DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0165 **Valid 20/03/2020**	**RIDGEFIELDS FARM LEEK ROAD CELLARHEAD**	**ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

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.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies within the open countryside to the south of Cellarhead and on the east side of Leek Road. It comprises part of a field on a farm holding of 8.3 hectares. The access is via a track connected to Leek Road to the north-west. There is a small farm building immediately to the west of the site which is part of the farm and two dwellings which front Leek Road lie a small distance further to the west. Farmland within the same property lies to the north, south and east. The land is on a gradual slope downwards from west to east. The site is in the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for a small farm storage building with a footprint of 7 x 7 metres and a height of 3.8 metres up to the roof ridge. The roof and walls would be finished with Juniper Green metal cladding. It would be placed next to an open sided livestock shed to the west of the site which is proposed to be repaired. It would be used to store agricultural implements and feed, and for lambing during the lambing season.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy (Adopted March 2014)

SS6c Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019)

Sections 12 (Design) and 13 (Green Belts).

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

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 was agreed by the Council and the subject of public consultation between 18th September 2019 and 31st October 2019. The schedule consisted of modifications that the Inspector has deemed necessary to make the Local Plan sound. Following the consultation, the Inspector concluded that further hearing sessions were necessary to consider; proposals for safeguarded land at Gillow Heath in Biddulph, housing land supply, Local Green Spaces in Cheddleton (Ox Pasture), Biddulph (Dorset Drive and implications for the emerging neighbourhood plan) and Blythe Bridge. They were held on 4th and 5th February.

On 27th February, the Inspector issued his post hearing advice. Key recommendations in the letter include:

- The proposed safeguarded land at Gillow Health, Biddulph should be removed. Neither should the site be allocated for housing as requested by the landowners as the case for exceptional circumstances has not ben met. The land will remain Green Belt as per the Local Plan Submission Version agreed by the Council in June 2018
- No further housing allocations in Biddulph are required
- No further amendments to the housing trajectory are required aside from pushing back the predicted commencement of the Wharf Road, Biddulph site (excluding BDNEW) until 2022/23.
- Monitoring of housing supply will determine if a full or partial Local Plan review is required within 5 years
- Land at Ox Pasture (Cheddleton) and Dorset Drive (Biddulph) should revert back to the Local Green Space designations as per the Local Plan Submission Version as agreed by the Council in June 2018.
- Other modifications were considered during the recent hearings sessions are necessary to make the plan sound, including; updating neighbourhood area housing requirements (Policy SS4) to reflect the latest monitoring data, updating the employment land area for the Tunstall Road allocation to reflect the masterplan and other adjustments to the wording of Policy SS4 and Policy DC2.

No further representations will be sought by the Inspector. As such, the Local Plan policies as proposed to be modified in September 2019 along with the Inspector recommended revisions (February 2020) provide a strong indication of the final

policies likely to be adopted in the Local Plan. The Inspector's final report is expected within 2 months and will reflect the post hearing advice. The Council will be able to consider the adoption of the Local Plan at this point. As such, the plan is at a very advanced stage of preparation with some of the key outstanding objections now having been resolved following the February 2020 hearing sessions.

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 considered below:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the main modifications have been subject to consultation
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies this varies depending on the policy in question – the Inspector wishes to explore outstanding objections on a limited number of issues at the February hearing sessions further before drawing conclusions.
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework – policies have been modified to address soundness issues identified by the Inspector to date. It is the Council's view that the policies (as modified) are consistent with national policy. The Inspector has yet to draw final conclusions, particularly on the matters subject to further hearing sessions.

Given the above, the majority of policies (as modified) can be given substantial weight.

Emerging Policies

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

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2019/0049: Replacement dwelling including the demolition of agricultural buildings at Ridgefields Farm. Approved. Under construction.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 2.6.20
Neighbour consultation period ends: 2.6.20
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to standard conditions.

Local Highways Authority

No objection.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the Green Belt where there are restrictions for new development in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt. The forms of development that are exceptionally allowed in the Green Belt are listed in paras 145 and 146 of the NPPF and include agricultural buildings. These are not considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt and therefore do not harm its openness, by definition. Therefore the principle of a new agricultural building on an existing farm in the Green Belt is acceptable.

In terms of the agricultural justification of need for the building, the farm, which has a size of 8.3 hectares, has just one other farm building, a fairly small livestock building next to the site. There were other farm buildings next to the original farmhouse to the west, Ridgefields Farm. However, the farmhouse and land around it is being redeveloped into a replacement dwelling and this appears to no longer belong to the farm and has become within a different ownership. The recent permission for the replacement dwelling also approved the demolition of all the other farm buildings which are sited on the footprint of the replacement dwelling and its curtilage. There is therefore a reasonable need for a farm storage building on a farm this size as a replacement of the former buildings and to compliment the livestock building in order for the farm to continue to operate.

The building would be placed in an appropriate location which best preserves the openness of the Green Belt i.e. adjacent to the one other farm building still remaining within the farm property. It is a relatively small building with limited height and not excessive to serve a farm of its size. It would have an appropriate conventional farm building design and green finishing materials to blend in with the rural landscape. It would not significantly harm the rural character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, a new stretch of hedgerow is proposed immediately to the north of the building, along the field boundary, to supplement the existing gappy hedgerow and provide more screening. It would not be easily visible from surrounding roads and would not be harmfully prominent from nearby public footpaths, especially when seen against the backdrop of the other farm building and two houses a short distance beyond.

Finally, with regard to residential amenity, although there are two dwellings about 60m to the west of the site (including the replacement of the former farmhouse), the building is proposed for implement storage uses and fodder and would only accommodate livestock during lambing season. The current livestock building is already closer to those buildings and screens the proposed building from those properties. Therefore the proposed building would not have any additional impact on the residential amenities of those two dwellings (including by way of noise and smells/odours).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area. The proposal would therefore comply with the Core Strategy, the forthcoming Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 19.6.20

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council