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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | **LE** | **Date:** | **14.3.2021** | **Manager:** |  | **Date:** |  |
| **Site Notice displayed** | **Y** | **Photos uploaded** | **Y** |  |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2022/0074 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 7.3.22 |
| **Officer:** | **LE** |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **Decision** | **APPROVE** |
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| **Development Description:** | Higher Parsonage Farm Parsonage Lane Chipping PR3 2NS |
| **Site Address/Location:** | New access, access road and siting of two camping pods (resubmission of application 3/2021/0880). |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| No comments received |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** | **No objections subject to technical conditions** |
| **United Utilities:** | **Technical comments received regarding sustainable drainage and connection to mains services.** |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| None |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:****Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy****Key Statement EN2 – Landscape****Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development****Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy****Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations****Policy DMG1 – General Considerations****Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations****Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility****Policy DME1 – Protecting Trees and Woodlands****Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection****Policy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and Conservation****Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy****Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development** |
| **Relevant Planning History:**3/2021/0880 - Proposed siting of two camping pods including new access and access road - Refused |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application site lies within the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parcel of land which is the subject of this application forms part of a larger field of agricultural land which is located to the west of Parsonage Farm. Parsonage Farmhouse is Grade II Listed and is around 100 metres from the proposed development site with intervening agricultural buildings and Grade II\* Old Vicarage is a greater distance away to the north-east.To the north of the field is Parsonage Lane alongside which runs a roadside hedge for the length of the field boundary. Beyond the site to the south-east, south and west is open agricultural land. |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**This is a resubmission of application 2021/0880 which was refused in November 2021Consent is sought for the siting of two camping pods including a new access and track. The pods would be 8.25m long x 3.3m wide and 2.9m high. This is slightly longer than the recent refusal but also slightly lower and of a simplified pitched roof design. The pods would have a timber clad exterior and could cater for a combined total of eight guests as each unit contains a double bed and bunk bed as well as bathroom kitchenette and living area. Each pod would be sat on a grey stone chipping base.A new access from Parsonage Road is proposed and would require the removal of a section of hedgerow along the field’s northern boundary. A proposed new track would be created using two strips of dark gravel with a central grass verge. The site will be demarcated with a post and rail timber fence with native hedgerow planting inside, a wildflower mix is also proposed adjacent to the new track.A package treatment plant would be sited adjacent to the pods. |
| **Principle of Development:**Key Statement EC1 ‘Business and Employment Development states that “Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle”. Core Strategy Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The applicant owns Parsonage Farm which is a working farm breeding 500 ewes. The applicant seeks an alternative form of income and are seeking to diversity.The proposed development is for a small-scale tourism development in the AONB. As such, it meets one of the considerations listed in Policy DMG2 (part 2).Policy DMB3 deals specifically with recreation and tourism development including six criteria to be met as follows:1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.In the Forest of Bowland AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).Policy DMB3 requires new tourism development to be ‘physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available’. The development is not required in conjunction with a countryside attraction nor it is located close to an existing main settlement. The revised scheme has relocated the proposed buildings so that they are now directly adjacent to the existing group of farm buildings within a cluster of buildings that are located on both sides Parsonage Lane. The proposal can be considered compliant with this criterion of DMB3. With regard to the additional requirements in the Forest of Bowland AONB, in general the area is not devoid of structures. In terms of demonstrating a ‘high standard of design’, these units better reflect vernacular style being pitched roof and linear in form and will be clad with natural materials.Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Listed Buildings Act) states: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. Paragraph 194 of the Framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. The application now acknowledges the siting of listed buildings in the locality. The nearest being Parsonage Farmhouse 75 metres away on the opposite side of the farm buildings. It is agreed with the submitted statement, that due to the distance from designated heritage assets, the scale of development proposed and intervening built form, the proposals would not result in any adverse harm on the setting of these buildings. |
| **Residential Amenity:**The proposed units would be over 200m from the nearest noise-sensitive building that is not in the applicant’s ownership. Given the pods can accommodate only 8 guests it is unlikely that the development would generate undue noise or disturbance. |
| **Visual Amenity / Impact upon the landscape:**Great weight is afforded to the conservation and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB as stated in the Framework and reiterated in Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy which requires the Forest of Bowland to be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas should be of a high standard of design and should be in keeping with the character of the landscape. This is echoed in Policy DMG2 which states that, ‘in protecting the designated area of outstanding natural beauty the Council will have regard to the economic and social well being of the area. However, the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area…’The AONB Landscape Character Assessment categorises the site as Undulating Lowland Farmland (Whitechapel E1). Undulating Lowland Farmland landscape type is considered to be of ‘moderate’ sensitivity. It is noted that tourist related development could impact the character and quality of the landscape.The revised scheme has amended the design of the proposed camping pods so that they are pitched roof cabin type structures. The pods also will now be sited as close as practical to existing farm buildings. The nearest pod will be 10 metres away from the agricultural building and the boundary fence will be 7 metres; the developed area will not project further to the rear than existing farm buildings. There will also be a significant reduction in the length of the access track. The area occupied by the pods is to be bounded by a post and rail fence with hedgerow planting behind and the access will be softened with a grass central strip and wildflower planting. There will be a gap in the hedge for access with a portion of it translocated away from the edge of the road and a new hedge is also proposed to the west. The development is sited close to the existing group of buildings and screened by the existing and proposed boundary treatments which will also prevent overspill of the activities of guests into the adjoining fields. The use of natural materials and soft landscaping will assist in its assimilation into the landscape. There would be a requirement for some external lighting at the site and the supporting statement says that this will be dark sky friendly downlighting which will be kept to a minimum. Full details of this shall be submitted prior to first occupation of the pods and any further lighting subject to approval. The proposal will have some impact visually but this has been reduced to a level that is considered acceptable and would bring economic benefits through the expansion of the range of tourist attractions as well as supplementing the existing farm income.  |
| **Ecology:**A hedgerow survey has been submitted with the application due to the requirement to remove a 21-metre section of hedgerow along Parsonage Lane. The report is not updated to show the revised siting of the pods, however the extent of hedgerow to be removed is the same as previously proposed to accommodate the new access.The proposal is to translocate the hedge to satisfy sightline requirements, and this is not deemed to adversely affect the quality or value of the remaining hedge. The site survey found that the hedgerow does not meet the criteria of being classified as ‘important’ by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. All existing trees would be retained.It is acknowledged that the applicant proposes some hedgerow and wildflower planting which would be of some modest ecological benefit. The proposed lighting will be minimal “dark sky friendly” down lights and this detail can be reserved by condition.  |
| **Highways:**The application is supported by a Transport Statement which has advised the proposed site access design. The County Highways Officer has noted that there are some shortfalls, 1) in the access width due to the position of two existing trees and 2) car parking spaces. However, the County Surveyor has raised no objection due to the small-scale nature of the development and the access meets the sightline requirements.It is also noted by the county surveyor that the grass verge may be difficult to manoeuvre on if two cars pass on the track. This is accepted but this is likely to be a rare occurrence given that the proposal is for two units and the grass will soften the impact and reduce the amount of hard surfacing so it is not requested that this is removed as the reduction in visual impact is beneficial.  |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**Having had regard to the relevant planning policies and material planning considerations the proposed scheme is considered to overcome the previous reasons for refusal and it is therefore recommended accordingly. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | To approve planning permission. |