

REPORT TO:	Planning Committee
APPLICATION REF:	11/26/0055
APPLICATION ADDRESS:	Land off Crown Street, Accrington, Lancashire
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Full: Construction of new staff car park
DATE REPORT WRITTEN:	27 February 2026

The application is brought before the Committee as it is a proposal by the Council and the named applicant is an employee of the Planning & Transportation Section,

Description of the Site and the Proposed Development

A planning application has been submitted for full permission to construct a car park at land bound by Crown Street, Ranger Street and Brown Street in Accrington. The site spans 0.17 hectares and is situated within the urban boundary of Accrington located just outside the town centre. The surrounding area includes a mix of uses including large employment/ industrial units, garages, offices and dwellings.

The application site consists of a rectangular piece of land primarily comprising hardstanding/ tarmacked surfacing, perimeter fencing, a small brick shed and a large concrete storage bay (located centrally). It is understood the application site has historically been used as a scrap yard/ storage yard for vehicles and a road gritting salt compound, however it has remained vacant since 2020.

The proposal seeks to remove the existing hardstanding/ concrete slabs and brick shed, while surfacing the whole site with bitumen macadam. Car parking spaces will be outlined with surface markings and the proposed plan details 69 parking spaces (including 3no. disabled parking bays). The existing perimeter fencing is to be replaced on a like for like basis (2.1m high galvanised steel fence) as will the lighting columns.

Access to the site would be taken via the existing access point off Crown Street – a 6m wide automated vehicle barrier will also be installed.

Consultation Responses/Representations

LCC Highways: No objection

United Utilities: No objection but recommend a condition.

Relevant Planning History

None relevant.

Relevant Policies

Hyndburn Core Strategy (CS)

Policy BD1 Balanced Development Strategy

Policy E2 Protection, Modernisation and Development of Employment Sites

Policy ENV4 Sustainable Development & Climate Change

Policy Env6 High Quality Design

Policy Env7 Environmental Amenity

Hyndburn Development Management Development Plan Document (DMDPD)

Policy GC1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM1 Employment Development

Policy DM20 Flood Risk Management and Water Resources

Policy DM26 Design Quality and Materials

Policy DM29 Environmental Amenity

Policy DM32 Sustainable Transport, Traffic and Highway Safety

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

DMDPD GN8 Car Parking, access standards and transport assessment/travel plan thresholds

Observations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for Hyndburn comprises of Core Strategy (2012), Development Management DPD (2018), the Accrington Area Action Plan.

The main issues raised by this application relate to the principle of development; design and appearance; impact on residential amenity and highway safety. Each of these issues will be considered in turn.

1. Principle of Development

1.1. Policy BD1 of the CS outlines the Councils development strategy stating:

'The existing settlement pattern and hierarchy of centres will be maintained and supported by concentrating development within the urban areas and in centres of a scale and type appropriate to their role. Accrington and its townships will accommodate the majority of new development. Modest growth is proposed in

Great Harwood, and Rishton would develop in a manner consistent with its size and function. Development that is appropriate to the scale and role of the townships will be supported to help sustain these areas and the services they provide to their communities.'

1.2. The application site falls within the urban boundary of Accrington – an area where development is expected to be concentrated. The proposal does not conflict with the overall development strategy of the CS.

1.3. The application site also falls within the wider existing employment allocation of 'Richmond Industrial Estate' under Policy DM1 (Employment Development) of the DMDPD. Although Policy DM1 relates mainly to new employment development, the policy outlines specific criteria for alternative uses on existing employment areas, but these are limited to 'adequate' employment sites:

'Employment sites of 'adequate' quality that are considered appropriate for alternative uses will be required to incorporate employment space as part of a mixed use redevelopment. At least 25% of the original gross internal floor space should be redeveloped for new employment development (B1 use classes).

Exception to the above will be permitted where a viability and market demand exercise demonstrates that the continuing use of 25% of the floorspace for employment purposes is unviable or unattractive in market terms. The viability exercise must reflect the full economic cycle and consider the different types of appropriate B1 employment space.

Applications for the change of use of existing employment sites will be expected to consider any impacts on traffic generation and will be assessed in line with Policy DM32: Sustainable Transport, Traffic and Highway Safety and other relevant policies in the plan.'

1.4. Policy E2 of the CS states:

'a) Existing business parks, major industrial estates and other good quality employment sites will be retained for employment uses.

b) The development of existing employment sites of adequate quality for alternative uses will only be permitted when part of the site is redeveloped for appropriate employment (within class B1) and where the criteria set out in part (c) below are satisfied.

c) Employment sites not falling within the scope of a or b above will remain in employment use unless it can be demonstrated that:

- *continued use of the site would give rise to unacceptable environmental impacts, or;*
- *there is no current or likely future demand for the site or premises for employment uses, or;*
- *permitting an alternative use is the only viable means of retaining a building or premises which has particular architectural or historical significance.*

In all cases, redevelopment for alternative uses should not prejudice the operating conditions of other remaining employment uses.'

- 1.5. The NPPF highlights the importance of making effective use of land. Paragraph 125 states decisions should; *'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings'*.
- 1.6. The application site falls within the wider 'Richmond Industrial Estate' employment allocation and is considered a 'good' quality employment site not suitable for alternative uses as per the Councils latest Employment Land Study (2019).
- 1.7. With regard to Policy E2 of the CS, the site falls within the scope of a). The CS outlines good quality employment sites will be retained for employment uses. Likewise, Policy DM1 of the DMDPD does not provide an exception or criteria for alternative uses on 'good' quality employment sites.
- 1.8. On this basis, the use of the site for a car park (sui generis) use would be in conflict with Policy E2 of the CS and Policy DM1 of the DMDPD.
- 1.9. However, it is worth noting that the application site has been vacant since 2020 and the NPPF promotes the development of under-utilised land. In addition, it is worth noting that Policy E2 of the CS and DM1 of the DMDPD primarily focus on the delivery of B1 use class development. This use class has now been revoked and enveloped within the new use class E (commercial). Historically, the application site however has been used as storage under use class B.
- 1.10. It is also clear that some of the adjacent uses (particularly to the northwest) within the same employment allocation are also used as vehicle mechanics/ garage or storage which is also a departure from the commercial uses expected in the allocated area.
- 1.11. Officers consider that as the site would only redevelop part of the wider 'good' employment site for a car park, and not the entire allocation, leaving a large proportion of the employment site available to continue its use as employment land. As such it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in this instance.

- 1.12. Considering the above context; the site currently has no internal employment floorspace/ will not lead to a loss of existing employment floorspace, will not lead to the total loss of the wider employment site, re-uses a brownfield site and will provide a car park which will support an existing office use associated with the Council.
- 1.13. In consideration of this, the application is considered to be acceptable in principle despite the conflict with Policy DM1 of the DMDPD and the E2 of the CS.

2. Design and Visual Appearance

- 2.1. Policy Env6 of the Core Strategy seeks to conserve and enhance the quality of Hyndburn's urban and rural environment through the application of high-quality design. Policy DM26 is concerned with design quality and materials and sets out a variety of criteria that should be taken into consideration when assessing planning applications.
- 2.2. The existing site is largely comprised of bitumen macadam surfaced area with a large concrete storage bay, a small brick shed and various haphazard hardstanding areas. The structures on site, although limited, are of a poor quality and unsightly (particularly the large concrete bay).
- 2.3. The application proposes no new structures within the site. The dilapidated small brick shed and large concrete storage bay are to be demolished. The random hardstanding is to be removed and the site will feature a uniform bitumen macadam surface across its area. The fencing and lighting are to be replaced on a like for like basis, and parking spaces will be marked across the site.
- 2.4. Overall, the changes to the site are considered to be positive with the removal of the large unused concrete storage bay leading to the removal of an unsightly structure within the site. The site will generally resemble its current state with the exception of a uniformed surface across the site. This will provide an improvement over the current state of the site in visual terms.
- 2.5. Overall, the loss of the existing use and the proposed changes would not significantly harm the character of the area. Therefore, the proposal accords with Policies ENV6 of the CS and Policy DM26 of the DMDPD.

3. Impact upon Residential Amenity

- 3.1. Policy DM29 (Environmental Amenity) of the DMDPD states that development will be required to protect, and where possible to improve, the amenity of surrounding areas or existing and future residents. The Council will require that new development: a. does not result in the loss of privacy or unacceptable increase in the sense of enclosure; b. does not result in the unacceptable loss of outlook; c. benefits from adequate level of

daylight and sunlight; and d. does not create an unacceptable level of noise, vibration, artificial light, odour, fumes of dust pollution during construction and over the life of the development.

- 3.2. Policy Env7 of the CS requires that proposals for new development will be permitted only if it is demonstrated that the material impact arising by reason of traffic, visual impact, noise, dust, emissions, pollution, odour, over-looking or loss of light, or other nuisance will not give risk to unacceptable adverse impacts or loss of local amenity and can be properly controlled in accordance with best practice and recognised standards.
- 3.3. The application proposed no new structures within the site and therefore there is little scope for increased impact on the privacy of neighbouring uses above and beyond the existing situation.
- 3.4. The lack of physical changes also ensures the exposure to light for neighbouring uses is not impacted unduly when compared to the existing arrangement. Likewise, the change from a car scrap/ storage yard to a car park would be similar in nature (featuring vehicles at the site). In the context of the surrounding industrial/ employment area, the car park would not be considered to impact upon amenity above and beyond the existing situation in terms of noise or dust pollution.
- 3.5. Overall, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any detrimental harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupants and the proposal would accord with the requirements of CS Policy Env7 and DMDPD Policy DM29.

4. Highway Safety, Traffic and Parking

- 4.1. Policy DM32 sets out that all development proposals will be required to actively encourage sustainable travel in line with Policy DM33: Sustainable Transport Infrastructure, and by prioritising the needs of sustainable transport modes in accordance with the following street user hierarchy: a. pedestrians; b. cyclists; c. public transport users; d. special vehicle service (including taxi's, deliveries and servicing needs); and e. other motorised transport.
- 4.2. The application site will retain the existing access point off Crown Street. LCC Highways have been consulted as part of the application process and raise no objections to the access point.
- 4.3. The proposed car park would, by its nature, not contribute to actively encouraging sustainable travel as it is primarily for staff members using private vehicles. However, the site has historically been used for the storage of vehicles and in general does not provide any contribution to promoting sustainable travel currently either.

- 4.4. Subsequently, LCC Highways have raised no objection to the proposed development noting that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 4.5. The proposals are in general accordance with Policies DM32 and DM33 of the Development Management DPD
5. Flood Risk and Drainage
 - 5.1. The proposal will not utilise a drainage system at the site due to the nature of the proposal and therefore will not see any changes in this regard.
 - 5.2. The site falls within the Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at a high risk of flooding nor is it expected to increase flooding nearby. Likewise, the site is not expected to be at an increased risk of flooding in the future (2070 to 2125). Therefore, the proposals comply with Policy ENV4 of the CS and Policy DM20 of the DMDPD insofar as they seek to meet the challenge of climate change and flooding.
6. Planning Balance and Conclusions
 - 6.1. The application site is currently vacant but has historically been used for the storage of vehicles or as a compound for gritting salt. The proposal seeks to remove the remaining dilapidated structures/ hardstanding on site and surface the site area with bitumen macadam to create a car park with 69 parking spaces.
 - 6.2. The proposal is not considered to detrimentally impact upon the amenity of neighbouring uses and will not harm the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The application site is not within an area at risk of flooding and is considered to not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.
 - 6.3. The proposed car park, while in technical conflict with CS Policy E2 and DMDPD Policy DM1 regarding the retention of "good quality" employment land, is considered to accord with the development plan as a whole and is acceptable in this instance. The proposal aligns with NPPF objectives for utilizing under-utilised brownfield land, and as it only affects a portion of the site and supports local council office infrastructure, it does not prejudice the overall industrial estate.
 - 6.4. On this basis, the application is recommended to be approved subject to the conditions below.

Recommendation:

That planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby approved shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To ensure that the Local Planning Authority retains the right to review unimplemented permissions and to comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan (Dwg no. E5/38/05) received 06th February 2026;
General Arrangement and Typical Section Details (Dwg no. E5/38/01a) received 06th February 2026;
Car Park Parking Bay Lining Layout (Dwg no. E5/38/02) received 06th February 2026.

Reason: In the interests of proper planning.

3. Site preparation and construction phase times of operation: Construction deliveries to and from the site, and construction works, are restricted to between 0800 and 1800hrs Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and will not take place on Sundays and bank holidays, unless otherwise prior agreed in writing with the local planning authority. All works will be undertaken in accordance with BS5228:2009

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity in accordance with the provisions of Core Strategy Policy Env7 and Development Management Development Plan Document Policy DM29.

4. Prior to first use hereby permitted the car park shall be marked out in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and to ensure adequate parking is available within the site and to comply with Policy DM32 of the Hyndburn Development Management Development Plan Document.

Informative Notes:

1. Positive and Proactive Planning Statement

The Local Planning Authority operates a pre-planning application advice service. All applicants are encouraged to engage with the Local Planning Authority at pre-planning application stage. As part of the determination of this planning application the Local Planning Authority has worked pro-actively and positively with the applicant ensuring that upon receipt all representations and consultation responses are available to view

on the Council's web site. The Local Planning Authority has considered the application and where necessary considered either the imposition of planning conditions and/or sought reasonable amendments to the application in order to deliver a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Conditions

This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond.

3. Building Regulations may be required

The enclosed approval is issued under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. You may also require Building Regulation approval which is dealt with by this Department's Building Control Section (Tel: 01254 380194). You must ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained BEFORE starting work, otherwise abortive expense may be incurred.

4. Coal Authority – Low Risk

The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to The Coal Authority on 0845 762 6848. Further information is also available on The Coal Authority website at www.coal.decc.gov.uk Property specific summary information on past, current and future coal mining activity can be obtained from The Coal Authority's Property Search Service on 0845 762 6848 or at www.groundstability.com.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) The planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Hyndburn Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is/are considered to apply.

List of Background Papers

Copies of documents included in this list must be open to inspection and, in the case of reports to Cabinet, must be published on the website.