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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | **LH** | **Date:** | **04/3/24** | **Manager:** | **NH** | **Date:** | **04/03/2024** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 2023/0632 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 22-8-23 | **Site Notice:** | 22-8-23 |
| **Officer:** | Will Hopcroft/Lyndsey Hayes |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **APPROVAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | Proposed earth banked slurry lagoon 50m x 50m |
| **Site Address/Location:** | Land off Preston Road Longridge PR3 3BL |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| No response. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **Cadent Gas** | Not affected – advise to contact National Gas |
| **National Gas** | No response  |
| **Environment Agency:** | No objection subject to condition. Advice provided to the applicant in relation to SSAFO Regulations.  |
| **Natural England:** | Following submission of a SCAIL assessment, and subsequent shadow HRA, Natural England offer no objection to the proposed development.  |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| One letter of objection received citing concerns about potential smells and flies  |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1: Development StrategyKey Statement DS2: Sustainable DevelopmentKey Statement EN4: Biodiversity and GeodiversityPolicy DMG1: General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2: Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DME3: Site and Species Protection and ConservationPolicy DME6: Water ManagementNational Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| **Relevant Planning History:**None in relation to the application site |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The site is located to the north-west of Alston Fold Farm and a cluster of residential properties (NB these are under separate ownership) to the north of the B6243, accessed via an agricultural track. The site comprises an agricultural field adjacent to an agricultural track. PROW 3-2-FP 107 runs in a north-south direction along the agricultural track to the east. PRW 3-2-FP 100 runs in a north-south direction to the west. The site is visible from both PROW’s although neither run adjacent to the application site. The nature of the immediate surrounding area is evidently rural with agricultural fields and farm tracks. The closest residential properties are approx. 150m to the east on the recently constructed housing estate known as Alston Grange. The site is located within the designated Countryside. |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**The proposal seeks consent for one new slurry lagoon measuring 40m x 40m at the base of the lagoon, with a depth of 2.5m below existing ground levels. The area at the top of the lagoon would be 50m x 50m and the top of the banking would be 3m above existing ground levels. A perimeter fence would be erected on the earth bank. The slurry lagoon is required in associated with Bolton Fold Farm (this farmstead is on the southern side of the B6243 with associated land on the northern side), with the applicant’s supporting statement citing the location to the north of the B6243 having been chosen to service the majority of the farmable land associated with Bolton Fold Farm and to reduce traffic crossing the B6243 when the slurry is redistributed in the summer months.The existing slurry handling facilities are situated at Bolton Fold Farm however the current storage capacity is not sufficient and additional facilities are required in line with legislative water regulations.  |
| **Principle of Development:**The principle of development is required to be secured against CS Policies DMG2, given the site is located within the countryside. DMG2 states that development outside the defined settlement areas must meet at least one of a number of considerations, the relevant one in this case outlined below:* *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture*

In light of the operational design and siting of the development and the justification provided on the need for this facility, it is considered that the proposal is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and to support the existing farming activities. As such the proposal is acceptable in principle.  |
| **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**The nearest residential dwellings are approximately 150m away. In light of the legislative environmental requirements that the applicant would need to adhere to, as regulated by the Environment Agency, it is not considered that there will be undue impact on residential amenity or quality of life by way of this proposal.  |
| **Visual Amenity:**As per CS Policy DMG1, all development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.In addition, CS Policy DMG2 states that development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting.It is accepted that the slurry lagoon will reduce the openness of the existing agricultural field and be visible from nearby PROWs. However it does serves a functional agricultural purpose and is sited adjacent to a hedgerow, and it is not located within a sensitive landscape, elevated position or directly adjacent to those PROW’s. The provision of a grassed earth bund will help the scheme assimilate into the landscape and, notably, there are other earth banks evident in the locality where they serve nearby reservoirs. The 2m high fencing on top of the earth bund can be controlled by condition to ensure it is visually appropriate. Given the above, the proposal is considered compliant with DMG1 and DMG2.  |
| **Highways and Parking:**No alteration to access is sought and as the existing track is available for use by farm traffic the proposal is not considered to result in any material change in relation to highways.  |
| **Ecology:**Designated SitesThe application sits within the Impact Risk Zone for a number of statutory designated sites and protected landscapes – notably, Bowland Fells Special Protection Area, Bowland Fells Site of Special Scientific Interest and Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. As a result of this, and because of the type and scale of development, Natural England were consulted who requested a SCAIL assessment, and subsequently a Habitat Regulations Assessment. The applicant duly provided these documents which concluded that the proposal can be screened out from further stages of assessment because significant effects are unlikely to occur. Upon assessment of these documents, the LPA consider that we can uphold the conclusions of the HRA as our own for the purposes of assessing the impact on the SPA. These conclusions, which were supported by Natural England who offered no objection, are based on the following:* *Screening has indicated that the process contribution (PC) for all pollutants at all sites will be <1% of the relevant critical level or load for the most sensitive habitat at each site (including nationally designated sites.)*
* *completion of a suitable desk-based assessment and habitat suitability survey for qualifying bird species which demonstrates no significant habitat attributes for qualifying birds within or near to the proposal which could significantly impact Functionally Linked Land (FLL) or the qualifying bird populations*

Furthermore, as advocated by Natural England, the proposal will not damage or destroy the inherent features for which the SSSI sites have been designated.Local habitatAn ecology survey has been submitted which identifies two ponds in the vicinity of the site, one of which (100m to the north) has a historical recording of Great Crested Newts. Based on the foraging value of the site for GCN being negligible, and the presence of good terrestrial habitat closer to the pond, and the fact that the site isn’t on any potential migration route between ponds or between ponds and terrestrial habitat; the likelihood of any GCN being affected by the proposal is considered highly unlikely.The site is not considered to support other protected habitats (breeding birds, badgers or bats).Therefore, the application is considered to satisfy policy DME3 and the NPPF. |
| **Water Management:**The Environment Agency were consulted, who raised no objection to the application. Whilst they request a condition stipulating details of mitigation measures to be submitted to reduce the risk of pollution to surface or ground water, this condition is not considered to be necessary given that this is covered by the legislative regulations that the applicant will need to adhere to. Therefore the application is considered to satisfy policy DME6. |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**As such, for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: |  |
| That planning consent be granted subject to the imposition of conditions. |