

RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APPROVAL

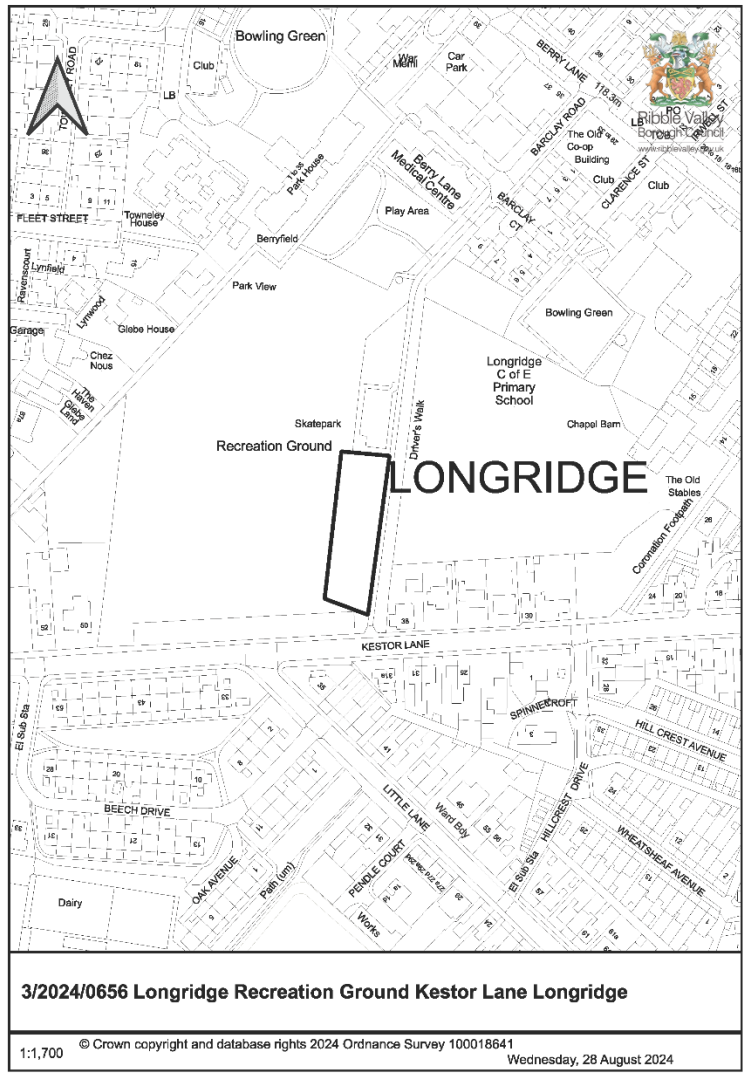
DATE: 17 OCTOBER 2024  
REF: LH

APPLICATION REF: 3/2024/0656

GRID REF: SD 360332 437191

**DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF WHEELED SPORTS FACILITY (PUMP TRACK) WITH ASSOCIATED DRAINAGE. LONGRIDGE RECREATION GROUND, KESTOR LANE LONGRIDGE



## **CONSULTEE RESPONSES/ REPRESENTATIONS MADE:**

### **TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL:**

Longridge Town Council have made the following observations:-

The Council is in general supportive of the application, but considers the following matters should be taken into consideration before the application is approved:

1. Parking is already an issue and the new facility could increase the problem and should be addressed.
2. Cycling is currently not allowed on the footpaths; this may well be ignored with a cycling facility on site and should be addressed.
3. The existing area comprising benches and trees needs to be preserved.
4. The area is prone to flooding and this needs to be addressed.

### **LOCAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY:**

Lancashire County Council (LCC) Highways Department raise no objection subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Construction Method Statement.

### **NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY:**

Preston City Council raise no objection

### **SPORT ENGLAND:**

Withdraws its previous objection subject to conditions as it is considered to meet Exception 5 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. Conditions required relating to a construction management plan, undertaking of a ball strike assessment and installation of fencing.

### **FIELDS IN TRUST:**

No response received

### **RVBC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT:**

Given the low impact noise element from the track and the fact that there's no lighting proposed there are no comments (or objections) on the track. Suggested restrictions on the construction phase of development to protect residential amenity.

### **ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS:**

Letters of support have been received from 20 households (13 from Longridge and 7 from the surrounding area) raising the following comments:

- Fantastic addition to the town and borough
- Opportunity for adults and children to access a new outdoor sport on their doorstep
- Town is growing but limited opportunities for health and fitness, particularly those aimed at teenagers and young adults

- Pump tracks have a friendly atmosphere and will encourage children and young people to socialise and improve their mental wellbeing
- Will bring the community together and improve quality of life
- Will provide a safe area for cycling in Longridge away from traffic (none at present)
- Sympathetic to other users of the recreation ground
- Will potentially draw people to Longridge benefitting local trade
- Ample parking off Berry Lane

Letters of objection have been received from 14 households raising the following concerns:

- Double parking and traffic congestion on Kestor Lane has become a real problem when any activities or events on the field take place. The pump track is likely to make this worse.
- Concern about pedestrians and cyclists crossing busy roads and between parked cars.
- No car parking solution
- Loss of already diminished green space
- Loss of view of green space from footpaths / benches
- Will be an eyesore
- Loss of space for community events like Longridge Field Day. Will jeopardise the future of Longridge Field Day including restricting access to the field
- Increased noise disturbance for neighbouring residents
- Recreation ground should provide recreational use for all people not just an age group
- Drivers Walk is a public footpath not intended for use by cyclists. Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists when busy
- Money better spent on other projects such as enhanced playground facilities or the youth centre or resurfacing the footpath on the recreation ground
- May encourage anti-social behaviour resulting in public safety concerns
- Increased litter and vandalism, no toilet facilities nearby
- Additional pressure on drainage infrastructure
- Better located elsewhere outside of the town centre

A letter of objection has been received from Longridge Field Day Events Committee raising the following concern:

- The proposal takes away the existing access to the field on Field Day, particularly when wet as the other access point gets very boggy and water flows across the path. This will affect other users wishing to access the field for an event e.g. the Circus.
- The proposed soakaway for the development will make that section of ground boggy after heavy rainfall
- Loss of view of the recreation ground for those sitting on benches on Drivers Walk

3 additional letters have been received neither expressing support or objection but making the following observations:

- There needs to be a designated car park
- What will happen to the 9 a side football pitch which the pump track encroaches onto?
- Attending events on this field is a Longridge tradition

## 1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 Members will note that the application is being brought before Committee given the application is made on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council with the land to which the application relates also falling within the ownership of the authority.

## 2. **Site Description and Surrounding Area**

- 2.1 The application site relates to a flat area of public open space at the southern extent of Longridge Recreation Ground, adjacent to Kestor Lane. The wider recreation ground includes a children's playground, outdoor gym, skate park and green outdoor space where sport including football is played with two pitches currently marked out.
- 2.2 Access onto the recreation ground is primarily via a public footpath known as 'Drivers Walk' which connects Kestor Lane to Barclay Road / Berry Lane. In recent years the Recreation Ground was dedicated to the fallen of WW1 and was made a Fields in Trust site.

## 3. **Proposed Development for which consent is sought**

- 3.1 The application seeks consent for the construction of a pump track on 1,500 sq.m of the recreation field to the south of the existing skate park and alongside Drivers Walk. The works required include excavation of the area and formation of track bumps and banked turns of between 0.4m and 1.8m in height. The track will be a minimum of 2m in width and surfaced with asphalt. Between the tracks there would be turf planted along with some wildflower planting and 3 new native trees along the eastern boundary. Surface water from the tracks would be managed on site with culverts piping excess water into a French drain. No external light is proposed.
- 3.2 The project is intended to meet the need of under-represented groups who have very few age appropriate facilities suitable for their recreational use and community social activity in the local area. This site was chosen as there are a limited number of Council owned sites in Longridge that are large enough, with alternatives at Mardale and John Smiths discounted due to loss of playing pitches or lack of services.

## 4. **Relevant Planning History**

No recent planning history directly relevant to the determination of the application.

## 5. **Relevant Policies**

### **Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Adopted Version)**

Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy

Key Statement DS2 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Key Statement EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations

Policy DMG1 – General Considerations

Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

Policy DMB4 – Open Space Provision

Policy DME6 – Water Management

## **Longridge Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Policy LNDP12 – Protecting and Enhancing Local Green Spaces

Policy LNDP13 – Protecting and Enhancing Local Open Spaces

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guide (NPPG)

### **6. Assessment of Proposed Development**

#### **6.1 Principle of Development:**

6.1.1 Longridge Recreation Ground is identified as a protected area of open space. Policy DMB4 of the Core Strategy protects open space and playing field provision. Policy DMG1 requires that development proposals must not result in the net loss of important open space, including public and private playing fields, without a robust assessment that sites are surplus to need. In assessing this regard must be had to the level of provision and standard of public open space in the area [and] the importance of playing fields. Regard will also be had to the landscape or townscape of an area and the importance the open space has on this.

6.1.2 Paragraph 103 of the NPPF is relevant, which states:-

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location;
- or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

6.1.3 Whilst the proposal would involve the development of a small area of the existing public recreation ground, it makes provision for an alternative sports facility for the community and so its use remains entirely compatible with the recreation ground use, in the same way as the existing skate park and play facilities are considered appropriate. In addition, this site will not impact on the amount of land available for football pitches, with Sport England confirming the proposed facility would retain adequate pitch provision for current user requirements.

6.1.4 Sport England had raised a concern about the more intensive use of the site by cyclists and the potential for cyclists using the facility to overspill onto pitches which will result in cycle wheel tracks, ruts and potential conflict with match/training play particularly when pitches are wet. Another concern was the increased potential for ball strike injuries to cyclists using the proposed facility. To mitigate these concerns conditions are required to undertake a ball strike assessment and secure a ball mitigation / segregation fence between the pump tack and football pitch.

6.1.5 As the proposal would not adversely impact on the delivery of football and pitches at the site, Sport England consider it meets one of the exception criteria in their policy to allowing development on a recreational ground / playing field. In addition the development is for alternative sports provision offering community benefits. As such the proposal would satisfy paragraph 103 of the NPPF and the Council's local plan policies namely Policies DMB4 and DMG1 of the Core Strategy as well as the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan.

6.1.6 Whilst the proposed facility has been designed to meet the needs of local residents, because there are no facilities like it in the immediate surrounds it is likely to attract people who live in nearby towns and visitors. As such Policy DMB3 of the Core Strategy is relevant which states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the Borough. This is subject to meeting a number of criterion:-

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, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;
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

6.1.7 Having regard to criterion 1 the proposal would not conflict with other policies of this plan in terms of protecting open space and playing field provision. Being within central Longridge the proposal is well related to an existing main settlement criterion 2 is satisfied. Criteria 3-6 is considered in more detail later in this report but no conflict is identified. Therefore, the proposal is considered to satisfy policy DMB3 and provide an appropriate play / leisure facility in the Borough.

## 6.2 Visual Amenity

6.2.1 Policy DMG1 is engaged insofar that the policy sets out general Development Management considerations, with the policy having a number of inherent criterion that are relevant to the assessment of the current proposal, which state:

*In determining planning applications, all development must:*

**DESIGN**

1. *Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the CABE/English Heritage building on context toolkit).*
2. *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.*
3. *Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.*

#### AMENITY

1. *Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*

6.2.2 The pump track has been designed as a continuous loop with a series of rolling features of between 0.4m – 1.8m in height. The track surface would be finished in asphalt with a strip of amenity turf laid around the edges and small wildflower areas within the track. The proposal would be situated next to the skate park as a continuation of the existing play facilities positioned alongside 'Drivers Walk' as such the embankments and undulating landscape is considered to be visually acceptable in this location. A line of trees to the south would largely screen the proposal from Kestor Lane.

6.2.3 A fence between the pump track and football pitch is required to be secured by condition. This would be positioned alongside an existing 2m high fence around the skate park with precise details to be submitted and approved to ensure a compatible design.

6.2.4 Accordingly, the visual impact of the works proposed is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies DMG1, DMG2, and DMB3 of the Core Strategy.

#### 6.3 Impact(s) upon Residential Amenities:

6.3.1 Given the proposal seeks consent for a new play facility in close proximity to existing residential properties on Kestor Lane and Little Lane, consideration must be given in respect for the potential for the proposal to result in undue impacts upon nearby existing residential amenity. Concerns have been raised by some of the residents about impacts caused by noise and disturbance. The application has been reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Team however they consider any noise issues to have a low impact. It is acknowledged that the pump track would come closer to the nearest residential properties, in particular no. 38 Kestor Lane, than the existing play facilities currently do. However taking account of the existing background noise levels and that the facility would not be illuminated so is less likely to be used in the evening and at night-time, then any noise and disturbance associated with the use of the pump track is not considered to be so adverse for neighbouring residents to justify a refusal of planning permission.

6.3.2 Taking account of the above, the proposal raises no significant measurable conflict with Policies DMG1 or DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which seeks to protect against development(s) that will result in measurable adverse impacts upon nearby existing or future residential amenities.

#### 6.4 Trees and Ecology:

6.4.1 There are a number of trees within influencing distance of the proposed site along Drivers Walk and Kestor Lane. As such the Countryside Officer has reviewed the proposal and recommended a condition requiring the installation of protective fencing around the site perimeter during the construction phase as well as other mitigation measures to be agreed, in order to protect the root protection areas of these trees.

6.4.2 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been submitted which demonstrates how the development will achieve the mandatory 10% (minimum) uplift in biodiversity through the provision of wildflowers, grasses and tree planting. This would be secured by conditions.

#### 6.5 Drainage:

6.5.1 The scheme has been designed so that surface water shed from the track surface will be managed by a series of inlets with silt traps, with culverts piping excess water away from the track into a French drain. This drainage scheme is considered to be appropriate to deal with surface water from the development and is not considered to exacerbate any existing issues of flooding in the area. It therefore satisfies Policy DME6 of the Core Strategy.

#### 6.6 Highways:

6.6.1 There have been a number of concerns raised about congestion on Kestor Lane when the recreation ground is hosting community events or football matches, and that a pump track would exacerbate those issues and result in adverse impacts on highway safety including on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists accessing the recreation ground.

6.6.2 LCC Highways have been consulted on the application and are of the view that the development will not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

6.6.3 Concerns have been raised by residents and the Town Council about the lack of parking. There is a public car park available on Barclay Road just behind the recreation ground, the site is well served by buses and given the accessible location of the facility it is expected that the majority of users will cycle to it. Whilst it is acknowledged that people who drive to the facility may use Kestor Lane or surrounding residential streets, in the absence of any objection from the local highway authority, any additional traffic is not considered to be of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance to justify a refusal of planning permission.



- 6.6.4 Concerns have been raised about the use of Drivers Walk by cyclists. LCC Highways have confirmed that the use of this route by cyclists is permitted by RVBC as landowner, and it is considered that its use by pedestrian and cyclists would not lead to a significant conflict or tension between users.
- 6.6.5 LCC Highways have requested details to be submitted relating to vehicle access for construction traffic, the compound and operative car parking which can be secured by condition.
- 6.6.6 Taking account of the above, the proposal raises no significant measurable conflict with Policies DMG1, DMG3 or DMB3 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy which require traffic and car parking implications to be considered, and developments to have appropriate access and be located in accessible locations.

## 6.7 Other Matters:

- 6.7.1 Concerns have been raised about the impact of the development on community events hosted on the recreation ground, including Longridge Field Day. The majority of the recreation ground would still be available and there is space for vehicles to access the field next to the children's play area. There may also be space for smaller vehicles to access the field to the south of the pump track subject to the re-positioning of one of the proposed trees. If a drainage solution was needed to allow for field access this would be a matter for the landowner i.e. the Council to resolve with relevant parties outside of the planning system.
- 6.7.2 Concerns have been raised about anti-social behaviour, litter and vandalism. Concerns about public safety, littering and anti-social behaviour are a material planning consideration, although there is no specific planning policy or guidance on these matters.
- 6.7.3 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides general guidance on promoting healthy and safe communities as referred to in section 8 of the NPPF including designing out crime and disorder having regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) which requires local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder. The siting of the facility is afforded a degree of public surveillance and in the absence of any specific risks / evidence of risks identified, it is not considered that the proposal would be in conflict with the NPPG. Therefore, there are considered insufficient grounds to refuse the application on this basis.
- 6.7.4 The recreation ground is a dedicated Fields in Trust site. Whilst Fields in Trust haven't responded to the planning application consultation, the Council as landowner is required to obtain their consent outside of the planning process.

## 7. Observations/Consideration of Matters Raised/Conclusion

- 7.1 For the reasons outlined above, the application is recommended for approval insofar that the proposal will not result in any significant adverse impacts, nor will the proposal result in significant measurable conflicts with the aims and objectives of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy that would warrant the refusal to grant planning permission in this instance.

RECOMMENDATION: That the application be APPROVED subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

1. The development hereby approved must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. 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:

Location Plan 1:2500  
Site Plan 1:200  
Pump Track Plan 1:250  
Drainage Plan 1:250  
Pump Track Formation Details 1:25  
Site Sections 1:500 / 1:250

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which plans are relevant to the consent hereby approved.

3. No development shall take place until a construction method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. It shall provide for:

- i) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii) The loading and unloading of plant and materials
- iii) The storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- iv) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding
- v) Wheel washing facilities
- vi) Measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- vii) A scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- viii) Details of working hours
- ix) Routing of delivery vehicles to/from site
- x) Measures to protect users of the public footpath

REASON: To mitigate the impact of the construction traffic on the highway network

4. No development shall commence until full details of:
  - (a) the works/contractors' compound (including any buildings, moveable structures, works, plant, machinery, access and provision for the storage of vehicles, equipment and/or materials); and
  - (b) a scheme for the removal of the works/contractors' compound and the restoration of the land on which it is situated are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority after consultation with Sport England. The works/contractors' compound shall not be provided and used on the site other than in accordance with the approved details and shall be removed and the land on which it is situated restored in

accordance with the approved details before occupation of the development hereby approved.

REASON: To protect the playing fields from damage, loss or availability of use.

5. The development hereby approved shall not be first used until full details of a ball stop mitigation fence, together with a maintenance and management schedule, informed by a ball strike assessment, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved fence shall be installed in full before the development is first used. The fence shall be managed and maintained thereafter in perpetuity in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To provide protection for the occupants of adjacent uses and their property from potential ball strike from the adjacent playing field/sports pitches.

6. The development hereby approved shall not be first used until full details of a segregating fence between the cycle facility and the remaining playing field to the west, together with a maintenance and management schedule, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved fence shall be installed in full before the development is first used. The fence shall be managed and maintained thereafter in perpetuity in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To provide protection for the occupants of adjacent uses and their property from egress onto the adjacent playing field/sports pitches from the cycle facility and to accord with policy

7. Prior to commencement of any site works including delivery of building materials and excavations for foundations or services, a site perimeter fence shall be erected in accordance with the BS5837 2012 [Trees in Relation to Demolition, Design & Construction] so all the trees within influencing distance of the sites (namely the group of trees to the east along Drivers Walk and the group of trees to the south fronting Kestor Lane) shall be protected.

The tree protection details shall be inspected and agreed by the Council's Countryside Officer before any site works are begun, along with a tree protection monitoring schedule.

The root protection/exclusion zone shall remain in place until all building work has been completed and all excess materials have been removed from site including soil/spoil and rubble. During the building works no excavations or changes in ground levels shall take place and no building materials/spoil/soil/rubble shall be stored or redistributed within the protection/exclusion zone, in addition no impermeable surfacing shall be constructed within the protection zone.

For the avoidance of doubt no tree felling or pruning works are authorised as part of the granting of this planning permission.

REASON: In order to ensure that nearby trees of amenity value are afforded appropriate protection from the potential adverse effects of development.

8. The development shall not be first used until:

(a) a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Plan (prepared by Elsie Josland Landscape Design and dated September 2024), has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This shall include details of:-

- (i) a non-technical summary;
- (ii) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- (iii) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Plan;
- (iv) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- (v) the monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority.

(b) the habitat creation and enhancement works set out in the approved HMMP have been completed; and a completion report, evidencing the completed habitat enhancements, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the local planning authority in writing in accordance with the methodology and frequency specified in the approved HMMP.

REASON: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

[https://webportal.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx\\_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2024%2F0656](https://webportal.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/planx_details.php?appNumber=3%2F2024%2F0656)