significant pressures associated with the withdrawal of Basic Payment Scheme support, rising production costs and market volatility. The development does not displace agricultural activity or introduce a dominant commercial use; rather, it represents modest and proportionate diversification which contributes positively to the rural economy. Those benefits should attract substantial weight in accordance with Policy E2(1)(a).
- 6.40 Policy E2(2) is of particular relevance because it addresses circumstances in which a proposal is required to demonstrate whether an unmet need exists, including for the purposes of Policy S5. Policy E2(2)(a) requires consideration of whether market signals indicate an undersupply of the particular type of business land or premises, taking account of the anticipated catchment area, the changing needs of the relevant sector and the availability of suitable existing land and buildings.

- 6.41 As highlighted elsewhere, the evidence submitted with this application demonstrates precisely such circumstances. East Lancashire is materially underserved by dedicated pet cremation provision. The nearest identified dedicated pet crematorium to the Applicant's core east Lancashire operating area is at Leyland, which is at some distance and better located to serve west Lancashire. There is no other comparable dedicated pet crematorium within east Lancashire itself, notwithstanding the substantial population within Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn. Facilities within Greater Manchester are similarly not well positioned to serve east Lancashire as their primary catchment.
- 6.42 As addressed above in relation to Policy S5(1)(j), the LPA had previously pointed towards a facility at Crawshawbooth, Rossendale, apparently on the assumption that it provided comparable pet cremation provision. Following the previous applications, the LPA specifically sought clarification regarding the services provided by that facility. However, the Crawshawbooth operation does not itself undertake pet cremations and therefore cannot properly be regarded as comparable provision. The proposed facility is consequently the only dedicated facility actually undertaking pet cremations within east Lancashire.
- 6.43 This evidence is directly relevant to the considerations identified by Policy E2(2)(a). The anticipated catchment for a specialist service of this nature necessarily extends beyond the immediate village or parish. Given the absence of comparable provision across east Lancashire and the population served across Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn, east Lancashire represents an entirely reasonable catchment within which to assess the availability of this particular specialist service.
- 6.44 The proposal responds to growing demand associated with high levels of pet ownership, increased end-of-life need and changes in veterinary practice, alongside the identified geographical deficiency in dedicated cremation provision. The Applicant is already an established operator serving a wide geographical area and therefore has direct experience of the market which the proposal serves.

- 6.45 The availability of suitable existing premises, another express consideration under Policy E2(2)(a), has also been addressed. The Applicant's headquarters are located at Burnley Bridge Business Park, but those premises cannot accommodate the cremation facility because the landlord will not permit installation of the necessary flue. The Applicant has therefore demonstrated that the obvious opportunity to consolidate the operation at its existing premises is not available.
- 6.46 Accordingly, the evidence demonstrates both an undersupply of this particular specialist facility within the relevant catchment and the absence of an ability to accommodate the facility at the Applicant's existing premises. Those are precisely the types of considerations which Policy E2(2)(a) directs should inform an assessment of unmet business need. The proposal therefore receives clear support from Policy E2 and reinforces the conclusion reached above under Policy S5(1)(j) that there is an evidenced unmet need for the development.
- 6.47 Policy E4 'Rural business development' provides still more direct support for the proposal. Policy E4(1) states that, in applying Policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported. It identifies the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings, the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses, and development which maintains and enhances farm viability and sustainability.
- 6.48 The proposal accords strongly with those objectives. It comprises a small and discrete new building situated within an established working farmstead and attached to a substantially larger existing agricultural portal-framed building. Its footprint is only 40.7 sq m and the operation is inherently low intensity. It therefore represents precisely the type of modest rural business development contemplated by Policy E4(1)(a).
- 6.49 More importantly, the proposal directly facilitates the diversification of an agricultural business for the purposes of Policy E4(1)(b). The facility provides a stable rental income to the agricultural enterprise at Dockber Laithe Farm, assisting the resilience and

continued viability of that business in the face of the financial pressures affecting the agricultural sector. It provides an additional and complementary income stream.

- 6.50 That relationship also engages the objectives of Policy E4(1)(d), insofar as the proposal helps to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability. The policy is notable in recognising that rural development can perform an important role in maintaining viable agricultural enterprises. The proposal should therefore not be regarded simply as a commercial use which happens to be situated in the countryside; its contribution to the diversification, resilience and continued viability of the host agricultural enterprise is itself a benefit recognised by Policy E4(1)(b) and (d).
- 6.51 Policy E4(2) is especially important in addressing the locational concerns previously raised by the LPA. It recognises that development proposals meeting business needs in rural areas *“may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport”*. National policy therefore explicitly acknowledges that a rural location and limited public transport accessibility do not render a rural business proposal inherently unsustainable.
- 6.52 That provision is pertinent here. There is no customer access to the application site; only one employee will usually attend the facility; no waste is stored at the site; and the operation generates only around four vehicle journeys per day. The availability of public transport is consequently of little practical relevance to the operation of the development.
- 6.53 Moreover, the journeys which do occur cannot realistically be transferred to sustainable modes. The business involves collecting deceased pets from homes and veterinary practices and transporting them for cremation. It would be neither practical nor appropriate to transport deceased animals by foot, bicycle, bus or train. The limited use of a company vehicle is therefore inherent in the nature of the service and would arise irrespective of whether the crematorium was located in Sawley, Burnley or a highly accessible urban centre.

- 6.54 Policy E4(2)(a) states that opportunities should be taken, where they exist, to use previously developed land and sites which are physically well-related to existing development. The wording “*where they exist*” is important and does not impose an absolute requirement to locate all rural businesses on previously developed land. In this case, the proposal is nevertheless physically integrated with existing development. It sits within the established Dockber Laithe Farm complex and is attached to a substantially larger existing agricultural building. It therefore does not represent an isolated commercial building introduced into an otherwise undeveloped part of the countryside.
- 6.55 Policy E4(2)(b) requires the siting and design of development to be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings. The proposal has been deliberately designed and positioned in response to its agricultural context. It is small in scale, discretely located, forms part of the established group of farm buildings and remains subordinate to the substantially larger agricultural building to which it relates. The detailed landscape and design considerations are addressed separately below, but in locational and principle terms the development is appropriately assimilated within the existing farmstead.
- 6.56 Policy E4 is therefore particularly significant to the assessment of the proposal. It expressly supports rural business growth, agricultural diversification and development which assists farm viability. Crucially, it recognises that development meeting rural business needs may need to be located outside settlements and in locations which are not well served by public transport.
- 6.57 Read together, Policies E2 and E4 provide substantial national policy support for the proposal. Policy E2 requires substantial weight to be given to the economic benefits arising from commercial development which enables businesses to invest, expand and adapt. It provides a direct policy basis for recognising the identified undersupply of dedicated pet cremation provision across east Lancashire when assessing unmet need under Policy S5. Policy E4 then supports rural business development, agricultural diversification and farm viability, whilst recognising the practical reality that such

businesses may appropriately need to operate outside settlements and away from public transport.

- 6.58 The proposal accords closely with each of those objectives.
- 6.59 Policy L2 'Making effective use of land' requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of proposals which, amongst other matters, make better use of vacant and underutilised land and buildings.
- 6.60 The proposal makes efficient use of a very small area of land within the established Dockber Laithe Farm complex. The proposed building has a footprint of only 40.7 sq m and is physically associated with, and attached to, a substantially larger existing agricultural building. It therefore concentrates the development within the established farmstead rather than introducing a substantial or freestanding commercial development elsewhere in the countryside.
- 6.61 This efficient use of land is reinforced by the modest intensity of the development. There is no customer access, no on-site waste storage, usually only one member of staff present and negligible vehicle movements. The proposal therefore represents a proportionate and efficient use of a small part of an existing developed farm complex, whilst providing the wider economic and rural diversification benefits identified above.
- 6.62 The proposal is therefore consistent with the overall objective of Policy L2 to make effective use of land, with the development occupying only the land necessary to accommodate the specialist facility and making efficient use of its location within an established group of farm buildings.
- 6.63 Policy TR3 'Locating development in sustainable locations' seeks to ensure that development supports sustainable patterns of movement, whilst expressly requiring the nature of the development and its location to be taken into account.

- 6.64 Of particular relevance, Policy TR3(1)(a) applies its locational requirements to proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement and recognises that a genuine choice of transport modes may be impractical because of the nature of a particular development. Neither circumstance presents a concern here. The proposal generates only around four vehicle journeys per day, has no customer access and usually requires only one member of staff to be present. It does not constitute development capable of generating a significant amount of movement for the purposes of Policy TR3.
- 6.65 Furthermore, the limited vehicle movements are inherent to the service provided. Deceased pets must be collected from homes and veterinary practices and transported in an appropriate company vehicle. Walking, cycling and public transport are not realistic alternatives, irrespective of where the crematorium is located. This is precisely the type of circumstance recognised by the qualification within Policy TR3(1)(a), where *“the nature of the development would make this impractical”*.
- 6.66 Policy P3 ‘Living conditions and pollution’ requires development to be appropriate for its location, taking account of the likely effects of pollution upon health, living conditions and the natural environment, including the sensitivity of surrounding receptors. Development should not give rise to unacceptable levels of air, noise or other forms of pollution, and any adverse effects should be avoided or mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 6.67 Odour was a matter raised in relation to the first application, 3/2025/0517, and formed part of the reason for its refusal. However, the circumstances subsequently changed materially. Following initial “teething problems” with the temperature function of the previous cremator, the Applicant purchased a new cremator and submitted a revised odour assessment with the second application 3/2026/0154. The LPA's Delegated Report records that *“previous issues pertaining to adverse odour emissions emanating from the business have now been resolved”*.

6.68 The matter was considered in detail by the LPA under the residential amenity section of the Delegated Report. The Council acknowledged that the first application had been refused, amongst other matters, because of evidence of odour emissions affecting neighbouring receptors, but went on to recognise the subsequent replacement of the cremator and the submission of the revised odour assessment.

6.69 Importantly, the conclusions of the revised assessment were independently considered by the Council's Environmental Health team, who also visited the site and observed the crematorium whilst it was operating. The Delegated Report records that, although a plume was observed, this *“was said to be solely limited to a heat haze”* and that *“no observable odour was present when standing in a field downwind of the site’s wind direction”*.

6.70 The LPA consequently reached a positive conclusion on this issue. The Delegated Report states:

“the Council’s Environmental Health team have concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would give rise to odour emissions that would be of detriment to the amenity of the site’s neighbouring receptors.”

6.71 On that basis, the LPA concluded that the development satisfied the (then) relevant NPPF requirements and Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy. Significantly, therefore, although odour contributed to the refusal of the first application, it did not form a reason for refusal of application 3/2026/0154.

6.72 The Odour Assessment accompanying the present application is the same as that submitted with Application 2. It has considered the odour-generating potential of the development having regard to its location, design and identified sensitive receptors. A conservative indicative model predicts negligible emissions and impacts upon identified receptors, with the majority of emissions dispersing downwind away from those

receptors. It also takes account of other potential rural odour sources, including the nearby abattoir.

- 6.73 The assessment additionally considers the operational controls now in place. The cremator operates at temperatures and residence times designed to achieve complete cremation and destruction of volatile emissions, thereby minimising the potential for odour. The site is operating in accordance with national guidance, with emissions routinely monitored and recorded by staff. An inspection undertaken whilst the cremator was operating identified no visible or odorous emissions. The location of the facility on the far side of the wider farm complex also provides a substantial separation distance from the nearest sensitive receptor, which is upwind of the development.
- 6.74 The Odour Assessment therefore concludes that during normal operation the proposal will not produce odours capable of causing any significant adverse impact and that the separation distance and relationship to the nearest receptors will ensure that there is no unacceptable effect upon nearby residential amenity. It concludes that the development complies with the NPPF in respect of odour.
- 6.75 Policy P3(3) is also particularly relevant. It expressly requires decision-makers to assume, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that separate regulatory regimes for the control of pollution will operate effectively. The development is subject to such regulatory controls and the operational measures described above. There is no evidence before the LPA which would justify departing from the assumption expressly required by Policy P3(3).
- 6.76 The position on odour is therefore robust. The original concern has been addressed through replacement equipment, operational controls and technical assessment; the Council's own Environmental Health officers inspected the facility during operation and raised no objection; and the LPA itself concluded when determining the second application that the previous odour issue had been resolved and that there was no evidence of odour emissions detrimental to neighbouring amenity. Indeed, the

consultation section of the Delegated Report records “RVBC Environmental Health: No objections.”

- 6.77 There has been no material change identified which would justify reaching a different technical conclusion on odour now. It is therefore reasonably expected that the LPA will reach the same conclusion on this issue as it did in determining application 3/2026/0154.
- 6.78 Accordingly, the proposal would not result in unacceptable pollution or adverse effects upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and accords with Policy P3.

Summary of NPPF Compliance

- 6.79 The NPPF is a material consideration of “critical importance” in decision-making.
- 6.80 The assessment above demonstrates that the proposal receives substantial and direct support from the national policy framework.
- 6.81 Policy S3 establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, whilst Policy S5 provides that specified forms of development outside settlements “*should be approved*” unless their benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects.
- 6.82 The proposal meets an evidenced unmet need for dedicated pet cremation provision in east Lancashire (Policy S5(1)(j)); supports an established business and the diversification and continued viability of an agricultural enterprise (Policies E2 and E4); and represents precisely the type of rural business development which the NPPF recognises may need to be located outside settlements and in locations not well served by public transport (Policy E4(2)). Its exceptionally small scale, negligible traffic generation and particular operational requirements also demonstrate compliance with Policies L2 and TR3.
- 6.83 The proposal also satisfies the specific requirements of Policy N4 in respect of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape. The development is very modest in scale and extent, is

contained within and physically related to an established group of substantially larger agricultural buildings, and does not extend into an open or visually sensitive part of the landscape. The building and flue are experienced as part of the existing farmstead, public views are limited, and the proposal has been further amended in direct response to the LPA's advice so as to reduce the visual prominence of the flue.

- 6.84 The development therefore avoids harm to the landscape character, scenic quality and special qualities of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape and is consistent with Policy N4.
- 6.85 There is no pollution or residential amenity consideration which materially weighs against the proposal under Policy P3. Although odour contributed to the refusal of the *first* application, the LPA subsequently expressly concluded that the *"previous issues pertaining to adverse odour emissions emanating from the business have now been resolved"*, with Environmental Health raising no objection following observation of the crematorium in operation. The submitted Odour Assessment reinforces that position.
- 6.86 Taken as a whole, the proposal accords with the relevant national decision-making policies of the NPPF. It benefits from substantial policy support for rural business development, agricultural diversification and the meeting of an evidenced unmet need, whilst also satisfying the particular environmental safeguards applicable to development within a National Landscape. There is no identified landscape, transport, pollution or other adverse effect of sufficient weight to substantially outweigh those benefits. Accordingly, having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development established by Policy S3 and the direction in Policy S5(1) that qualifying development outside settlements *"should be approved"* unless its benefits are substantially outweighed by adverse effects, the national policy framework weighs substantially in favour of the grant of planning permission.

7.0 Overall Balance and Conclusions

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has considered the proposal against the Development Plan and the material considerations relevant to the determination of the application, including the recently updated NPPF.
- 7.2 The application seeks permission for a small scale pet cremation facility at Dockber Laithe Farm, comprising a building of only 40.7 sq m within an established working farmstead. The operation is also very modest - there is no customer access, no on-site waste storage, usually only one member of staff present and approximately four vehicle journeys per day.
- 7.3 The proposal should be considered in the context of the established agricultural business and the particular service which it provides. The Applicant operates a specialist pet euthanasia and cremation service across Lancashire and surrounding areas. The evidence submitted with the application demonstrates a clear geographical deficiency in dedicated pet cremation provision across east Lancashire, including the substantial population centres of Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Blackburn. The nearest identified dedicated facility is at Leyland, some distance away, principally serving west Lancashire, with other facilities located further away within Greater Manchester.
- 7.4 Importantly, the application facility is the only dedicated facility actually undertaking pet cremations within east Lancashire. In any event, planning policy does not require an applicant to establish that no commercial competitor exists before a need can be demonstrated. The purpose of the planning system is not to restrict legitimate competition or preserve commercial monopolies, but to determine whether development is acceptable in land-use planning terms. The evidence in this case demonstrates both an actual demand and a clear geographical gap in provision.
- 7.5 There are also compelling reasons for the particular location. The Applicant's existing headquarters at Burnley Bridge Business Park cannot accommodate the cremator because the landlord will not permit installation of the necessary flue. Dockber Laithe

Farm is approximately 9 miles from those premises, allowing the two locations to operate effectively together. The rural location also provides appropriate separation from concentrations of sensitive receptors whilst accommodating an activity which, by its very nature, does not depend upon customer accessibility or conventional sustainable transport modes.

- 7.6 The transport implications are negligible. The facility does not receive customers and ordinarily generates only around four vehicle journeys per day. The journeys which do occur are intrinsic to the service: deceased pets must be collected from homes and veterinary practices and transported in an appropriate vehicle. Walking, cycling and public transport could not realistically substitute for those journeys, irrespective of whether the crematorium were located at Sawley, Burnley or within a more conventionally accessible urban location. There is therefore no material transport sustainability or highway impact arising from the proposal.
- 7.7 The proposal also provides meaningful economic and rural benefits. It allows an established specialist business to operate and respond to an identified demand, whilst providing a stable rental income to the agricultural enterprise at Dockber Laithe Farm. That income assists the resilience and continued viability of the farm against the acknowledged financial pressures affecting agriculture. The proposal does not displace farming activity or fundamentally alter the character or function of the holding. It represents modest and proportionate diversification of an established rural enterprise.
- 7.8 Previous concerns regarding odour have already been comprehensively addressed. Odour contributed to the refusal of the first application, but importantly did not form a reason for refusal of the second. In determining application 3/2026/0154, the LPA recognised that the *“previous issues pertaining to adverse odour emissions emanating from the business have now been resolved”*. Following observation of the crematorium in operation, the Council's Environmental Health team concluded that there was *“no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would give rise to odour emissions*

that would be of detriment to the amenity of the site's neighbouring receptors".
Environmental Health accordingly raised no objection.

- 7.9 The Odour Assessment submitted with this application provides confirmation of that position. It concludes that the operation will not produce odours with the potential to result in significant adverse impacts upon nearby sensitive receptors. The combination of the replacement equipment, operating temperatures and residence times, emissions controls, monitoring arrangements, separation distances and location of receptors provides a robust technical basis for that conclusion. There is no material evidence which would justify the LPA reaching a different conclusion on odour from that which it reached when determining the second application.
- 7.10 The application must also be considered in light of the new NPPF. That is particularly important because paragraph 1 identifies the NPPF as a material consideration of *"critical importance"* in decision-making. The national policy assessment undertaken above demonstrates that the proposal receives substantial positive support from the Framework.
- 7.11 Policy S3 establishes the presumption in favour of sustainable development, whilst Policy S5 expressly addresses development outside settlements. The proposal falls within the forms of development supported by Policy S5, both as development for a rural business or service where an outside-settlement location is necessary and as development addressing an evidenced unmet need. Policy S5 states that such development *"should be approved"* unless its benefits would be substantially outweighed by adverse effects when assessed against the national decision-making policies.
- 7.12 That positive position is reinforced elsewhere in the NPPF. Policy E2(1)(a) requires substantial weight to be given to the economic benefits of commercial proposals which enable businesses to invest, expand and adapt, whilst Policy E2(2) addresses the evidence relevant to establishing unmet business need. Policy E4 supports rural business development, agricultural diversification and development which maintains and enhances farm viability. Of particular relevance to the previous concerns about the

location of the development, Policy E4(2) recognises that development meeting rural business needs *“may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport”*. The proposal also accords with the relevant objectives of Policies L2, TR3 and P3 for the reasons set out above.

- 7.13 That positive policy support must also be considered alongside Policy N4, which applies specifically to development within Protected Landscapes and requires substantial weight to be given to conserving and enhancing their natural beauty.
- 7.14 The proposal satisfies that important policy requirement. It is exceptionally limited in scale and extent, is sensitively located within and physically related to an established group of substantially larger agricultural buildings, and does not extend development into an open or visually sensitive part of the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.
- 7.15 The only outstanding visual concern relates only to the narrow and functional flue, which is seen in the context of the wider farmstead and whose prominence has been further reduced through the revised design of the building following the LPA’s pre-application advice.
- 7.16 Public views are very limited and the development would not harm the landscape character, scenic quality or identified special qualities of the National Landscape.
- 7.17 The overall planning balance is therefore positive. On the benefit side are the provision of the only dedicated pet cremation facility undertaking cremations within east Lancashire; meeting an evidenced unmet need across a substantial catchment; supporting the continued operation and development of an established local business; supporting agricultural diversification and farm viability; and providing a specialist and compassionate service to pet owners across the area. These are real and identifiable benefits which attract significant, and in some instances *“substantial”*, weight under the NPPF.

- 7.18 Against those benefits, the development is exceptionally modest in physical and operational terms. It occupies only 40.7 sq m within an established farmstead, ordinarily involves one member of staff, receives no customers and generates around four vehicle journeys per day. The previous odour concern has been resolved to the satisfaction of the LPA's own Environmental Health officers, and the technical evidence reinforces that conclusion. The proposal therefore gives rise to very limited adverse effects, none of which individually or cumulatively approaches the threshold necessary to “*substantially outweigh*” its benefits under Policy S5(1).
- 7.19 For those reasons, we suggest the proposal represents an appropriate, proportionate and sustainable form of rural business development. It addresses an evidenced local need, provides substantial economic and rural diversification benefits, can be accommodated without material infrastructure or transport consequences and does not result in unacceptable effects upon neighbouring living conditions. Most importantly, it is consistent with the direction of the new NPPF, which is a material consideration of “*critical importance*” and which provides clear and direct support for this particular form of development.
- 7.20 Accordingly, when the Development Plan and all other material considerations are considered together, and with appropriate weight afforded to the new national policy framework, the planning balance weighs in favour of the proposal. There are no adverse effects of sufficient weight to outweigh, still less “*substantially outweigh*”, the considerable benefits identified above. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

Appendix 1

Confirmation from the applicant's Burnley landlord explaining why he will not permit the installation of a flue at the Company's HQ

Mark Slater

From: Steve Ackers <s.ackers@mrituk.com>
Sent: 10 October 2024 11:49
To: Mark Slater
Subject: Application for crematorium

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your recent enquiry regarding the proposed installation of a crematorium at Unit 1 Magnesium Court, Burnley.

After reviewing the request in detail, I must confirm that I am unable to grant approval for this installation. Unit 1 is held on a long-term lease and is currently a shared premises, which means any significant structural or operational changes must take into account the rights, business activities, and comfort of the existing tenant. The introduction of a crematorium would fundamentally alter the nature and use of the unit, and would likely cause disruption and concerns for the other occupier—something I am not prepared to impose on them.

Additionally, the unit contains a mezzanine floor, which forms part of the building's structure and overall value. The proposed installation would require the removal or alteration of this mezzanine. I cannot agree to this, as it would:

- Devalue the building,
- Create substantial reinstatement issues, and
- Cause major disruption to the existing tenant who relies on the current layout.
-

For these reasons, I am unable to permit the installation of a crematorium within Unit 1.

I appreciate your understanding and am happy to discuss alternative options should you wish to explore other types of occupancy or different units that may be more suitable.

Kind regards,
Stephen Ackers

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

Appendix 2

Certification from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

eDepartment for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Welsh Government



Approval Number: U1421613/INC

Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption

The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013*

Final Approval of Incineration Plant

1. In accordance with Regulation 14 of The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013 and Article 24 of (EC) No. 1069/2009, the Secretary of State approves:

Name of Operator	Beloved Pets Limited
Address of approved premises	Dockber Laithe Farm Sawley Clitheroe Lancashire Postcode BB7 4LH

to operate a low capacity incinerator (no more than 50kg/hr), make and model of incinerator - MSC 2I/C, make and model of burner: Riello RL34, G20 & G10, on the premises to incinerate domestic pets.

- The incinerator shall be located at the address above (and completely separate from livestock, feed and bedding in the case of on farm incinerators).
- The incinerator must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- The incinerator must be subject to an annual service by the manufacturer or an independent service engineer who should be able to confirm that the incinerator is still capable of meeting the requirements of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 142/2011.
- Each time the incinerator is used, a record must be made of the date, quantity and description of animal by-products incinerated. The temperature in the secondary chamber must be recorded either automatically or manually every 2 hours for at least 10% of burn cycles.
- This approval may be suspended or revoked in the event of non-compliance with the above Regulations.

Signature		
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	ALBA ALONSO-GARCIA	Date 13/10/2025

A person authorised in that behalf by the Secretary of State

APHA Address:
ABP Team
APHA Customer Service Centre
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Notes

1. All the conditions of The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013/The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2014 and Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 and Commission Regulation (EU) No. 142/2011 must be complied with.
2. Changes to the ownership, address or operation of an approved animal by-product premises must be notified to APHA at the above address.
3. The operator must take all necessary steps to ensure that:
 - animal by-products are handled and stored safely and incinerated without undue delay in such a way that they are reduced to dry ash
 - the dry ash is not removed from the combustion chamber unless combustion is complete
 - intermediate storage and transport of the dry ash takes place in a closed container to prevent dispersal in the environment
 - on farm pig/poultry carcase incinerators - the dry ash is disposed of in accordance with the relevant exemption registered with the environmental regulator:
 - or otherwise the dry ash is disposed of to a landfill with an appropriate environmental permit, or as directed by the environmental regulator
 - and/or in the case of individual carcase cremations, the ash may be returned to the animal owners.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

HM3 Stamp	Name:		Date Received:		WS ID:	
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