


Late Items – Planning & Development Committee				 Ribble Valley Borough Council www.ribblevalley.gov.uk	
Meeting Date: 21st September, 2023					
Briefing version		Issue Date:			
Committee Version	•	Issue Date:	21/09/23		
Application Ref:	3/2023/0148	OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 9,290SQ.M. OF EMPLOMENT DEVELOPMENT. (USE CLASS B2 – GENERAL INDUSTRIAL AND/OR USE CLASS B8 – STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION) WITH ACCESS APPLIED FOR OFF A59 LONGSIGHT ROAD (ALL OTHER MATTERS RESERVED) LAND SOUTH OF CAUSEWAY FARM, BALDERSTONE BB2 7HZ		REC:	REFUSAL

Since the publication of the Committee Agenda the Committee are asked to note the following updates on this application:

1. The response from Balderstone Parish Council was not reported in the correct place within the published committee report and is as follows:

Of the 32 responses to the agent's pre application consultation, 25 are unsupportive (only one showed any broad support). Balderstone Parish Council not only wishes to emphasise this lack of local support but also add its own strong objection to the application.

The site lies in open countryside and is a significant distance and totally detached from the established business locations within Balderstone, which lie to the west of the defined settlement area .The site lies to the east and adjacent to the residential area of Mellor Brook and would effectively sandwich the village between industrialised areas.It is understood the application is for general industrial use (B2) which is usually associated with industrial parks, not next to a residential area or within open countryside . Such use has potential for noise and other environmentally negative effects.

The massing and scale of the buildings is incongruous and totally discordant with the locality. The proposed units are significantly larger in area and height when compared to adjacent businesses and properties. The site is also far from flat, rising above the level of the A59 which would make any buildings overbearing in height. The following image underlines this point in a powerful way, showing that the units would dwarf any other buildings in the locality.

The proposed development would not be in keeping with the character of the area which is open farmland with links via designated, well used footpaths to countryside which in turn, lead to extensive and spectacular vistas towards the Lancashire plain and across the Ribble Valley. This would result in a significant change to the experience of those that use the three footpaths running through the site and as such, have a huge negative impact on amenity value.

Of great concern would be the potential loss of yet more valuable habitat, particularly the two ponds and open grassland, with threats to hedgerows and trees. Ecological impoverishment is a subject of national and local debate , developments such as that proposed , even with mitigation, are at odds with a drive to improve and protect the diversity of our native flora and fauna. The positive eDNA test indicating the presence of Great Crested Newts in the ponds, plus local observations of a wide variety of woodland song birds, Barn and Tawny Owls along with large mammals such as Roe Deer show there is a mature and diverse ecosystem.

It was disappointing to note that the agent acting on behalf of the applicant in their Statement of Community Involvement failed to include Balderstone Parish Council amongst those listed in 4.8 of

the Planning Statement 'Consultation with Local Councillors.' A clear oversight which deprived the Council an early opportunity to comment on the proposal.

2. A letter has been received from Avison Young acting as agents for this application which is appended to this Late Items Sheet. A summary of the officers response to this letter is as follows:

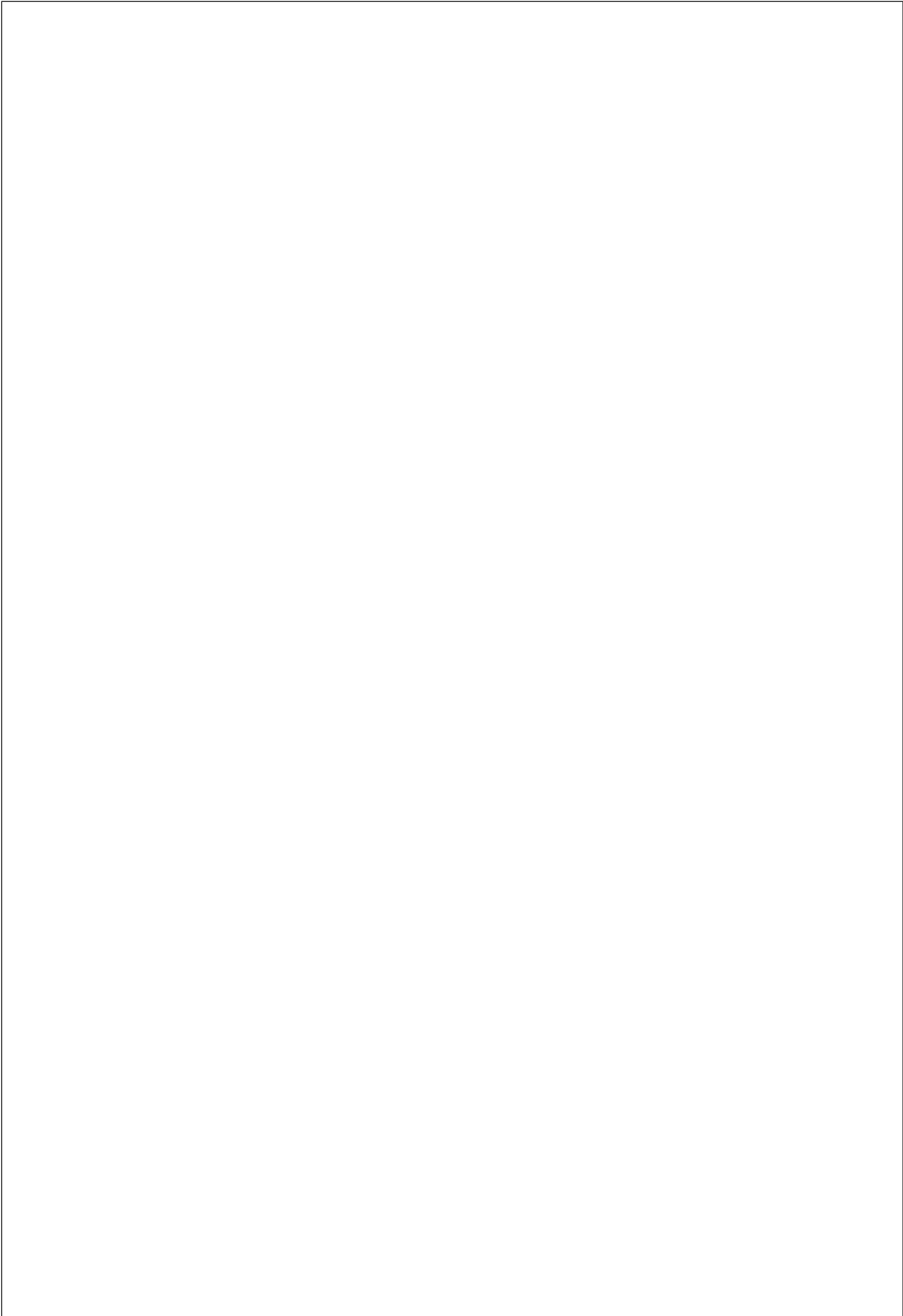
The relevant development plan policies have been identified in the published committee report on page 32. An assessment of the development against the key policies is then made in section 5 of the report which includes Policy DMG2 and Key Statement EC1. Policy DMG2 is intended to steer development to the most appropriate locations in order to ensure sustainable development and to protect rural landscapes. Key Statement DMG2 is not considered to be out of date and the settlements have been reviewed in the last five years. A recent appeal decision upheld this view. It very much aligns with the NPPF and it is incorrect to suggest it is not up-to-date, particularly when there is not a shortage of sites to meet the current local plan employment requirements as reported in the published committee report (paragraph 5.1.7). It is also incorrect to suggest that it is at odds with Key Statement EC1.

Key Statement EC1 outlines the spatial strategy for employment development. However this key statement does not allocate land, which you would not expect it to with it being an overriding strategic policy, but is to inform the decision on where to allocate land. There is also a suggestion that in considering where this land will be located priority will be given to the use of appropriate brownfield sites. The decision on where to allocate land was done as part of the Housing and Economic Development DPD published in 2019. At that time the residual requirement for employment land had reduced from 8 hectares to 2.41ha and three sites were allocated accordingly to meet this need. Therefore it is incorrect to say that this policy overrides or conflicts with Policy DMG2. Of the three sites identified in the Housing and Economic Development DPD only one site has been fully built out and occupied and that is the Land at Sykes Holt, Mellor. Therefore there remains employment sites available to bring forward.

It is also incorrect to state that EC1 is out-of-date because of the Ribble Valley Economic and Employment Land Needs Study, dated 17 December 2021. This is an evidence document that was commissioned for the purpose of informing the new Local Plan, and the decision whether or not to accept the findings on need will be informed by various matters in preparing the Plan including whether or not it aligns with the overall housing and economic development growth strategy for the Borough going forward. It carries very limited weight for development management purposes.

Therefore the tilted balance in the NPPF at paragraph 11(d) is not engaged and the council's assessment in the published committee report remains unchanged. For the avoidance of doubt officers consider that the adverse impacts of allowing the development would outweigh the benefits.

3. Further information has been received from the agent today (21/09/23) with regards to the outstanding highway issues and this has been sent to LCC Highways for comments. LCC Highways have responded that they are not able to get a response prior to the meeting due to the short timeframe and therefore it is recommended that Members continue to consider the application at Committee, where the highway refusal reason remains. Should the Committee agree with the officers recommendation to refuse the application then the agent may choose to continue their dialogue with LCC Highways post decision, and should this matter be resolved then the Council would then withdraw its highway refusal reason as part of any appeals process.
4. A Certificate relating to Great Crested Newts (GCN) has also been received today (21/09/23), however, this is a payment mechanism and not a License. The assessment in the published committee report that there is insufficient information on GCN remains, and therefore this matter has not been satisfactorily addressed.



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