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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | BT | **Date:** | 27/7/2022 | **Manager:** |  | **Date:** |  |
| **Site Notice displayed** | N/A | **Photos uploaded** | Y |  |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2022/0411 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 9/5/2022 |
| **Officer:** | BT |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **Decision** | Approve |
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| **Development Description:** | The permanent retention of a static caravan for use as a farm workers dwelling. |
| **Site Address/Location:** | Demesne Farm, Settle Road, Newsholme. BB7 4JF |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| Newsholme and Paythorne Parish Meeting have no objections. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| LCC Highways: no objections. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| Alan Jackson (BSc FRICS FAAV) for AG & P Jackson, Chartered Surveyors and Land Agents: supportive of the proposal. |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy Key Statement DS2 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Policy DMG1 – General Considerations Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3 - Transport And MobilityPolicy DMH3 - Dwellings In The Open Countryside And AONBPolicy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth And The Local EconomyNPPF: Paragraph 80 & 84 |
| **Relevant Planning History:****Planning Appeal ref:** APP/T2350/C/17/3180028**3/2015/0372:**Erection of one 50.39m x 39.3m agricultural building (Approved) |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application relates to a farmstead in Newsholme. The static caravan which forms the subject of this proposal is situated on the applicant’s agricultural unit approximately 30 metres away to the North of Demesne Farm. The caravan is a three bedroom property comprised of rendered walls, white UPVC doors and windows and concrete roof tiles. The surrounding area is rural and comprises a mixture of agricultural land, woodland and open countryside. |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**Consent is sought for the permanent retention of a static caravan for use as a farm workers dwelling. |
| **Principle of development:**The application site is situated within an area of open countryside. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states:*“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside”.*Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that:*“Planning policies and decisions should enable:**a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings:**b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”.*The above national guidance is consolidated within Policy DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy which states:*“Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied”.*Similarly, Policy DMG2 allows for development outside of the defined settlement areas when the development in question is needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry.With the above in mind, an assessment has to be made of the proposal with regards to the following issues:* Evidence of the necessity for the applicant to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of the existing agricultural enterprise
* Labour requirements of the existing agricultural enterprise
* The degree to which there is confidence that the agricultural enterprise is currently economically viable and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future
* Suitability and availability of existing dwellings on the agricultural holding

An assessment of the above criteria has subsequently been carried out through consultation with the Council’s Rural Consultant, the findings of which have been detailed within an agricultural report. The findings from the report concluded that there is a clear requirement for two farm workers to be on hand to deal with instances relating to the management of livestock that need to be dealt with reasonably quickly, particularly those instances that occur outside of normal working hours. As such, there is a clearly established functional need on the applicant’s land holdings.The report also determined that the applicant’s agricultural operation currently carries a labour requirement of up to 8 full time workers which at present is being met through the applicant and his brother. The findings concluded that it would be entirely reasonable for 2 full time workers actively involved in the management of the agricultural unit to permanently reside at the application site to meet the current labour requirements of the existing agricultural operation. The report also found the applicant’s existing agricultural operation to be financially sound with a clear prospect of remaining as such for the foreseeable future.In relation to the final requirement, analysis shows a complete absence of dwellings suitable for housing agricultural workers within the immediate vicinity of the applicant’s agricultural unit, as evidenced through market housing research. The issue of alternative housing within the localities of Paythorne and Gisburn has been previously explored however these locations were deemed to be unsuitable by the Planning Inspectorate during a previous planning appeal in relation to the static caravan in 2018.Accordingly, the above findings are considered to be in accordance with Paragraphs 80 and 84 of the NPPF and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy and as such establish the principle of the development subject to an assessment of additional material planning considerations. |
| **Residential Amenity:**The static caravan is situated approximately 30 metres away to the North of Demesne Farm and Demesne Barn with its front South-western elevation windows solely providing views into a garden area and towards a tree line. As such, it is not considered that permanent retention of the caravan would be harmful to the amenity of any neighbouring residents. |
| **Visual Amenity:**The static caravan is modest in terms of height and footprint and comprises similar external materials to the semi-detached pairings of properties situated between Whinhill House and Demesne Farm. The caravan is not viewable within the public realm by virtue of being set back approximately 50 metres from Settle Road behind an existing farm building therefore its visual impact is negligible. Accordingly, it is not considered that the caravan, if retained permanently, would result in any harm to the visual amenities of the immediate or surrounding area. |
| **Ecology:** No ecological constraints were identified in relation to the proposal. |
| **Highways:** The application site does not comprise an extensive curtilage however in this instance the application site does provide ample off-street parking space for two vehicles which would meet the statutory parking requirement for a three bedroom property. Furthermore, Lancashire County Council highways have reviewed the proposal and have no issues with the proposed development in terms of access and parking. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would be of detriment to highway safety. |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**A functional need for an agricultural worker’s dwelling on the site has been established. It is not considered that the proposal would have any undue impact upon residential amenity for any neighbouring residents, nor is it considered that the proposal would be of detriment to the visual amenities of the immediate or surrounding area. The design, materials and scale of the worker’s dwelling are acceptable subject to appropriate conditions. Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy seek to limit development within areas of open countryside to the purposes of agriculture therefore an occupancy condition will be required in order to accord with policy.It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | That planning permission be granted. |