

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0129
Valid 30/03/2026

F BALL AND CO LTD
STATION ROAD
CHEDDLETON

REMOVAL OF
UNDERGROUND SOLVENT
TANKS AND ERECTION OF
EXTENSION TO EXISTING
BUILDING TO PROVIDE
ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION
AREA

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impacts on Character and Appearance
- Impacts on residential amenity and potential for risk to human health
- Impacts on controlled waters

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

F Ball and Co Ltd manufacture flooring adhesives, occupy a large site on the Churnetside Business Park which houses a range of buildings, parking areas, internal access roads and landscaped areas. The site has its origins as providing building and infrastructure to Cheddleton Paper Mills 'Brittains', established in 1797 and eventually closed in 1979. The whole site was cleared and redeveloped to form the business park.

The application site itself comprises of a small broadly rectangular parcel of land which lies on the northern side of a large portal framed building which lies on the southern side of Station Road. Immediately to the north of the site, on the opposite side of Station Road, lies a short row of terraced properties which sit gable end on to the highway with more sporadic dwellings varying in size and scale located further along. To the west on the opposite side of Harrison Way lie further industrial buildings whilst the site is contained by the River Churnet to the south which runs contiguous with this boundary and to the west with the Churnet Valley Railway. Vehicular access is provided off Harrison Way which leads to the centre of the site.

For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within the 'larger village' settlement of Cheddleton North. The site itself lies within Flood Zone 1 the lower part of the site including the access lies within Flood Zones 2 & 3.

PROPOSAL

Full planning application which seeks consent for the removal of underground solvent tanks and the erection of an extension to an existing production/ warehouse building to form additional production area.

The application proposes a modest extension on the northern side of the existing production/ warehouse building and would house 3 x 80,000 litre storage tanks which would hold water-based polymers. The proposed extension would be formed predominately on an existing concrete apron, with surrounding surfaces made good once the extension is complete. To accommodate the required tanks whilst limiting the building height to the existing eaves height a pit is to be formed in which the silos are installed. The pit will also act as a bund which is able to store 110% of a single silo volume. The proposed extension will primarily facilitate the delivery of goods, which will be pumped into on-site tanks through wall openings via connecting hoses. Deliveries will be undertaken by HGVs approximately two to three times per week.

The proposed extension would be constructed from facing and roofing materials to match the existing and is to incorporate ventilation louvres as indicated on the submitted plans. Both a pedestrian and vehicular access door would be provided in the eastern gable of the extension. At the same time the application also seeks to remove the decommissioned underground solvent tanks and reinstate the ground back to hardstanding.

The application submission includes:

Drawing nos.

- 2025-2970-01
- 2025-2970-02C
- 2025-2970-04
- 2025-2970-05A
- 2025-2970-06

Documents

- Noise Impact Assessment undertaken by E3P, January 2026
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment undertaken by Tree Heritage, February 2026
- Site Contamination Assessment undertaken by GRM. January 2026
- Ecological Impact Assessment undertaken by Peak Ecology, February 2026
- Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by NC29 Ltd, January 2026

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS8 Larger Village Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
E1 New Employment Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SM/4698 Temporary storage and distribution of gas, oil, derv and kerosene.
Approved.

SM.89-0675 Outline permission for factory/employment site. APPROVED.

SM.91-0197 Reserved Matters – Factory units, warehouse, associated parking.
APPROVED.

SM.91-0901 & SM.92-0576 Attempts to vary condition to allow vehicle movements
outside prescribed hours. REFUSED.

00/00540/FUL Erection of additional factory building and site works. APPROVED.

00/00541/FUL Additional manufacturing facility and site works. APPROVED.

00/00558/FUL Removal of existing lagoons and infilling of land. APPROVED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12th May 2026

Neighbour consultation period ends: 12th May 2026

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Cheddleton PC: No objection. Consideration should be given to residences regarding
noise and working hours. Smell could be an issue during the work.

Environmental Health

Construction Impacts (Condition)

Artificial Lighting (Condition)

Noise (Condition)

Contamination

Air Quality/Odour Control (Permit)

No objection subject to conditions

Site Construction Nuisance

The proposed development is close to existing properties, so care needs to be taken
during the construction phase to ensure these activities do not cause unreasonably
disruption to the neighbour's enjoyment of their properties.

Noise

A noise impact assessment has been submitted to address predicted noise impacts
of the development. It has been conducted by E3P, ref. E3P 51-704-R1 29/01/25.
This date appears to be a typo and we would expect it should be 2026.

According to the Design and Access Statement – “Deliveries will be undertaken by
HGVs approximately two to three times per week.” No deliveries will be undertaken
during night time hours. The predicted timings and number of deliveries do not appear
significant.

The assessment predicts a noise rating +7db over background during deliveries and proposes an acoustic barrier in section 5.1 to mitigate this noise. We would advise this is made a condition of development.

We would also advise a condition restricting all plant and fan noise to be attenuated so as not exceed pre-existing background sound levels.

Contamination

The applicant has submitted a phase 1 & 2 letter report produced by GRM.

As is established the local authority lead on potential risks to human health and the EA on risks to controlled waters. It is noted that the EA have reviewed the proposal and have no objections, aside from an unexpected contamination condition and appropriate pilling condition. The investigation was essentially undertaken to determine if the tank to be removed / and or other industrial processes in the area may lead to contamination.

The comments made by the EA are agreed but what does not appear to have been raised is the locations of the sampling points (though lack of source is) and how they relate to detecting any actual leaks. For example, one might anticipate dissolved and light non aqueous contaminants to flow in the direction of the ground water, and the dense non-aqueous compounds to go down. The hydraulic gradient is likely to be south towards the River Churnet yet WS1 appears to be "up gradient" of this and not sure on WS2 and CP1 but the general sample depth is fairly shallow. The actual depth of the existing tanks and how the sample location relate to these is also not really discussed.

It would have been seen to make some sense to require sampling of the base and sides of the tank after excavation? This allowing a perhaps clearer indication of if any leaks of material over the years.

The location of the window sampling and cable percussion installations appears to have been dictated by accessibility first and foremost and also appear a little compromised – see installers comments about casting collapses. This means the response zones (which were shallow) may have been compromised (slots smeared etc).

With regards to the human health, as noted above I have some concerns regarding the possible accuracy of the ground gas assessment. No direct VOC monitoring was undertaken despite the tanks being used for solvent, which is considered an omission. It is noted that a PID was used to screen for volatiles on a single occasion, but this did not pick anything up. One may have expected it to detect up the dichloromethane that the analysis detected?

On another note, would be that little reference has been made to the former settling tanks that were in the general area and the former paper works. This may well be the reason for the increase in pH (used for the WAC testing).

The above noted, given the proposed industrial use of the site as a large storage area, with limited activity and the prevalence of hardstanding, there is a lack of receptors/ pathways anyway so the likely risks despite the above concerns are low.

SMDC Tree Officer

No objection.

The works proposed generally will not impact retained trees on site and the removal of trees is not required to facilitate the development.

Mature trees are being retained to maintain the existing screening of mature trees. However, the works will require construction activities to take place in proximity to retained trees and therefore protection must be secured through conditions if approval is granted.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Acceptance

Application is for an extension to an industrial building.

The site is over underground tanks which will be removed as part of the development and replaced within the extension.

The extension is relatively small in relation to the overall building and site. Proposal will not affect the existing access.

Proposal will effectively renew existing tanks. No highway issues.

Current records show that there were no Personal Injury Collisions on Harrison Way within 50m either side of the property access in the previous five years.

SCC Flood Risk Management

We offer the following comments in good faith:

We note that areas of the application site are within Flood Zones 2 with risk of flooding from Caldon Canal. As the Environment Agency (EA) are a statutory consultee upon all proposed developments within Flood Zone 2 and 3, it is envisaged that the EA will comment on the flood risk vulnerability, flood depths and suitability of the proposal in flood risk terms. Where the EA do not provide bespoke comments, you should be guided to their standing advice.

Our flood modelling shows that this site is currently at risk of surface water surface water and in future.

Surface water flooding can be difficult to predict, more so than river or sea flooding, as it is hard to forecast exactly where or how much rain will fall in any storm. This is based on the best available information, such as topography, ground levels and drainage. However, there are no reported flooding hotspots within the vicinity of the property. Therefore, the Flood Team have no further comments to offer on this application.

Environment Agency

No objection, confirmed 19th May 2026, following submission of further information.

Reviewed the following information submitted in the following report:

- 'Site Appraisal Letter Report at F Ball and Co Ltd., Station Road, Cheddleton, Leek.' GRM (January 2026).

Comments relate solely to protection of 'controlled waters'.

Geology mapping indicate that the site is located on the Chester Pebble Bed Formation, which is designated a Principal Aquifer by the Environment Agency. The site is located within the total catchment (SPZ3) of a groundwater Source Protection Zone, designated for a public water supply. Superficial Alluvium deposits are also designated for the site. These are likely to be associated with the River Churnet, which is located approximately 160m from the site boundary. The location is therefore considered to be sensitive with respect to controlled waters receptors.

We note that the application seeks consent for the removal of underground solvent tanks and the erection of an extension to an existing production / warehouse building to form additional production area at the F Ball & Co Ltd site. We understand that the

proposal is for installation of 3 x 80,000 litre above ground storage tanks which would hold water-based polymers.

The Site Appraisal Letter Report details a Phase I and Phase II investigation of the site. The recent site works have involved a limited investigation of soils and groundwater, targeted to the area of development. Three exploratory locations were utilised, with 2 shallower window-sampler boreholes, plus a deeper CB borehole utilised. Samples of soil and groundwater were taken from the 3 locations and analysed against an appropriate contamination suite for the former and current industrial use of the site. Two exploratory locations were relatively shallow, with groundwater identified at shallow depths (1.2mbgl) within the made ground and alluvium. Depth to groundwater within the deeper borehole is unrecorded, but groundwater strike was recorded at a shallow depth of 0.6m. Boreholes were not progressed past 14mbgl, therefore sampling of deeper groundwater within the principal aquifer has not been conducted.

Groundwater analysis did not identify any elevated concentrations of hazardous contaminants, with the majority of concentrations below laboratory limits of detection. We note though that deeper sampling of groundwater has not been conducted so there remains a risk of contamination not yet identified. We also note the comments in the above referenced report that 'F. Ball and Co. Ltd have informed GRM of the presence of two underground storage tanks (UST) adjacent to the proposed development area which were previously used for storing solvents but had been decommissioned with foam.' Whilst we note that the report suggests that 'whilst in operation the tanks were fitted with leak detection systems, anecdotal evidence suggests no leaks were ever historically recorded' there remains a risk of historic contamination from these tanks. Whilst we agree that the current site data does not suggest an unacceptable risk to controlled waters from the proposed development due to an absence of identified source, the investigation itself is limited and deeper groundwater sampling has not been conducted, therefore contamination may have been missed. We therefore recommend a condition be included on any planning permission granted.

Within the Site Appraisal Letter Report, the use of piled foundations at this site is also considered. The report notes that piles could provide a suitable foundation solution.

Piling using penetrative methods can result in risks to potable supplies from, for example, pollution/turbidity, risk of mobilising contamination, drilling through different aquifers and creating preferential pathways. Groundwater is particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is within source protection zone 3 and located upon principal aquifer.

In light of the above, the proposed development will only be acceptable if a planning condition controlling disturbance of the aquifer is imposed and we therefore recommend that a condition be included on any planning permission granted.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is part of an established factory on an employment site. For the purposes of the Local Plan the site is within the 'larger village' of Cheddleton. In a 'larger village' Local Plan area strategy policy SS8 applies which requires that the settlement shall retain and enhance its role as a rural service centres, providing for

employment needs of a scale and type appropriate to each settlement having regard to infrastructure capacity and character. Employment needs to be met improving and intensifying the use of existing employment areas and, where appropriate, expanding them.

Additionally, Local Plan policy E1 states that new employment development should be assessed according to the extent to which it supports and improves the local economy in terms of providing for the needs and skills of the existing and future local resident workforce and meeting identified business needs. In general the council will endeavour to support the expansion of existing businesses and new businesses in the District.

The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

Paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity in the UK and confirms that planning policies and decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

F. Ball and Co. Ltd is the UK's leading manufacture of flooring adhesives and preparation products for the contract flooring industry. It is said that existing liquid bulk storage facility, built in 1992, has already exceeded life expectancy and now needs replacing to support the ongoing manufacture of product. The proposed extension would house 3 new tanks that would enable a phased replacement of and transition from old remaining tanks.

Clearly the business has an operational need for the development which will support existing and future production with employment opportunity implicit in that delivery. Local and National planning policy, as set out above, provide support in those regards.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should incorporate creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; and, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

The proposed addition would have a low profile relative to the existing building it would replicate but be subordinate in size and form and be of a colour that matched that of the existing building.

At 9.2 metres to eaves and 9.5 metres to ridge height the extension would appear as a secondary and subservient addition. Furthermore, the design of the proposal is typical for an industrial building in this area, and would not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities, character, or appearance of the area.

Importantly, the addition would be set behind substantial mature tree line planting to the boundary that conceals and significantly filters views of the site from Station Road and Harrison Way.

Overall it is considered that the proposed building is of a size, scale, form and design which is acceptable and complies with adopted national and local planning guidance.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires that development protects the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution. Paragraph 135 (f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

The application site is located on an existing and established industrial estate and occupied by the applicant since 1992. Immediately to the west of the site lie other commercial and industrial buildings in similar B2 use.

Whilst residential dwellings are located on the northern side of Station Road these are separated from the site by the public highway and screened by substantial and mature landscaping to the site boundary which significantly limits views into the site and also assists in reducing noise emitting from the site.

To support the application a Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted, undertaken via E3P. This concludes that subject to a 2.0m timber fence being provided between the proposed building and an adjacent building the impact on neighbours would be within the recognised limits. The submitted plans detail the provision of this acoustic barrier and show it incorporated within the proposed scheme.

The Council's Environmental Health service accept the findings and conclusions of the noise assessment. They recommend conditions that would require a construction and environmental management plan, control artificial lighting, limits on sound/noise emissions, and the inclusion and construction of the acoustic barrier.

There would not be conflict with policy DC1 of the Local Plan and there would not be an unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residents.

Biodiversity and Ecology Impacts

The Environment Act (2021) places a legal requirement on all development, unless otherwise exempt, to compensate for impacts on and loss of biodiversity habitats with the delivery of a 10% net gain on site or, where this cannot be achieved, off site, which can include the purchasing credits from a registered habitat bank.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that policies and decisions should minimise impacts on biodiversity and that development should mitigate or compensate for the loss of habitat whilst delivering enhancement and net gain in habitat.

The applicant claims exemption from the BNG legislation under the terms of the de minimis criteria – the development would impact on less than 25sqm of biodiversity habitat. Although the building would be larger than 25sqm, it would largely occupy an area of existing hardstanding.

An ecological impact assessment has been submitted to support the application. This confirmed that two small sections of other neutral grassland extending to some 15 sq metres and a section of other developed land would be lost to facilitate the proposed building. As the total loss of habitat on site would be less than the 25 sq metres requirement for BNG the proposed development falls under the de minimis exemption and is therefore exempt from a BNG Assessment.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Acceptable form of industrial development to support the operations of an established factory on an existing employment site. No conflict with the Local and National policies listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council