



**PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING
AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL RELATING TO THE ERECTION OF
AN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING
(INCLUDING THE RETENSION OF A MOBILE HOME UNTIL FIRST OCCUPATION)
ON LAND AND BUILDINGS AT
GODLEY LANE, DILHORNE, STOKE ON TRENT, ST10 2PF**

ON BEHALF OF

MR R CHALLINOR

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- This report has been produced to support a full planning application for the erection of an agricultural workers dwelling on land and buildings at Godley Lane, Dilhorne. The applicant is a livestock farmer who owns and operates the business.
- The applicant currently lives on site with his partner Miss R Howell. This application seeks permission to retain the mobile home for use as a temporary agricultural workers dwelling until the proposed permanent property is completed.
- The applicant previously lived off site in rented accommodation, however was unable to provide the necessary care for the livestock and therefore moved to the farm in temporary accommodation.
- A new agricultural workers dwelling is required to house the key worker, Mr R Challinor, and his partner. This will allow the applicant to meet the functional needs of the business as a key worker and provide him with the platform to grow his business further.
- The buildings were previously associated with Whympney Lodge, however, the traditional range of buildings have undergone residential development, this leaving the modern purpose built range.
- This application will allow for family succession as the applicant's father currently resides in the village and continues to own and operate a small sheep flock however it is envisaged that his workload will reduce on retirement. The applicant and his father run separate farm businesses and therefore the farm detail provided solely relates to the applicants business.
- There is not a suitable sized and affordable property available to the applicant in order for him to meet the needs as a key worker to the business.
- The applicant and his partner are at the age and ability to grow the livestock business which, to date, has successfully been established to comprise of a breeding flock of approximately 360 ewes and wintering cattle. Further detail regarding the agricultural business is given later in the report.

- The proposal is considered essential to allow a farm business run by a young applicant to expand and remain as a sustainable entity. Furthermore, as the business is economically sound it contributes to a sustainable economy, whilst at the same time fulfilling a social role as part of a thriving rural community. By its very nature as a working farm, then it fulfils a key environmental role. Each of these three factors is a key component of any sustainable development.
- As a consequence of the above, it is vital that businesses like this are supported. In order to be able to continue to operate in a sustainable way then it is essential that an agricultural worker lives on site. The proposed development is considered to be commensurate with the functional requirement.
- In addition to addressing the functional and financial tests which are still of some relevance, this report clarifies the additional considerations that were taken into account when preparing the application.
- The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policies and it is considered to comply with their various requirements. Consequently, it is considered that the application should be supported by the local planning authority.

2.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- The NPPF was introduced on 27th March 2012 to replace the present many of the previous national planning policy statement and guidance documents. The purpose of planning, as clarified within the Ministerial Foreword to the NPPF is to achieve sustainable development. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In addition to Local and Community plans, the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- The extracts from the NPPF which are relevant to this proposal are detailed below, in addition to the extracts from Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) that were relevant prior to it being replaced.

2.1 Achieving Sustainable Development

- **Paragraph 7** confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. These give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:-
 - *“An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy*
 - *A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities*
 - *An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change...”*
- In **paragraph 12** The NPPF confirms that proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved. However, at the heart of the NPPF is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, *“which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-making”*.
- **Paragraph 14** confirms that for **decision-taking** this means:
 - *“approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
 - *Where the **development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:***
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or*

- *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted”.*
- **Paragraph 15** confirms that policies in Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

2.2 Core Planning Policies

- There are twelve core land-use principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The principles are that planning should:-
 - *“be genuinely plan led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings...;*
 - *Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
 - *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of the area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth...;*
 - *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
 - *Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the use of existing resources including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable energy resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*
 - *Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution...;*
 - *Encourage the effective use of land by reusing that has been previously developed...;*

- *Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas; recognising some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation...);*
- *Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;*
- *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport...;*
- *Take account of land support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all...”.*

2.3 General Policies

- **Section 3 (paragraph 28)** of the NPPF is titled Supporting a prosperous rural economy. This states that:-
 - *“Planning policies should **support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.** To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:*
 - *Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;*
 - *Promote the **development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses...**;*
- **Section 7** of the NPPF relates to the requirement for **good design**. In paragraph 56 it confirms that *“the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”.*
- **Section 11** relates to **“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment”**. Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:-
 - *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;...*

- *Minimising the impacts on biodiversity...*
- *Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability...”.*
- **Paragraph 112** seeks to ensure the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land, none of which will be taken by this proposal.
- **Paragraph 123 relates to noise** and confirm that planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development. This proposal will not create any detrimental noise or other impact and is compliant with these requirements.
- **Section 12 of the NPPF is titled “Conserving and enhancing the historic environment”**. The essence of the various statements within this are that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. In this case there are no heritage assets impacted by the proposal.

2.4 Rural Workers

- **Paragraph 55** of the NPPF is most relevant to this application and it states that:-

“To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities... Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated development in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:
 - *The **essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work** in the countryside...”*
- This paragraph is similar to the provisions of **Annex A of Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7)** which related to permanent agricultural dwellings and which stated that:-

“there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work”.
- **Paragraph 3** of PPS7 dealt with permanent agricultural dwellings and stated that:-

*“New permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on **well-established agricultural units**, providing:*
 - (i) there is a clearly established existing functional need...”*

- In accordance with the current planning framework (NPPF) and also that previously in place (PPS7), this report addresses the issue of the functional requirement for a rural worker to live permanently at the farm and hence why this proposal is compliant with not only planning policy, but also relevant welfare and health and safety considerations.

2.5 Local Plan Policies

- **Local Plan Policy R2 - Rural Housing** states that *“A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.”*
- **Policy R2** section 8.8.11 notes that *“It is essential that all applications for planning permission for new dwellings in the countryside are scrutinised thoroughly to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF. In the case of occupational dwellings the proposal will be required to meet functional and financial tests to demonstrate the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.”*
- Reference in this Policy R2 confirms that applications should be considered in accordance with Paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Whilst comments regarding the functional and financial tests are noted, the NPPF should be the basis for any decision making regarding the special circumstances.

3.0 RELEVANT CASE LAW

- A recent High Court Decision *Embleton Parish Council & Anor v Gaston* (2013) confirmed that there is no prescribed financial viability test for a rural workers dwelling under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The Court noted that Government Guidance was a material planning consideration to be taken into account and the Court accepted that Paragraph 55 of the NPPF was “significantly less onerous” than the previous guidance under PPS 7.
- A further decision from the Secretary of State on 26th March 2015 (APP/L3625/A/14/2220464) argued the interpretation of paragraph 55 in the context of the *Embleton* decision and stated that *“it is necessary to demonstrate economic sustainability”*.
- In light of the above, the financial sustainability of the business should be considered, however the requirements under paragraph 55 of the NPPF, consider that there is no a longer prescribed “financial test”.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY DISCUSSION

- Paragraph 55 of the NPPF sought to simplify the policy basis in relation to determining planning applications for agricultural workers dwellings with a view to stimulating agricultural business growth in rural areas.
- In assessing the “essential need” requirement of paragraph 55, full consideration should be given to the business case which justifies the “essential need” to reside on site. Further Secretary of State decisions have considered that this includes a requirement to assess the financial stability and sustainability of the business particularly in the case for permanent dwellings.
- Local Plan Policy R2 predates Paragraph 55 of the NPPF and references functional and financial tests. Considering the interpretation of the above Case Law, demonstrating the “essential need” rather than “functional test” is now a Policy requirement with the financial stability of the business considered as part of whether there is a need for “permanent” onsite accommodation. Limited weight is given to Local Plan Policy R2 as Paragraph 55 of the NPPF and Case Law give a clearer policy position in relation to the requirements of agricultural workers dwelling applications.

5.0 PROPOSED DWELLING

- Planning permission is sought to erect an Agricultural Workers Dwelling to house the key worker for the business, Mr R Challinor, and his partner.
- In addition, permission is sought to retain the existing mobile home for use as a temporary agricultural workers dwelling until the property can be occupied.
- Mr R Challinor has strong connections with the village with his father continuing to reside in the nearby property.
- The proposed site of the dwelling allows for the applicant to oversee the welfare requirements of the livestock on the holding in the adjacent buildings and secondly to oversee the access drive to the farm, thus reducing the risk of livestock, machinery and equipment theft.
- The applicants need to live in close proximity to the farm in order to be able to fulfill their duties and take the significant burden of work that is created by the enterprise. More specifically, they need to meet the requirements to be available to provide the essential care at short notice that is required by the animals on the farm.
- The proposed farm business is of a size and scale to accommodate the applicant's livestock with the opportunity to increase livestock numbers over the following years.
- The details below clarify the significant nature of the farm and why it is essential for the applicant to live at the farm and provide suitable housing for the livestock.

6.0 BACKGROUND TO THE FARM BUSINESS

- Mr R Challinor has been successfully farming in his own right for 3 years. The applicant is aged 23 and has been working full time in agriculture since the age of 16. As his sheep flock has increased, the applicant has been able to grow the business to provide his main source of income.
- At present the applicant lambs 360 ewes and intends to increase this year on year to reach a sheep flock comprising 600 ewes.
- The applicant achieves this growth by retaining his female ewe lambs as breeding replacements. On average, approximately 75% of the lambs are sold as either store or finished lambs with the remaining female lambs entering the breeding flock.

- The breeding flock comprises a mixture of Texel, Charolais, Beltex and Suffolk mules. These are run on a commercial basis using Beltex and Texel rams.
- In addition the best ram lambs are kept entire and reared through to shearlings where they are sold as commercial breeding rams to other sheep flocks.
- Lambing takes place from the end of January through to the end of May and ewes are lambed on a batch system which utilises the limited labour available and also spreads the housing and labour requirement across the season.
- The ewes are lambed indoors in the range of buildings and depending on the grass availability and weather conditions, some ewes are housed during the winter period and latter stages of their pregnancy.
- As noted above, the majority of the lambs are reared through to a finished condition. Lambs are brought inside the buildings from November onwards when there is limited grass available and put onto a concentrate diet to achieve the necessary weight gain. Finished lambs are sorted on a weekly basis ready for sale and the store lambs are graded in accordance with their size and dietary requirements.
- The applicant uses an EID reader and weigh scales to ensure that the sheep flock enterprise runs as efficiently as possible.

7.0 BEEF ENTERPRISE

- During the winter period, between 25 and 50 head of cattle are housed in the buildings on a contract basis. The cattle come on to the farm at approximately 6 months old and stay in the buildings between 6 to 8 months.
- Housed cattle are fed by the applicant twice each day, with the straw yards bedded with straw to ensure that the animals are kept in a clean, dry condition. In addition to these activities additional livestock management duties include TB testing, foot trimming and generally ensuring that the cattle do not succumb to illness or infection.

8.0 LAND AND BUILDINGS

- Mr R Challinor presently farms approximately 192 acres of land. Of this approximately 114.5 acres is owned and located adjacent to the buildings.
- Below is a break down of the land farmed which gives detail of the occupational arrangements.

Acres	Land Farmed		
84.71	Owned Whympney Lodge		
29.95	New land purchased adjacent owned		
114.66			
	Location	Basis of Occupation	Years Farmed
14.33	Rented Cheadle	Grazing Licence	1 year
22.17	Rented Cresswell	Annual Agreement	4 year
35.80	Rented Finney, Dilhorne	Grazing Licence	3 Year
6.00	Rented Needham	Annual Agreement	2 Year
78.30			
192.96	Total Farmed		

- The above land is used for a mixture of sheep grazing and fodder making. The applicant makes approximately 300 round bales of silage per year and approximately 80 round bales of hay.
- In addition to the above land, the applicant takes on approximately 400 acres during the winter season for sheep keep. This is usually on dairy farms in the locality for approximately 4 months per year. All of this land has to be temporary fenced with electric fence units.
- The buildings at Godley Lane are of modern construction and provide a suitable base for the business to operate. The footprint of the buildings extends to in excess of 12000 square foot.

9.0 LABOUR REQUIREMENT

- The breakdown of the livestock which are farmed by the applicant is detailed below. In addition (and based on labour requirements detailed within The Agricultural Budgeting and Costing Book 72nd Edition published by Agro Business Consultants) are the total number of man days required per animal:-

STANDARD MAN DAYS CALCULATION - MR R CHALLINOR

Current Labour Requirements	Per Unit	Unit	Total
Store Cattle (pro-rata adjusted for winter)	1.75	24	21
Ewes	0.5	360	180
Ewe lambs	0.5	100	50
Rams	0.5	15	7.5
Field Work	0.5	200	100
Fodder making	3.6	50	180
			538.5
Maintenance and Management (15%)			80.78
Total SMD Hours			619.28
Equivalent Full Time Workers			2.25

- The above break down provides details of the current labour requirements for the business.
- By taking the total standard man days hours and dividing by 275, it confirms that there is a full time labour requirement for two full time workers.
- At present, this labour requirement is provided by Mr R Challinor, part time by Miss R Howell and other contract/seasonal staff.
- The applicant carries out his own shearing and fodder making and does not use agricultural contractors. Therefore, considering the applicants working hours in comparison to the standard Man Days Calculation, the actual labour requirement for the business is comparable with the SMD calculation.

10.0 REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENTERPRISE

- Based on the size of the farming operations it is essential that there is a key worker on site at all times.
- The management approach to run a large sheep flock and cattle enterprise results in the essential need for a key worker to reside at the farm.
- At present, the applicant cannot provide the labour requirement of a key worker by living off site and this is going to become increasingly problematic as his business grows. Therefore a decision has been taken to reside temporarily onsite to meet the livestock needs.
- Furthermore, it is particularly important that during the lambing period that the sheep flock is given 24 hour supervision and care. This period is particularly labour intensive with the applicant often working long hours and, therefore, it is not sustainable for him to travel to and from the farm at such regular intervals.
- The scale of business operated means that at certain times of the year when the labour requirement is particularly high, the work load can be shared between Mr R Challinor and Miss R Howell.
- Should the applicant have to live away from the farm then this will consequently result in numerous trips to and from the farm each night. This is considered to be wholly unsatisfactory and certainly not supportive of a sustainable business. Similarly, at times when harvesting is being undertaken and when farmers work excessively long hours, then there will be a requirement for someone to manage the animals whilst the other ensures that crops are appropriately harvested and to deal with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss. This is also a valid criterion which forms part of the functional requirement for a property at the farm.
- It is also important that someone is on hand at all times to ensure the protection of livestock from theft or injury by intruders. The farm is in an accessible position and it is therefore susceptible to potential thieves. With the increasing value of livestock over recent years cases of theft have risen greatly and it is therefore essential that there is someone at the farm to prevent this.

11.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- As clarified above, this enterprise comprises a significant number of breeding animals.
- Whilst handling cattle, it is at such times that additional vigilance is required with animal welfare the primary concern.
- Farming is the most dangerous occupation industry in the UK with a significant number of injuries and deaths caused by cows and other livestock. This is supported by the Health and Safety Executive which in a Press Release dated 30th June 2010 stated that:-
 - *"... between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010:*
 - *38 agriculture workers were killed at work, marking a return to average levels of previous years in contrast to the record low in 2008/09 when 25 workers died*
 - *the rate of fatal injuries in the sector was 8.2 per 100,000 workers, **making it the most dangerous industry in which to work***
 - *of the 38 agriculture workers killed, 17 were employees and 21 were self-employed people".*
 - HSE's Head of Agriculture, Graeme Walker said:
 - *"38 workers were killed on British farms last year, failing to come to their families because of avoidable safety failings - proving once again that agriculture is the most dangerous way of making a living in Great Britain.*
 - *"The fact that many of these lives have been lost in family businesses is a double tragedy. Not only have families been ripped apart, but businesses that have been handed down through generations have been ruined".*

12.0 ALTERNATIVE PROPERTIES AVAILABLE

- Following a review, there are considered to be no suitable alternative properties in the locality which satisfy the requirement that this farm has for a permanent dwelling. The applicant has sought to identify alternative properties but there are none available meeting his requirements.

Alternative Properties Considered

- Whilst the issue of affordability is a key issue when determining the potential suitability of a property for an agricultural worker, of equal importance is the location of the property and whether it enables the applicant to provide essential care at short notice that is required. On this basis, a review of properties available in the locality has been carried out.
- Using the search facility on the Rightmove website (www.rightmove.co.uk), then a search of properties has been undertaken. There are currently no properties for sale which are considered suitable for a farm manager within a 1/2 mile radius of the farm.

Rightmove Search – ½ Radius of the Farm Buildings

The screenshot shows a Rightmove search results page for the postcode ST10 2PF with a 1/2 mile radius. The search results are sorted by Highest Price. Two properties are listed:

- Property 1:** 2 bedroom detached house for sale at Sarver Lane, Dillhorne, Stoke-on-Trent. Price: £379,950. Description: Situated in a sought after rural area, a secluded detached cottage standing in approximately 1.5 acres of land with a range of outbuildings including an office, multi gym, two large... Reduced on 11/05/2016 by Kevin Ford and Co Ltd, Cheadle.
- Property 2:** 4 bedroom detached house for sale at Godley Lane, Dillhorne, Staffordshire. Price: £370,000. Description: Delightfully presented; having been extended and refurbished by the current owner to a high standard, this property has a lot to boast about. Surrounded by fields to the rear the view is... Reduced on 17/10/2016 by Graham Watkins, Leek.

The search interface includes filters for Min Price, Max Price, Min Beds, Max Beds, Property Type, and Filters. A map on the right shows the search area around Godleybrook and Dillhorne.

- Two properties are available at present, both are in excess of what is affordable to an agricultural worker.
- In addition, whilst these two properties available in the locality, they are not located adjacent to the livestock unit allowing the applicant to be within sight and sound of the livestock in his care. Therefore it is clear that the most-appropriate option is to develop a permanent dwelling at the farm itself.

13.0 ANIMAL WELFARE

- Maintaining animal welfare standards creates a management burden, particularly during the winter months and periods of inclement weather when the animals are housed. The farm buildings will be designed to provide a natural environment that ensures sufficient warmth, shelter and ventilation as necessary. The Farm Animal Welfare Council defines five ideals, known as the 'Five Freedoms', by which animal welfare should be tested. These five freedoms are as follows, and farm animals should have:- freedom from fear and distress; freedom from fear of pain, injury and disease; freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom from discomfort; and freedom to express normal behaviour.
- Each animal has easy access to both food and water. The cows and sheep are housed in the winter months, with bedding regularly replenished by the applicant to ensure the highest standards of hygiene and animal cleanliness. The cattle and sheep are kept in loose housing which are emptied once the livestock go out to grass in the spring. The farm yard manure is then cleared and spread onto the land farmed by the applicants, and this spreading is in accordance with the environmental cross-compliance regulations which the applicants are bound to comply with in order to be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme subsidy scheme.
- Like most livestock farmers, the applicant has to ensure that sufficient space is available to cater for any animal movement restrictions. The new guidance based particularly around Tuberculosis testing, imposes certain time-periods and restrictions on animal movements on or off the farm.
- A letter from the applicant's veterinary surgeon has been included in Appendix I.

14.0 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Whilst the financial test formed part of the criteria under Annex A of PPS7 and hence is no longer valid, it is noted that it continues to be used as a reference by local authorities when assessing applications for agricultural workers dwellings.
- As noted above, there is no prescribed financial test under the NPPF however financial sustainability is a consideration when assessing the permanent need for accommodation on site.
- The farm has undergone significant financial investment over the years to grow the business to the size it is today. This capital investment is significant and shows the applicants clear intention to develop and grow the business.
- The funds to erect the agricultural workers dwelling will be financed through personal savings and a mortgage.
- Full audited accounts are available for the business and held on the agents file.

15.0 SUMMARY

- The proposal seeks to achieve planning permission for the erection of a permanent agricultural workers dwelling for the applicant, Mr R Challinor and his partner.
- In addition, the retention of the existing mobile home is required to provide temporary accommodation for the applicant until the property is complete.
- Having reviewed all relevant factors, it is essential that there is a permanent dwelling on the farm to house the key worker in order to appropriately manage the livestock and ensure that the animals get the care and attention that they require.
- Full consideration has been given to the essential need and permanent requirement for a key worker on the farm due to the size and nature of the enterprises.
- There are no properties in the locality which can house a key worker, mainly due to the lack of affordability.
- At a time when both the number of properties available in rural areas and investment in agriculture is extremely low, and more and more farmers are leaving the industry, it is considered that this application should be viewed positively. Small scale, essential residential and agricultural development such as this which helps preserve an existing farming enterprise is considered to be the least obtrusive solution to ensure that the farm can continue to operate on a sustainable basis.

APPENDIX I – VETERINARY SURGEON’S LETTER



Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

Moorland Veterinary Centre, St. Lukes
House, Vicarage Road, Leek,
Staffordshire, ST13 6AS

Monday 30th January 2017

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Planning Application for the Veterinary Practice Client: Mr R. E. Challinor,
Whympney Lodge, Godley Lane, Dilhorne, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 2PF**

As a Vet, at the Practice which Mr Challinor's stock are under the care of, I write this letter in full support of a planning application to build an agricultural worker's dwelling at the above mentioned address.

The current expanding sheep enterprise also includes a young flock which is managed & will lamb separately. This will increase the intensity of work on the farm and in order to sustain optimum health and welfare, requires more help from Mr Challinor's Parents and Miss Rachel Howell, Mr Challinor's partner. This is particularly important during the lambing season when their presence is also required throughout the night to monitor and assist with difficult births/ caesareans which is more likely to occur with a young flock anyway.

By living on the farm, Mr Challinor can ensure optimal animal health and welfare with respect to many of the ongoing management tasks mentioned below, which would help significantly with the work load, by cutting out any commuting time and being to hand at all times. This is of particular importance with respect to condition such as twin lamb disease and staggers, which require rapid detection to ensure the best possible recovery and prevent losses. Also consider the following:

- Lambing indoors – February & April – as already stated, requiring constant monitoring, assistance and moving of ewes and lambs to appropriate designated areas within the building post-lambing.
- Bedding, feeding, watering and generally checking and managing as necessary the health and welfare of all stock, on a daily basis. Certain conditions require urgent attention to ensure survival, as mentioned above
- Hand rearing kade lambs which require regular bottle feeding throughout the day& night.
- Mr Challinor also fattens approximately 400 lambs throughout the winter which also need daily management
- Additional tasks throughout the year include worming, vaccinating, bolus-ing, moving/ stock and managing the grazing/ fields associated with the farm as well as preparing/

disinfecting sheds for lambing and dealing with all the paperwork (e.g. Farm Assurance) associated with the farm enterprise.

Obviously being a key stakeholder in this business as well as being a key worker generally to be on hand and tend to all the livestock, it is not difficult to see the importance of this application.

If you should require any further information or clarification then please do not hesitate to contact me on 01538 382129/ 07446367696 or by email: tracylatham@yahoo.co.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Latham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tracy Latham BVSc MRCVS