

Report Title	PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Meeting	WEST CRAVEN COMMITTEE
Meeting Date	6TH JANUARY 2026
Report Author	NEIL WATSON
Directorate	PLACE
Lead Executive Member(s)	COUNCILLOR L. WHIPP
Wards Affected	EARBY & COATES
Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt	PUBLIC
Appendices (if any)	NONE

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To determine the attached planning application.

REPORT TO WEST CRAVEN COMMITTEE ON 6TH JANUARY 2026

Application Ref: 25/0748/FUL

Proposal: Full: Formation of an agricultural track.

At Thornton Hall Farm, Skipton Road, Barnoldswick

On behalf of: Mr Chris Harrison

Date Registered: 26.11.2025

Expiry Date: 21.01.2026

Case Officer: Athira Pushpagaran

This application has been called in to committee by the Chair.

Site Description and Proposal

The application site forms part of a farm used for farming and as an open farm visitors centre located in open countryside on the edge of Thornton in Craven. The premises has an existing access road from Church Road. PROWs FP1305039 and FP1305044 pass cutting across the track.

The proposed development is the formation of an access track from Skipton Road/Colne & Broughton Road (A56). This has already been constructed at the time of the site visit. It slopes down from the edge of the car park to Skipton Road through a field, with the access near a bent in the road. Skipton Road/Colne & Broughton Road (A56) is a strategic link between Lancashire and Yorkshire carrying high levels of daily traffic, including HGVs to and from the West Craven Business Park to the south in Earby. The road is subject to a National Speed limit outside the existing field access.

Relevant Planning History

25/0059/FUL Full: Erection of 3 no. polytunnels and the siting of 2 no. shipping containers for mixed use as a Halloween Venue, visitor farm and educational and agricultural use. Approved with Conditions. 2025

24/0775/FUL- Full: Erection of a mixed-use barn for entertainment purposes. Pending consideration.

24/0611/FUL - Full: Erection of an agricultural storage, lambing and workshop building. Approved with conditions. 2024

17/0382/FUL- Full: Erection of a multi-purpose agricultural storage, lambing and workshop building. Approved with conditions. 2017

13/15/0398P - Full: Extension to existing car park to form 225 spaces overall. Approved. 2015.

13/14/0003P - Erection of detached single storey building to accommodate biomass boiler and farm store. (part retrospective). Approved. 2014.

13/13/0577P - Erection of an orangery extension to provide additional dining room accommodation for cafe. Approved. 2014.

13/13/0554P - External alterations to existing farm visitor centre including the cladding of walls in natural stone, the roof in natural blue slate and insertion of a section of curtain walled glazing. Approved. 2014.

13/13/0228P - Erection of a first-floor balcony and insertion of a glazed roof to front of farm visitors' centre. Approved. 2013.

13/12/0102P - Full: Change of use of land and buildings from agricultural use to mixed agricultural use and recreational use as a farm visitor centre with play barn, cafe, car park, D2 assembly and leisure use and quad biking (Retrospective). Approved. 2012.

13/08/0600C1 - Approval of Details Reserved by Condition: Discharge Condition 3 (landscaping) of Planning Permission 13/08/0600P. Condition discharged. 2012.

13/11/0535P - Full: Change of use of land from agriculture to use as an outdoor play area (D2 leisure use) and erection of play equipment with access from Church Road. (Retrospective). Approved. 2011.

13/08/0600P - Full: Erect visitor's centre. Approved. 2009.

13/02/0414P - Erection of open farm visitor centre on front elevation of existing farm building. Approved. 2002.

Consultee Response

Highways

Summary

The highway authority considers that insufficient information and evidence has been submitted to enable the authority to fully assess the impact of the development, as outlined in the submitted documents, on the surrounding highway network in terms of highway safety and capacity. The highway authority therefore objects to the development as submitted and considers that it would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would be contrary to paragraphs 115 b), 116 and 117 d) of the NPPF.

Site planning history

The site has had numerous planning applications, including several retrospective ones. Details of all applications are outlined in Section 4 of the submitted Planning Statement. It should be noted that application 24/0775/FUL for the erection of a mixed-use barn for entertainment purposes has not yet been determined, nor has the additional information which the highway authority requested been provided.

Development

The highway authority has been consulted on the retrospective formation of an agricultural track (local planning authority's consultation letter dated 28 November 2025). However, the description of the development on the submitted application form is for 'the creation of a farm track to be used for agricultural purposes and for emergency use in connection with the tourism use taking place at the farm'. The following extracts are also taken from the submitted Planning Statement which support this intended additional use:

1.3 The farm track for which permission is sought retrospectively serves two functions it provides improved access for agricultural purposes connecting the farmstead and land on the west side of Skipton Road (A56) with the land on the eastern side and it provides an emergency access when large events are held at the farm such as at Halloween and Bonfire Weekend.

2.1 The main enterprise operated from Thornton Hall Farm is a well-established rural visitor attraction, trading as Thornton Hall Country Park, it is one of the primary tourist attractions within the Borough of Pendle and while the applicants provide a diversified range of attractions, farming remains at the heart of the country park's offering and is one of its key attractions. There is also a wedding venue and camping available at the farm as well as a wide range of events and activities throughout the year.

2.2 ... The development for which permission is sought is located to the east of the car park and comprises an access track which connects the car park to Skipton Road (A56).

3.2 The development has involved the creation of a length of access track which runs from the edge of the farms visitor car park to Skipton Road (A56), it is approximately 325m in length and approximately 4m wide.

5.8 The site is in a rural location but on the edge of a village where there is some access to public transport in the village. The majority of visitors to the site will arrive by private car and when certain events are held such as at Halloween or Bonfire Weekend and very high numbers of visitors are present will high numbers of vehicles it is important to have an alternative access available in the case of an emergency and the track for which permission is sought is available for use on such an occasion serving a clear health and safety role at the site. At other times of the year, it provides an all-weather access for farm machinery between the two parts of the applicant's agricultural holding which are situated on either side of Skipton Road.

5.27 The proposed development is to improve an existing tourist facility by providing an additional access for use by visitors or the emergency services in the event of an emergency.

As it is clear the applicant intends to use the track other than for agricultural purposes the highway authority makes its comments on that basis.

Main site access

The main site access for both the farming and tourism/leisure activities is from Church Road (B6252) via a surfaced, single vehicle width lane. It also provides vehicular access to other residential properties on Summerfield not associated with the farm nor its activities. The first section of lane (approx 22m from the carriageway edge) is wide enough to allow two way traffic to pass within the entrance. There are no formal passing places between Church Road and the car park, with access points to other properties acting as informal passing places.

Agricultural track/access

The existing field access is onto Skipton Road/Colne & Broughton Road (A56), which is a strategic link between Lancashire and Yorkshire carrying high levels of daily traffic, including HGVs to and from the West Craven Business Park to the south in Earby. The road is subject to a National Speed limit outside the existing field access.

The applicant states that the track already constructed would be used as all-weather access for agricultural purposes between land in their ownership on both sides of the A56. The use of the existing field access onto the A56 by agricultural vehicles is likely to be infrequent and seasonal, eg for silaging, haymaking or moving livestock. As the driver of 3 an agricultural vehicle is sat higher than in a domestic vehicle they are likely to have a clearer view of vehicles approaching

from either direction. The use of the track for agricultural purposes only with no connection to the tourism/leisure activities on site does not raise any highway safety concerns.

The track is 5.5m wide as shown on the 1:20 scale Agricultural Track Cross Section on Drawing Har.696.3184-01 dated 26.11.25. The maximum width of a standard agricultural tractor is 2.55m or 3m when it has fully mounted equipment or interchanged towed equipment. A 5.5m wide track would allow two way traffic by most non-agricultural type vehicles.

As farming activities have decreased on site and the tourism activities increased (see 2.1 of the Planning Statement) movements by agricultural vehicles across the A56 may have also reduced. If that is the case then does the level of farming activity warrant the construction of the style and size of track which has been submitted?

Emergency access use

The agricultural track links to the existing car park at the farm and so there are no physical barriers to prevent all traffic using the track not just agricultural vehicles. Indeed, as already stated, the description proposal on the submitted application form and information within the Planning Statement clearly indicate the intention for the track to be used by all types of traffic on certain occasions.

Due to the intensification in use of the access both the access and visibility splays would need to be provided to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard.

For a road with a speed limit of 60mph a Stopping Sight Distance (or visibility splays) of 215m would need to be provided in both directions to the nearside edge of the A56 (DMRB). These would need to be over land within the applicant's ownership and/or the public highway network. It may be suitable to reduce the visibility splays for the vehicle speeds on the A56 at the site access. However, these would need to be supported by data obtained by an automated seven day survey to establish 85%ile average seven day speeds. The survey would need to be collected in a neutral month (outside any holiday periods and adverse weather events) with prevailing weather conditions noted. The access would need to be paved and drained and constructed under a legal agreement (Section 278) with Lancashire County Council.

The applicant does not own the field and hedge boundary to the south of the access and therefore cannot provide the visibility splay to the right when exiting as this would be over third party land and not within their control. The geometry of the road to the north with a right hand bend would prevent the provision of a 215m visibility splay to the left when exiting. The intensification in use of an access with sub-standard visibility splays, particularly by those unfamiliar with the road network, is a highway safety issue and contrary to paragraphs 115 b) and 116 of the NPPF.

Previous applications for tourism activities/public events, including retrospective applications, have not mentioned the need for an emergency access. The applicants have not provided details of why an emergency access is now required and being applied for. The highway authority expects that any public events/activities which attract larger numbers would have to be assessed on an event by event basis through the appropriate channels when these do not come within the site's operation licence. For example through the relevant ESAG group or by a Temporary Events Notice. Both these channels would require the Police to be consulted and any highway safety measures they recommend being complied with. These could include, but not be exclusive to, temporary traffic management on the surrounding highway network, which would also have to be agreed with the relevant highway authorities, that is Lancashire County Council and North Yorkshire Council.

Section 5.27 of the Planning Statement says that the additional access would be 'for use by visitors or the emergency services in the event of an emergency'. Access by any emergency

vehicles in the case of an emergency would likely be via the existing main access onto Church Road. Even if an emergency vehicle could use the access and track off the A56 (which has not been demonstrated), as this leads to the car park access to the wider site is likely to be obstructed by parked vehicles. Therefore, the use of the track by emergency vehicles would be contrary to paragraph 117 d) which states that applications for development should 'allow for the efficient ... access by ... emergency vehicles.'

No information has been submitted that alternative options have been considered for an amended or additional access for emergency purposes. For example widening the existing access lane from Church Road to allow two-way traffic. As the applicant owns the adjacent field to the access lane this would be possible.

Conclusion

Lancashire County Council acting as the highway authority objects to the application and considers that the applicant has not submitted adequate information to demonstrate that the use of the track for anything other than infrequent agricultural purposes would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would therefore be contrary to paragraph 116 of the NPPF, that the use of the track for anything other than agricultural purposes would not provide a 'safe and suitable access to the site ... for all users' (contrary to paragraph 115b) and that efficient access by emergency vehicles cannot be provided (contrary to paragraph 117 d). The authority therefore recommends refusal.

Parish/Town Council

No response

PBC Environmental health

No response

PBC Public Rights of Way

No response

North Yorkshire Highways

No response

Yorkshire Water

No response

PBC Engineering

No response

Thornton in Craven Parish

No response

Public Response

The nearest neighbours have been notified by letter, a site & press notice have been displayed, with no response.

Relevant Planning Policy

Pendle Local Plan Fourth Edition (2021-2040)

Policy SP01 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) echoes the presumption set out in National Policy and promotes the three strands of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Applications which accord with policies contained within the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy SP13 (Transport and connectivity) New developments should, wherever possible, exploit opportunities for walking and cycling by connecting to existing pedestrian and cycle routes.

Policy DM10 (Landscape character) expects development proposals to respect and wherever possible enhance the landscape in which they are located.

Policy DM16 (Design & Place Making) seeks high quality design in all new developments. Proposals should promote local character and distinctiveness and demonstrate a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants

Policy DM37 (Parking) standards are set out in Appendix 5 of the plan, adequate parking provision is required to serve all new development.

Policy DM45 (Tourist facilities and accommodation) makes provisions for proposals that support tourist facilities and accommodation.

National Planning Policy Framework

The Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The policies in the Framework, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.

Para 115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;
- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code⁴⁸; and
- d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.

Para 116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Para 117. Within this context, applications for development should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

The Design Principles Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) applies to extensions and sets out the aspects required for good design and protecting residential amenity.

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Development in the Open Countryside places great importance on proportion and setting and provides guidance on the materials which would be acceptable for agricultural buildings. Developments must not be detrimental to the landscape and the materials and design must reflect traditional farm buildings.

Officer Comments

The proposed development relates to a farm used for farming and as an open farm visitors centre located in open countryside outside the settlement boundary. A previous planning application 13/12/0102P approved the change of use of land and buildings from agricultural use to mixed agricultural use and recreational use as a farm visitor centre with play barn, cafe, car park, D2 assembly and leisure use and quad biking at this property. Part of the access track is within the area approved for quad biking as per a condition on that decision. The rest of the track is on agricultural field.

There are no underlying policies which would prevent the development in principle. The principal material considerations for the application are as follows:

Design and Materials

The proposed track would be on a slope that rises from Skipton Road to the site car park. Part of it would be parallel to the road with the rest perpendicularly raising up the hills slope. It is 5.5m wide and constructed with limestone aggregate base layer and finished with dust limestone as per the section drawings submitted with the application. The access and the track is prominent from public vantage points on Skipton Road the public footpaths passing through the site. The track is agricultural in appearance and would not be completely incongruous within its open countryside location.

Overall, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of design in accordance with policies DM10 and DM16 of the Adopted Pendle Local Plan Fourth Edition (2021-2040) and the Adopted Pendle Design principles SPD.

Residential Amenity

The track is not next to any residential properties and would not have any impact on the residential amenity of any neighbouring properties.

Therefore, the proposed development would be acceptable in terms of residential amenity in accordance with policy DM16 of the Adopted Pendle Local Plan Fourth Edition (2021-2040), and the Adopted Pendle Design principles SPD.

Highways

The development results in an access from Skipton Road/Colne & Broughton Road (A56), which is a strategic link between Lancashire and Yorkshire carrying high levels of daily traffic, including HGVs to and from the West Craven Business Park to the south in Earby. The road is subject to a National Speed limit outside the existing field access.

The agricultural track links to the existing car park at the farm and so there are no physical barriers to prevent all traffic using the track not just agricultural vehicles. Indeed, the description proposal on the submitted application form and information within the Planning Statement clearly indicate the intention for the track to be used by all types of traffic on certain occasions. LCC Highways have noted that due to the intensification in use of the access both the access and visibility splays would need to be provided to Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) standard.

For a road with a speed limit of 60mph a Stopping Sight Distance (or visibility splays) of 215m would need to be provided in both directions to the nearside edge of the A56 (DMRB). These would need to be over land within the applicant's ownership and/or the public highway network. The Stopping Sight Distance requirement can only be reduced if it can be demonstrated that actual vehicles speed on the A56 is lower, as obtained by an automated seven-day survey to establish 85 percentile average seven-day speeds collected in a neutral month (outside any holiday periods and adverse weather events) with prevailing weather conditions noted. As it stands no such information has been submitted.

The applicant does not own the field and hedge boundary to the south of the access and therefore cannot provide the visibility splay to the right when exiting as this would be over third-party land and not within their control. The geometry of the road to the north with a right-hand bend would prevent the provision of a 215m visibility splay to the left when exiting. The intensification in use of an access with sub-standard visibility splays, particularly by those unfamiliar with the road network, is a highway safety issue and contrary to paragraphs 115 b) and 116 of the NPPF.

Access by any emergency vehicles in the case of an emergency would likely be via the existing main access onto Church Road. Even if an emergency vehicle could use the access and track off the A56 (which has not been demonstrated), as this leads to the car park access to the wider site is likely to be obstructed by parked vehicles. Therefore, the use of the track by emergency vehicles would be contrary to paragraph 117 d) which states that applications for development should 'allow for the efficient ... access by ... emergency vehicles.'

No information has been submitted that alternative options have been considered for an amended or additional access for emergency purposes. For example, widening the existing access lane from Church Road to allow two-way traffic.

In this case the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and would not provide a safe and suitable access to the site for all users and emergency vehicles and would therefore be contrary to paragraphs, 115, 116 and 117 of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

Due to the following reason:

1. The development due to substandard visibility splays at the access and insufficient information submitted to demonstrate otherwise would result in a significant impact on highway safety on the road network leading to the site. It would not provide safe and suitable access to all users and would not provide efficient access by emergency vehicles. The development would thus be contrary to Policies DM16 and DM37 of the Adopted Pendle

Local Plan Fourth Edition (2021-2040) and paragraph 115,116 and 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Application Ref: 25/0748/FUL

Proposal: Full: Formation of an agricultural track.

At Thornton Hall Farm, Skipton Road, Barnoldswick

On behalf of: Mr Chris Harrison

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Applications

NPW/MP

Date: 28th November 2025