**DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

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| **SMD/2020/0223**<br>**Valid 04/05/2020** | **BARNES LEA FARM**<br>**REACLIFFE ROAD**<br>**RUDYARD** | **PROPOSED EXTENSION TO EXISTING LIVESTOCK BUILDING**<br><br>**(FULL - MINOR)** |

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## MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposal would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
The impact on the character and appearance of the area
The impact on the residential amenities of the area

## DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is on the northern edge of a complex of farm buildings, Barnes Lea Farm, which is in a remote part of the countryside to the west of Rudyard Lake and about a mile to the south of Rushton Spencer village. It is reached via a long track (Reacliffe Road) connected to Beat Lane, the nearest classified road, to the north. It comprises open land adjoining a livestock building to the north of the farmhouse and to the north-west of listed stone barns which were converted into dwellings under permissions in 2014. The farm complex and converted barns are surrounded by open land and fields belonging to the farm. A public right of way runs past the site to the west.

## PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for an extension to an existing livestock building immediately to the south of the site and which would adjoin its north elevation. The extension would run the whole length of the existing building (approx 30 metres) and would have approx half the width. It would be in the form of a lean-to extension with the current north-facing roof-slope continuing down to the proposed eaves. It would be completely enclosed with concrete panels for walls (apart from Yorkshire boarding above the eaves on the side elevations) and a fibre cement roof.

## 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**

None.

**CONSULTATIONS**

**Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 17.6.20
Neighbour consultation period ends: 17.6.20
Press Advert: N/A

**Public Comments**

None.

**Town / Parish Comments**

No objection.

**Severn Trent Water**

No objection.

**Conservation Officer**

No objection.

**OFFICER COMMENTS**

The site is in the Green Belt where development is only allowed under the limited criteria set out in paras 145 and 146 of the NPPF in order to protect the openness of the Green Belt. These list the forms of development which are not considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt and therefore not harmful to its openness. Extensions to buildings are listed, providing they would not be disproportionate in relation to the original building. As the extension would lead to an approx 50% increase in the size of the building, it is debatable whether this can be considered avoid being disproportionate. However, agricultural buildings are listed and as the proposal involves an extension to an existing livestock building, I consider the proposed extension would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore the principle of the development is acceptable.

In terms of visual impact, the lean-to form of the extension, using the continuation of an exiting roof-slope, would harmonise with the exiting building and the lower height would also ensure it would not appear dominant in relation to the other farm buildings. It would appear subservient to the main building. The existing building is currently very well screened and only prominent when walking past it along the adjacent public footpath which runs in a north/south direction (to the west of the building). From the north, the extension would be seen against the backdrop of the building. It would be screened by the existing building when approaching from the south. There is an absence of paths further to the west. From Reacliffe Road, it is only possible to see glimpses of the gable end from the east. Due to the tree coverage along field boundaries, the extension would in fact be completely screened from Reacliffe Road. The proposed materials would match those of the existing building helping it to blend in with the existing building as well as the landscape in general. There are nearby listed barns to the south-east. However, as the extension would be on the opposite side of the farm building to the barns and therefore would not have any impact on the appearance of the barns or their setting. No objection has been raised by the Conservation Officer.

With regard to residential amenity, the existing building is already being used to house livestock. The extension would be on the opposite side of the building from the nearby converted barn dwellings to the south-east so there would be no

additional impact on the dwellings and their occupants in terms of noise and smells/odours.

**CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

The proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and does not harm its openness. It would also not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area. The application therefore complies with the Core Strategy, forthcoming Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE**

**Case Officer: Chris Johnston**
**Recommendation Date: 28.6.20**

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**