DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2019/0663 **Valid 29/10/2019**	**TEAN NURSERIES** **RIVERSIDE ROAD** **UPPER TEAN**	**RETENTION OF TWO BIOMASS BOILERS AND DRYING CABINS** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES
Benefits of rural diversification weighed against any harm to the character and appearance of the area or amenity of residents.

The developments sustainable and environmental credentials depend upon an acceptable burn rate, the type of material burnt and the quality of emissions.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
Tean Nursery is an isolated property situated in the swathe of open countryside, mid way between the southern edge of Upper Tean and the A50 that is 1.5km to the south.

The property is served by an access track or lane that joins the residential edge of Upper Tean to Blythe House (a listed 17th Century farmstead) 2.5km to the south, the other side of the A50. The lane provides Checkley Parish Public Footpath No. 5.

PROPOSAL
The development has already been carried out and the application retrospectively seeks planning permission. Within the yard area two biomass boilers have been introduced to dry fresh cut logs. The boilers are to the rear of and attached to freight container type units that provide the drying cabins. Each boiler has a tall flue chimney providing venting. The boilers use an efficient burn of waste wood (pallets and the like) to dry the logs for home burner market.

"The general process can be split into two separate areas:

- *Waste wood, primarily waste pallet wood, is collected by myself from a couple of local businesses on a semi-regular basis, usually three to four times a month. This is dependant on both our needs for fuel and also the availability of the waste wood. This waste pallet wood is then fed into the boilers and burnt, the heat produced is circulated through the two shipping containers on site where the log wood is dried.*
  Records of the waste wood collection for the past year can be seen on the attached document under pages "Waste Fuel Boiler 1 & 2"

- *Core wood or felled tree wood is delivered to us in full trunk form, usually in ten tonne loads by timber merchant D.Nagington. The regularity of these deliveries again is dependant on our needs and the availability of wood. This wood is then processed by myself, on site at Tean Nurseries into a log size*

suitable for household wood burners and then dried in the before mentioned shipping containers. I then deliver these logs, usually in loose quantities filling a one tonne builders bag, to customers in the local area. The number of deliveries in a time frame can vary widely as the vast majority of my customers use the logs to heat their homes so usage is variable and I do not keep an exact record of every delivery.
Records of every core wood delivery can be seen on the attached document under the page "Log Wood Records". This also shows a percentage of each load which has been dried and sold to date"

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 Area
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character and Appearance
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework
Section(s) 2 Achieving sustainable development; 4 Decision Making, 6 Building a strong and competitive economy; and 15 protecting the natural.

Emerging Local Plan Policy
SS10 other rural area strategy; DC1 Design and DC3 Landscape Character – are the equivalent emerging policies key to an assessment of this application. The Local Plan would not introduce any material change to the policy approach and strategy set out below that is compliant with the NPPF.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
1963 – NC.5129 Planning permission for the bungalow in connection with the established nursery garden.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 7th Jan 2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 22nd November 2019
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Checkley Parish Council: No Comment

Environmental Health

No Objection subject to conditions to control emissions by ensuring only 'clean' wood is burnt and that boilers are maintained accordingly, and that noise breakout is limited.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development
The premises are in an 'other rural area', occupying a relatively isolated location. The site appears to have operated as a nursery since the 1950's, with grown produce cultivated in large greenhouses (essentially to be considered or included as an agricultural activity - s.336 of the Act) although there is no planning history relating to the greenhouses, they have evidently been on site for well over 4 years). The applicant's dwelling was granted a planning permission in 1963 in connection with that activity.

The Development Plan strategy for the other rural areas at SS6c generally provides support for the sustainable diversification of farm enterprise where there is compliance with Policy R1 and appropriate consideration for the quality and character of the countryside area. The emerging strategy SS10 in the soon to be adopted Local Plan does not introduce any material change to that approach. A diversification project, such as the applicant's, therefore could be acceptable if it is sustainable and does not unduly impact on the character and appearance of the area to an extent that outweighs any benefit to the rural economy.

Impact on the character and quality of the countryside area
The property is on a gently rising hillside just 100m from the wide plateau of the high ground to the south. It is surrounded by farmland divided into irregular small scale field parcels that are enclosed by dense well established traditional hedgerow and notable tree lines. The site is adjacent to the roadside with a yard to the front of a row of large polytunnels and green houses. The site does not have a profile in the landscape from middle and distant views - land levels, trees and natural enclosures prevent this. From the access lane it is apparent only from immediate proximity, and then only glimpses from the access point.

The 'drying cabin' freight containers and the pile of wet logs occupy a central part of the yard against the back drop of the green houses behind, they do not have prominence within the landscape and do not appear as discordant features that interrupt quality views or environment.

There are rather tall galvanised flue chimneys venting the two boilers behind the 'log dryer' freight containers. The tops of the narrow tubes are 6metres above the freight containers. However, the visual impact of their slim profile is lost within the context of tall trees and conifers within immediate proximity and the run of the steel electricity pylons within the relatable landscape. Because of surrounding trees, dense hedgerow and land profiles the chimneys are not prominent within the landscape.

Within the site, in immediate proximity, the site's appearance is akin to that of a modern working farm where more functional buildings provide facility.

There are no adverse impacts on the quality and character of the countryside area.

Amenity – noise and emission impacts
The nearest dwelling to the site is Benthouse Farm, 150metres to the south east of on the other side of the access track opposite. Oakhill Farm is to the north-west some 600metres away. The boilers have been operating for some time without complaint and there have not been any objections to the application. The Environmental Health officer does not believe that the boilers are a source of noise pollution but suggests that controls are applied to noise out put.

There is satisfactory evidence provided by the applicant to show that the boilers are burning efficiently and cleanly without creating emissions that harm air quality. The boilers burn 'clean' waste wood that has not been treated.

Sustainability
There are inherent sustainable credentials in this project. Waste wood is put to good use in modern boilers to provide efficient and smokeless fuel for the home heating market.

Occasional 10 tonne deliveries of full trunk tree wood is delivered to site and waste wood is collected from local businesses three to four times a month. These arrangements and logistics do require a limited number of vehicle movements to this 'countryside' location, however, such a use does need a certain degree of space and remoteness so that it does not interfere with residential amenity.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
The inherent benefits of sustainable farm diversification would not be outweighed by any harm to the character and appearance of the area or residential amenity.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 6th March 2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council