


Late Items – Planning & Development Committee				 <div>Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</div>			
Meeting Date: 9 JANUARY 2025							
Briefing version		Issue Date:					
Committee Version		•		Issue Date: 09.01.25			
Application Ref:		3/2022/1158		Land South of Accrington Road Whalley		REC:	APP
<p>Members will note that four further letters of objection have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased flood risk• Impacts upon nature and biodiversity• Application site is prone to flooding• Increase in traffic <p>Following the submission of a Highways Technical Note (23rd December) by the applicant, the Local Highways Authority have reviewed the additional information and have responded as follows:</p> <p><i>‘The CBO Transport Technical Note submitted on 23rd December 2024 has been reviewed and we do not dispute the conclusions.</i></p> <p><i>Previous guidance required modelling of the wider highway network to be undertaken where the vehicle trips generated at the site access exceeded 30, 2 -way trips in the peak hour. In this case there are 24 AM two-way and 27 PM two-way trips per day predicated which falls below the old guidance threshold.</i></p> <p><i>Current guidance places no maximum trip numbers and instead requires modelling work is to be undertaken where we recognise junctions or links are approaching or exceeding their capacity and as a result are creating a severe impact to highway safety.</i></p> <p><i>Each application site is therefore assessed on a case by case basis and in this case we do not foresee this development causing any capacity issues on the wider network which would result in a severe impact to highway safety.</i></p> <p><i>Some traffic signal work has been undertaken by LCC recently on the A671 Whalley Bypass junction Accrington Road and I have requested an update on the exact works that have been undertaken here (I will provide this as soon as I get it). There has been one collision at this junction in the previous 5 years, Jun 2023, which is regrettable however considering the number of vehicles using this junction it does not indicate that an inherent safety problem is present that requires mitigation.</i></p> <p><i>The mini roundabout at Accrington Road and King Street has 2 collisions recorded in the previous 5 years (Sept 21 and Oct 24).</i></p> <p><i>We do require measures on Accrington Road itself to mitigate the impact of the development traffic, particularly to reduce vehicle speeds and to ensure safe pedestrian movements are provided as a priority. We have sought to secure these to ensure the development traffic can be accommodated safely on the network.’</i></p>							
Application Ref:		3/2023/0706		Higher College Farm Lower Road		REC:	APP
<p>The agent for the application has contacted officers requesting/ confirming the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correspondence / information has been issued directly to Members – see attached.• Either the proposed developer or the agent will speak at Committee							

- A request to record the meeting will be made

The agent for the application has also contacted Officers confirming that the applicant would like to discuss the design and layout of the buildings further with officers, in an effort to arrive at further changes which might overcome the concerns of the Committee.

On this basis the application has been **REMOVED** from this agenda and will be brought back to a later Committee

Application Ref:	3/2024/0612	Land opposite Turner Fold Read	REC:	APP
<p>An additional block plan has been received clarifying the proposed parking arrangement (Drawing No 2352 BP01).</p> <p>In light of this additional plan being received, condition 2 has been updated accordingly as below</p> <p>1. <i>Unless explicitly required by condition within this consent, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the proposals as detailed on drawings:</i></p> <p><i>Proposed Elevations and Plans 2352-PR01 C</i> <i>Extent of Demolition Plan 2352-PR02</i> <i>Block Plan and Location Plan BLP01</i> <i>Proposed Block Plan 2352 BP01</i> <i>Existing and Proposed Site Sections SS01 A</i> <i>Visibility Plan 4472-F01</i> <i>Arboricultural Constraints Appraisal Prepared by Bowland Tree Consultancy LTD</i></p> <p><i>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which plans are relevant to the consent hereby approved.</i></p>				
Application Ref:	3/2023/0367	Knott Farm Chipping Road Thornley	REC:	REF
Application Ref:	3/2024/0851	4a Wiswell Lane Whalley	REC:	REF
Application Ref:	3/2021/0275	Land Behind The Dog Inn Market Place Longridge	REC:	APP
<p>1 further letter of concern has been raised setting out the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about surface water drainage • Water will be directed towards existing properties • Not satisfied the plans take into account the impact on existing properties regarding surface water 				



6th January 2025

Ref: 23-1537/001

Dear Councillor Bibby,

**PLANNING APPLICATION 3/2023/0706
ERECTION OF 34 CLASS E(G) UNITS ETC. RESUBMISSION OF 3/2022/0553
HIGHER COLLEGE FARM, LOWER ROAD, LONGRIDGE, PRESTON PR3 2YY**

I write to you individually in your capacity as a Member of the Planning & Development Committee ('P&DC') of Ribble Valley Council and in respect of the above-mentioned planning application, which is due to be reconsidered at the meeting of the P&DC on 9th January 2025.

We act for the owner of the application site, which he will develop once he receives planning permission. The applicant was extremely disappointed with the outcome of the P&DC on 28th November 2024, where Members indicated their intention to reject the application, against officer recommendation.

We appreciate that it is for the Committee to determine the application and for individual members to form a view on the acceptability of the scheme, regardless of officer recommendation. However, a decision to go against clear officer advice should be based on sound reasoning. Having listened to the debate at the last meeting, I do not believe the decision was based on a proper understanding of the facts, as opposed to the allegations (presented as facts) in the debate.

Given the importance that this scheme represents to the applicant and to the economy of Longridge, we want to make you aware of some of the key facts (some of which we consider were misrepresented at the previous meeting), in advance of your next meeting.



I have identified those key points, which I believe Members need to reconsider as part of their decision-making process on 9th January 2025.

1. SAME DEVELOPER ATTEMPTING TO REDUCE THE QUALITY OF THE SCHEME.

At the previous meeting, presentations were made which raised concerns about “well thought-out applications being approved, only for them to be replaced later with sub-standard alternatives.” It was suggested that the current application was “a prime example of that regression. Instead of delivering the Eiffel Tower, we are being asked to accept a Blackpool Tower. A far cry from what was originally planned.”

The same presentation stated that “Even the applicant for this Longridge site has previously submitted plans that were far-more in-keeping – and were rightly approved. The previous application set a standard and proves it is possible to deliver development that aligns with policy.”

Regardless of any views on design, the statement misrepresented the true situation. Although the applicant name remains the same, this is simply because the application represents a resubmission of the earlier application approved in 2023. It is purely an administrative point, as a resubmission can only be by the same applicant. In this case, once the earlier applicant / developer had decided not to progress with the approved scheme, the site was remarketed and our current client (Tom Myers of Eco Providers) purchased the site with the agreement of the original applicant that a fresh application could be submitted. The resubmitted scheme will be developed by Mr Myers and his company and he has no relationship with the original applicant. To then link the two applications, as though it has been a purposeful attempt to ‘play the system’ is plainly not true.

Turning to the second part of the allegation that the new scheme is reduction in quality from the original, it is fact that the approved scheme was designed to accommodate a range of Class E uses, including some non-industrial (pseudo-retail) uses. The original application was pursued on this basis and the design was intended to accommodate this range of uses. When, at late stage in the determination of the earlier application, it became clear that senior officers would not support any use other than Class E(g), this effectively was fatal to the original scheme. Indeed, the approval was granted with the restriction to Class E(g) and entirely predictably, the original developer walked away from the development.

Following the decision by the original developer, Mr Myers stepped in and agreed to purchase the site and pursue a new application, accepting of the limitation on use that the Council required. Of course, a light industrial, Class E(g), scheme requires a different design which provides the type of functional space that is required by light industrial businesses, rather than gym / creche / retail and other similar uses.

We then worked with your officers to achieve a scheme which can deliver the space for light industrial users and at the same time ensure a viable scheme.

Contrary to a number of assertions at the last meeting, the scheme will deliver purely light industrial uses, as required by the Council, and the corollary is that the buildings are not then well suited to the



retail type of users that the Council does not want to see occupying the site. The suggestion that the previous scheme *“proves that it is possible to deliver development which aligns with policy”* is wholly inaccurate and the opposite is entirely the case. Indeed, the approved scheme was not intended to provide development which aligns with the Council’s interpretation of policy, and as a result the scheme was abandoned. The current scheme will deliver precisely what is expected by policy.

We believe that we have balanced the design needs for the site with the requirements of local businesses to have space which is functional and efficient for light industrial purposes. We also believe that comparison with the earlier scheme is pointless as the evidence strongly suggests that this scheme was not viable for the light industrial users which the Council wishes to see at this site.

2. RURAL CHARACTER OF THE SITE IS UNSUITED TO INDUSTRIAL USE / BUILDINGS

At the earlier meeting, a statement was made that the proposed development would *“fundamentally alter the area”*. It was suggested that what was *“currently a rural farmstead would become a large, industrial-style site.”* It was further stated that *“this is the wrong type of development for this location”*.

The allegations that the site is somehow unique in its character and setting and is a rural farmstead again fundamentally misrepresents the position. On the contrary, although the site is in the open countryside, as defined by the development plan, it is plainly strongly affected by the surrounding land uses and the fact that it lies close to the edge of the settlement of Longridge. Indeed, the site is close to existing industrial users, as well as a modern housing developments, which plainly influence the setting and character of the locality and the site in particular.

Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the nature of the site and the effect of surrounding land uses is through aerial images. As part of the planning application process, we had a drone take pictures of the site in its context. I think that it is important that Members are able to view these images and form their own opinion on whether this site is in fact a rural farmstead as suggested or is an edge of urban area site which is affected by existing development, where the effects of the proposed development will be very limited and in some instances result in positive effects by screening some of the existing uses.

The aerial images of the site are then attached with this letter, and I would urge Members to review these and where necessary undertake their own visit to the site so that they are more familiar with the site and its context, rather than relying on the inaccurate descriptions provided in earlier presentations.

We are convinced that the lengthy presentation made at the earlier meeting was both inaccurate and misleading and directly led to a decision to reject the scheme. I believe that it is necessary for us to put the record straight and respond to some of the inaccuracies. I hope that the information above provides a more factual account of the circumstances.



I understand that Members are not bound to accept the minded to refuse decision arrived at during the last meeting and are in fact required to review the full facts of the case, before then coming to a final conclusion on the application.

I would then ask that you review the design and nature of the scheme in the context of the facts as we have presented above, rather than the inaccurate position presented at the last meeting.

Having done so, I hope that you will accept that the reasoning given for the earlier decision was based on some fundamental misunderstandings of the facts and that the suggested reason for refusal in your papers would prove to be indefensible. I hope that this reconsideration will convince you to support the application in accordance with your officer's recommendation.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Walton MRTPI
Managing Director

cc. Aerial imagery of the application site and surroundings taken summer 2024.



Aerial image showing the wider site context, including HGV layby, Cleggs Cheese Factory, the butcher's, and the adjacent residential estate.



Closer image of Clegg's Cheese Factory, Higher College Farmhouse in far view.



Image of the site and wider context, taken from the south looking due north.



Image of the site and the adjacent residential estate and surrounding uses.