DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2018/0015 **Valid 01/05/2018**	**KNIVEDEN FARM** **MOUNT ROAD** **LEEK**	**PRIOR NOTIFICATION FOR: PORTAL FRAME** **(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Landscape impact
- Rural area outwith development boundary

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Prominent ridge top location 120m back (east) from public road (Mount Road) on rising ground. Existing TV mast and accompanying small operators' buildings. Sparse scatter of three or so small but prominent trees. Wind Turbine (35m) within c. 60m. Extensive and prominent range of farm buildings beyond ridge – out of sight from Mount Road but dominant in views from east eg from Stile House Lane and from Morridge Top Road.

PROPOSAL

Modern portal frame farm building c. 28m x 15m. Stated purpose: to store in dry conditions hay and straw for use principally in feeding and bedding livestock and for seasonal lambing of ewes. The submitted drawing shows visible eaves height of 3.8m and visible ridge height of 5.8m. These heights have been verified with the agent as being the intended dimensions.

The application form refers to the drawings for details of the external materials. Concrete base walls to 2m with "dark" profiled sheeting to all sides. However this is contradicted on drawing KML3 01 which states Yorkshire boarding to the sides. Roof stated as "natural fibre cement". Again this has been checked with the agent and boarding is the intended finish.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Local Plan Submission Version (February 2018)
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
E1 Rural Diversification
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework July 2018
Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
SMD/2017/0154 – Proposed erection of an agricultural building for use as a milking parlour for dairy cows and rearing calves – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 25th October 2018
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
N/A

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development
In accordance with policies SS1 and SS1a, the Council expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether: (a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or (b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Policy SS6c for the rural areas supports only development which meets an essential local need and supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas (or supports sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside).

As a new building for agriculture there is no express or specific policy provision either in the current Core Strategy or the Local Plan (submission version) to support the proposal outright. The proposal therefore falls to be determined on its merits based on benefits versus harm. More specifically Policy R1 expects a balanced consideration of the extent to which a proposal protects and benefits rural qualities and supports rural economic and community needs stating that "appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area".

The purpose of this building is to support the functional operation of an established farm enterprise. To this extent the development may be assumed to contribute to the continued viability and therefore the sustainability of the farm business and in turn to the rural economy more generally.

Potential adverse impacts of the proposal are its visual prominence on a skyline. Policy SS6c(3) is to "enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by: (inter alia) giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape. NPPF paragraph 170 is that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (inter alia) (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Design

With concrete base walls, Yorkshire boarding above and a dark roof panel (along with skylights) the proposal would have an acceptable design for a modern rural farm building. Although other material finishes are referred to in the application the agent has advised that this combination is acceptable and, for the LPA, being preferable in design terms for this location it is proposed that these details be specified by condition.

Amenity

There are no near neighbours to be affected to any significant extent by the proposal. Pike Hall is c.180m to the SW but the existing TV mast and its ancillary building will tend to intercept the sight line. The development would be visible from

properties on Stile House Lane which is at a similar altitude across the valley to the east but at distances of 1km there will be no directly adverse consequences.

Landscape
The main consideration with this proposal is its potential impact in the landscape. The Mount is a renowned local recreational route for Leek residents. The proposed development would be a noticeable built addition to the skyline viewed from Mount Road. It would however tend to be seen in combination with the existing TV mast building and would be partially set against a slight rise in the ground to the immediate east of the proposal. In response to these concerns the applicant has proposed a block of tree planting approximately 15m x 15m (225m2) which would intercede in the view from Mount Road from the west and NW.

A further important consideration has been the view from Stile House Lane in which the existing range of large buildings at Kniveden Farm are seen to be extensive and prominent. The proposal building would be slightly masked by the natural bank with drystone wall atop running along its eastern side. Again it would be seen from here in combination with the TV mast building and importantly there is higher ground in the further distance which would prevent the proposal from being seen to break the horizon. The associated tree planting will in time further aid in this point.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
It is appropriate to support farm business expansion on grounds of benefit to the rural economy. In this location breaking the skyline from the west the acceptability of the proposal is finely balanced. The restriction of the building dimensions, the acceptance by the applicant of timber boarding to the exterior upper walls, use of a dark roof material and the proposed tree planting are all considered key to the acceptability of this proposal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 31st October 2018

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council