DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2019/0222 **Valid 09/05/2019**	**KNOWLE STYLE FARM THE HOLLANDS BIDDULPH MOOR**	**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

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Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
The impact on the character and appearance of the area.
The impact on residential amenity/living conditions of local residents.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the countryside to the north-east of Biddulph Moor village and is also within the Green Belt. It comprises part of a small farm of 1.87 hectares which has a traditional farmhouse and three fields and which lie on the south side of The Hollands (which provides the access to the site), a narrow country lane and a short distance to the west side of the main road, Top Road. The site lies on the southern edge of the property and to the south of the farmhouse. It is surrounded mainly by open land but there is also a horse menage and associated equestrian buildings on a separate property, a short distance to the south. The farm is a smallholding with grazing land for 17 sheep and 3 goats and also land for haymaking.

PROPOSAL

This a full planning application for an agricultural storage building which would have a footprint of 12.6 x 6.5 metres and an eaves height of 3.6 metres and overall height of 4.5m. The walls would be clad with Yorkshire timber boarding (above a 1.0m concrete base) and the roof would comprise Moorland Green profiled metal sheeting. The building would be used to store implements, machinery and vehicles/tractors associated with the farm. An email from the agent confirms that a tractor, mower, haybaler, muckspreader and grass topper along with domestic lawnmower, will be stored in the building. The agent claims these items are currently kept outdoors in the vicinity of the site and a storage building is needed to safely store and shelter the items currently exposed to the elements and also to tidy up the land.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

SS6c Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting

National Planning Policy Framework

Sections 7 (Design) and 13 (Green Belts)

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

National Policy Guidance

Paragraph 48 of the newly adopted NPPF states that:

> *"…decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:*
> - *the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
> - *the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
> - *the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).*

Local Plan process

The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was "sound". Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.

In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public is ongoing in order to determine whether the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. Hearing sessions were conducted in October 2018 and the Inspector issued his initial post-hearing advice in January 2019 which set out some actions for the Council and a range of modifications that would be necessary to make the plan sound. The full schedule of modifications is to be determined and will be subject to consultation in due course. The Inspector will then be in position to write his final report. Subject to the findings of the appointed Inspector, the Local Plan can then be adopted by the Council. This will be towards the end of 2019 at the earliest. Upon adoption, ~~it~~ the Local Plan will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and become part of the statutory development plan for the District.

In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is as follows:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the Council has submitted it to the SoS for examination

- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – this varies depending on the policy in question. The Officer Comments section of this report identifies the level of outstanding objections to each policy and recommends the amount of weight to be given to them at this stage in the process
- The degree of consistency of policies with the NPPF – given that the Council has submitted a Local Plan that it considers to be sound, all policies are deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.

Emerging Policies

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

No relevant previous applications.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 3.7.19
Neighbour consultation period ends: 3.7.19
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

None.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

SCC Public Rights of Way Section

The footpaths running through the site would not be affected by the proposal. It does not appear from the application documents that this right of way will be affected by the proposals.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the Green Belt where new buildings are generally not allowed, in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt, unless they fall under the limited categories of development deemed to not be inappropriate in the Green Belt, listed in paras 144 and 145 of the NPPF. Agricultural buildings are listed and therefore in principle, the proposal is acceptable in this location as it is not considered to amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is therefore also by definition not harmful to its openness.

However, the justification for the agricultural need for the building would need to be assessed so that it is used for agricultural needs, as necessary so that the principle remains acceptable. The farm is small but there is a stock of 20 animals and haymaking also takes place. Despite the limited size there is still a realistic need for a tractor and other equipment and machinery to maintain the land as necessary for the agricultural operation of it. I consider the building to be an appropriate size for the items proposed to be stored and not excessive for its purpose. The storage need for the items seems reasonable in the interest of the maintenance and security of the items needed for agricultural practice. There are other outbuildings at the farm but these comprise a domestic car garage and a portable animal shelter and neither building appears to be suitable for the purpose of adequately, safely and securely storing all of the items listed. I consider there is sufficient agricultural justification for a farm storage building of the size proposed.

In terms of the design and impact on the appearance of the area, the building would appear as a typical modern conventional farm building and therefore has a form in keeping with the surrounding rural area which comprises similar buildings. The height and size is not excessive and the materials comprising timber boarding and green profiled sheeting for the roof are appropriate in view of the character of the rural area and would help the building blend in the with rural landscape. The building also benefits from an adequate level of tree and hedge screening particularly to the south, where the building is placed up against robust boundary hedging and to the west, so is partly screened when viewed from the road.

The building would not be placed close enough to other dwellings outside of the property to cause any harm to living conditions. Equipment rather than livestock will be stored in the building alleviating any concerns about noise or smells/odours.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal is not inappropriate in the Green Belt and the scale, siting and design of the building would not harm the rural character and appearance of the area, or the amenities of the area in general. It would therefore comply with both the relevant Core Strategy policies and government planning guidance in the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 4.7.19

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Signed by: JaneC

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council