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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
| **Signed:** | **Officer:** | BT | **Date:** | 4/11/24 | **Manager:** | **LH** | **Date:** | **6/11/24** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2024/0268 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 10/10/24 |
| **Officer:** | BT |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **REFUSAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | Outline planning application for the erection of six holiday cottages with access applied for on land adjacent to Ribchester Road (all other matters reserved). |
| **Site Address/Location:** | Land at Tan Yard Farm off Ribchester Road, Hothersall, PR3 3YA. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| **Ribchester Parish Council:** | Object to the proposal for the following reasons:* Impact of the proposal upon highway safety
* Impact of the proposal upon flood risk
* Impact of the proposal upon the ecology of the area
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| **Hothersall Parish Council:** | Object to the proposal for the following reasons:* Roadways within the site do not appear to adhere to road construction criteria for public use
* Insufficient infrastructure to deal with foul water disposal
* Inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the application’s supporting information
* No arrangements have been specified for refuse collection
* Impact of the proposal upon highway safety
* Unsustainable location of the application site
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** | Request made for further information with regards to pedestrian access and visibility splays. |
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| **RVBC Environmental Health:** | No objections subject to conditions. |
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| **RVBC Countryside:** | No objections subject to conditions. |
| **Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU):** | Consulted 27/9/24 – no response received. |
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| **United Utilities:** | No objections subject to conditions. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| Objections have been received from twenty four households which are summarised as follows:* Impact of the proposal upon residential amenity
* Impact of the proposal upon visual amenity
* Impact of the proposal upon highway safety
* Impact of the proposal upon the ecology of the area
* Impact of the proposal upon flood risk
* Concerns raised with respect to the application site being located in an unsustainable location with no nearby access to amenities
* Concerns raised with respect to the absence of infrastructure to handle foul water disposal
* Concerns raised with respect to the accuracy of the application’s supporting information
* Concerns raised in relation to approval of the proposed development setting a precedent for similar future developments

Additional concerns have been raised in relation to the impact of the proposal upon property value and comments in relation to a perceived over provision of holiday let accommodation within the Borough however such concerns do not form the basis of material planning considerations and as such cannot be assessed as part of this application.A committee call-in request was received from Councillor Barnsley in the event that officers were minded to approve the application, stating concerns about the unsuitability of the site to accommodate the proposed development, highway safety, impacts upon the ecology of the area and the high level of public interest generated through the application’s public consultation process. |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES AND SITE PLANNING HISTORY:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy Key Statement DS2: Sustainable DevelopmentKey Statement EC3: Visitor Economy Key Statement DMI2: Transport ConsiderationsPolicy DMG1: General Considerations Policy DMG2: Strategic Considerations Policy DMG3: Transport And MobilityPolicy DME2: Landscape And Townscape ProtectionPolicy DME3: Site And Species Protection And ConservationPolicy DMB3: Recreation And Tourism DevelopmentNational Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) |
| **Relevant Planning History:**No relevant planning history for application site. |
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| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application relates to a land parcel located on the Eastern outskirts of Longridge. The land parcel in question comprises a strip of modified grassland approximately 170 metres in length and 0.5 hectares in area. The perimeter of the application site is lined with a mixture of trees, shrubs and hedgerows with the North-eastern perimeter of the site adjoining the South-western side of Ribchester Road. Residential development lies to the North-west and South-east of the site with open countryside bordering the site’s South-western perimeter.  |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**Outline consent is sought for the construction of six holiday let cottages with all matters reserved save for access. Originally the submitted scheme included two vehicle access points however revised plans have been submitted reducing this to one vehicle access point and one pedestrian access point. |
| **Principle of Development:**Key Statement EC3 of the Core strategy states:*‘Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions.’*In this instance, the proposal relates to the creation of new tourist accommodation that could potentially offer small scale benefits to the economy of the Borough. As such, the proposed development would accord with the general intentions of Key Statement EC3.Policy DMB3 requires additional criteria to be met with regards to the provision of tourism and visitor facilities:*Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough. This is subject to the following criteria being met:* *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,**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; and* *6. 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.*Criteria point 1 of Policy DMB3 stipulates that proposals for development must not be in conflict with other policies of the Core Strategy, with the relevant policies in this instance being Policies DMG2 and DMG3. The application site lies outside of the Borough’s defined settlement areas. Policy DMG2 of the Core Strategy requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six exceptions, one of which allows for developments for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area. Furthermore the latter part of Policy DMG2 states:*‘Within the open countryside 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 materials, landscaping and siting.’*Although scale and layout is reserved for a later stage, some weight can be given to the indicative layout plan as an indication of the applicant’s intentions as to how the development may come forward. In this instance, the application site comprises a sizeable strip of land of approximately 170 metres in length, with the site covering a total area of 0.5 hectares. The proposed development would result in the introduction of built form, hardstanding areas, landscaping, internal roads and pathways and a new vehicle access to the application site and these features would occupy the entire length and interior of the site. As such, the application site would be engulfed by the resultant development therefore it is not considered that the overall scale of the proposed development would amount to small scale tourism. Furthermore, the introduction of holiday lets, hardstanding areas, landscaping, internal roads and pathways and a new vehicle access would have a distinctly urbanising impact on the proposal site which at present comprises an undeveloped grassland parcel which forms part of the wider open countryside to the South-east of Ribchester Road. As such, the proposed development would fail to read as a harmonious addition to the site’s open countryside setting which in turn would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area. Consequently, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy DMG2.Policy DMG3 of the Core Strategy requires decision taking to consider the availability and adequacy of public transport and associated infrastructure to serve those moving to and from new developments. This is consistent with the NPPF which requires development proposals to promote sustainable transport. In this instance, analysis shows an absence of bus stops within the nearby vicinity of the application site with the nearest public transport links being sited approximately 200 metres away to the South-east and North-west of the application site. In addition, there is a notable absence of street lighting along Ribchester Road (save for a small section of road located approximately 150 metres to the South-east of the application site) with a pavement only running along the Northern side of Ribchester Road. Furthermore, the proposal lies some distance from the nearest amenities in Longridge and Ribchester. Accordingly, future occupants of the proposed holiday lets would be largely reliant on the use of private motor vehicles. Consequently, it is not considered that the proposal would align with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG3 or the NPPF.In light of the above, the proposal would fail to satisfy criteria point 1 of Policy DMB3 which stipulates that proposals for development must not be in conflict with other policies of the Core Strategy.Having regard to criteria point 2 of Policy DMB3, the North-western extents of the application site lie in close proximity to the residential properties of Mount Pleasant and Belmont, with the South-eastern extents of the site being in reasonably close proximity to the residential properties of Sunny Nook Farm, Cherry Dene, Somerville, Sunnyside, Clare Cottage, Brookside Cottage and the properties known as Hospital Cottages therefore the proposed holiday lets would be reasonably well related to existing built form. The proposal would therefore be compliant with criteria point 2 of Policy DMB3.Having regard to criteria point 3 of Policy DMB3, this states that developments should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design however in this instance it is not considered that the proposal would meet this criteria for the reasons outlined above. The proposal would therefore fail to satisfy criteria point 3 of Policy DMB3.Turning to criteria point 4 of Policy DMB3, the proposal site adjoins the South-eastern side of Ribchester Road which has good connectivity to the settlements of Longridge and Ribchester and is therefore considered to be well related to the existing highway network. No major concerns have been raised by the Local Highways Authority with respect to traffic movements from the proposed development however the proposed location of the pedestrian access is not supported by the LHA and there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the required visibility splays can be achieved. As previously conveyed, there is an absence of bus stops within the nearby vicinity of the application site therefore the proposed development is not considered to be well related to the existing public transport network. The proposal would therefore fail to satisfy criteria point 4 of Policy DMB3.With respect to criteria point 5, whilst it is acknowledged that parking provision and landscaping within the proposal site stand to be fully assessed at the reserved matters stage, the indicative site layout provided in support of this application suggests that the necessary requirements with respect to vehicle parking and appropriate landscaping could likely be met. The proposal would therefore likely be capable of satisfying criteria point 5.Having regard to criteria point 6, and as conveyed above, whilst ecological considerations from the proposed development would not be fully assessed until the reserved matters stage, a tree survey, preliminary ecological appraisal and biodiversity net gain report have been provided in support of the application submission. The submitted survey work identifies potential impacts upon protected species from the proposed development, along with some small scale tree removal and a post development loss in biodiversity however the supporting survey work includes a number of recommendations and strategies to mitigate for these issues. Accordingly, it is considered that relevant nature conservation impacts from the proposed development have been taken into account in this instance. The proposal would therefore satisfy criteria point 6 of Policy DMB3.Taking account of all of the above, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMB3 (in particular criterion 1, 3 and 4) and is therefore considered to be unacceptable in principle. |
| **Impact Upon Residential Amenity:**As the application is made in outline with all matters reserved except for access, a definitive assessment of the impact upon neighbouring residential amenity cannot be considered at this stage. Whilst measures could be put in place to manage the frequency of occupants for the holiday lets, occupation for such uses would be more transient than the activity associated with existing residential uses in the immediate vicinity and there would be some inevitable noise and disturbance from the visitors staying on site. The effect of any increased activity upon adjacent residents would be intensified by their proximity to the site. However as Ribchester Road is well trafficked, the level of noise and disturbance on a daily basis from such comings and goings would be unlikely to be unacceptable to local residents. |
| **Visual Amenity:**The application does not seek consent with respect to the design / external appearance of the proposed holiday lets or other works within the site therefore a detail assessment of the individual elements of the proposed development cannot be considered at this stage. Notwithstanding this, Paragraph 135 (c) of the NPPF states:*‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting’.*Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy provides general design guidance as follows: *‘All* *development must* *be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing and style…particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character.’*As previously conveyed, the application site comprises a sizeable area of undeveloped grassland within the setting of the wider open countryside to the South-east of Ribchester Road and in this instance the indicative plan shows that the proposed development, which includes built form and extensive areas of hardstanding, landscaping, internal roads and pathways and a new vehicle access, would occupy the entirety of the application site. As such, the visual impact of the proposal, by virtue of the overall scale of development proposed, would have a distinctly urbanising impact on the proposal site and as such would fail to read as a harmonious addition to the site’s open countryside setting which in turn would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area. Moreover, the indicative site layout provided shows that the proposed development would be predominantly viewable within the public realm from Ribchester Road therefore the proposal would have a discernible visual impact, and the visibility splay plan shows that removal of trees and hedgerow along the site frontage would be required to achieve a safe access, which would have a further impact.In light of the above, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 135 (C) and Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy. |
| **Ecology:**A tree survey, preliminary ecological appraisal and biodiversity net gain (BNG) report have been provided in support of the application submission. The submitted survey work identifies potential impacts upon protected species from the proposed development, along with some small scale tree removal and a post development loss in biodiversity however as previously conveyed the supporting survey work includes a number of recommendations and strategies to mitigate and enhance for these issues. With the plan now suggesting considerable removal of hedgerow is required to facilitate sightlines, which does not appear to be factored into the BNG report, additional enhancement of linear habitat will be necessary in order to achieve the mandatory 10% BNG uplift. However, it is considered that achieving the necessary BNG and ecology mitigation could be secured by appropriate condition.  |
| **Highways:**The application submission seeks consent in relation to vehicular and pedestrian access to the proposed development therefore consultation has been undertaken with the Local Highways Authority who in their initial response requested that the number of vehicle access points be reduced to one and further information from the applicant with respect to visibility splays. A revised location plan, proposed site plan and visibility splay drawing have since been provided which have been subject to review from the Local Highways Authority. The latest response from the LHA raises no issues with the width and extent of the site’s revised vehicle access however it is still unknown whether the required sightlines can be achieved on land owned by the applicant. Furthermore the separate proposed pedestrian access is not supported by the LHA given it would be on a bend in the road. As such, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DMG1 and DMG3. |
| **Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion:**The proposal, by virtue of the overall scale of development proposed, is not considered to constitute small scale tourism appropriate to a rural area. In addition, the proposal would introduce built form, hardstanding areas, landscaping, internal roads and pathways and a new vehicle access to an open countryside setting which would be at odds with the natural and unspoilt character of the application site and surrounding landscape. The proposal would therefore be in conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG2. In addition, the proposed development would be sited in an unsustainable location whereby future occupants of the proposed holiday lets would be largely reliant on the use of private motor vehicles. Consequently, it is not considered that the proposal would align with the aims and objectives of Policy DMG3. Consequently, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy DMB3 which stipulates that proposals for development must be well related to the public transport network whilst not being in conflict with other policies of the Core Strategy or undermining the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of their scale, siting, materials or design. The proposed development is therefore considered to be unacceptable in principle.Furthermore, the visual impact of the proposal, by virtue of the introduction of built form, extensive areas of hardstanding, landscaping, internal roads and pathways, new vehicle access and overall scale of development proposed, would have a distinctly urbanising impact on the proposal site and as such would fail to read as a harmonious addition to the site’s open countryside setting which in turn would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area. The proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraphs 135 (C) and Policy DMG1 of the Core Strategy.Additionally it is unknown whether the required sightlines can be achieved on land owned by the applicant and the separate proposed pedestrian access is not supported given its position would be on a bend in the road. As such, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DMG1 and DMG3.It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that outline planning permission be refused.  |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | To refuse outline planning permission for the following reasons: |
| **01:** | The proposal, by virtue of the overall scale of development proposed, its visual impact and the dependence on the use of private motor vehicles due to the site’s poor connectivity to public transport links and distance from amenities, is not considered to constitute small scale tourism appropriate to a rural area. This conflict with Policies DMG2, DMG3 and DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy is such that the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable in principle and would fail to meet the overriding objective of sustainable development. |
| **02:** | The visual impact of the proposal, by virtue of the introduction of the quantum of built form across the site including buildings, areas of hardstanding including internal roads, new vehicle access and loss of hedgerow along the site frontage, would have a distinctly urbanising impact on the proposal site and as such would fail to read as a harmonious addition to the site’s open countryside setting which in turn would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area. The proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Paragraph 135 (C) and Policies DMG1 , DMG2 and DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |
| **03:** | The application has failed to demonstrate that a safe access can be provided into the site for vehicles and pedestrians. In particular, it is unknown whether the required sightlines can be achieved on land owned by the applicant, and the location of the separate pedestrian access on a bend in the road is considered unsafe. As such, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies DMG1 and DMG3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. |