

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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**SMD/2021/0273**  
**Valid 14/04/2021**

**FOREST FARM**  
**ASHBOURNE ROAD**  
**CALTON MOOR**

**ERECTION OF**  
**AGRICULTURAL BUILDING**  
**FOR LIVESTOCK HOUSING**

**(FULL - MINOR)**

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### MAIN ISSUES

- Whether there is an essential need for the proposed building to be located in the Open Countryside.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.

### DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises an isolated farmstead located approximately 145 metres to the south of Ashbourne Road – the A52. The farmstead comprises a detached farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings surrounded by agricultural fields. The existing agricultural buildings are currently used by cattle, although they are in a dilapidated condition. The land slopes downwards from north to south. The application site is located in the Open Countryside.

### PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of an agricultural livestock building.

### RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

#### **Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)**

SS1 Development Principles  
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy  
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy  
DC1 Design Considerations  
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting  
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

#### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14  
Section(s) 4, 12

## **SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**

|               |                                                                         |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SMD/2021/0298 | Erection of lean-to agricultural building to house livestock<br>Pending |
| SMD/2021/0311 | Proposed silage clamp<br>Pending                                        |

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 21/05/2021  
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A  
Press Advert: N/A

**Public Comments:** None

**Town / Parish Comments:** Blore with Swinscoe Parish Meeting: no objections to this application have been raised.

**Severn Trent Water:** No objections to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.

## **OFFICER COMMENTS**

### **Principle of Development**

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2019) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental. In accordance with policies SS1 and 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2019).

The application site is located within the Open Countryside, whereby policy SS10 is applicable. This policy outlines that *'these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside'* and then lists a number of types of development that are deemed acceptable in principle.

One such example is listed at (2) as *'enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified'*. A farm would meet this criteria as an agricultural building needs to be in an Open Countryside location.

A Design & Access Statement, produced by Bagshaws, was submitted to support the proposed development. The Statement outlines that Birchwood Park Farms occupies three holdings and farms a total of 675 acres with over 530 cattle. The farm partnership was started in 1991 with a 90 acre dairy farm and 60 cows and has grown over the years. Forest Farm was purchased by the applicant in 2016. Commencing June 2019, Birchwood Park Farms achieved organic status and milk is sold to ARLA who supply McDonalds restaurants.

Birchwood Park Farms operates their enterprise across the following farm units: Birchwood Park Farm, Roston (dairy), Moor Lane Farm, Stockwell Heath (finishing unit, grassland and arable), Forest Farm (dairy youngstock and dairy heifer unit) and Darlbury Lees, Ashbourne (cattle grazing). Forest Farm comprises 126.22 acres.

The Statement outlines that the applicants have insufficient livestock housing at Forest Farm and require the proposed building to increase capacity and the existing agricultural buildings to be reconfigured for fodder and straw storage, machinery storage and the housing of younger calves.

The information provided within the submitted Design & Access Statement demonstrates that a farming enterprise is taking place on the land and there is a need for the proposed building. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable and it complies with the requirements of policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020).

## **Design**

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2019) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of the design of new buildings.

The proposed agricultural building will measure 30.5 metres by 18.5 metres. It will have an irregular shaped pitched roof with an eaves height of 4.5 metres over the

agricultural pens and an eaves height of 7.8 metres above the feeding passage. It will have a ridge height of 8.6 metres. The walls will be constructed of concrete panels with vertical Yorkshire boarding cladding above. The roof of the building will be constructed of fibre cement sheeting coloured natural grey with clear panels for light. The building will comprise agricultural pens covering approximately two-thirds of the floorspace with a feeding passage to the west. The feeding passage will be open to the north, south and west elevations, with a gate at either end providing access into the pens. The existing yard area will be extended into the adjacent field to the south so that it will adjoin the side elevations of the existing agricultural buildings and will be constructed of limestone.

The building will be sited within an existing silage clamp located to the west of the existing farm buildings. The land surrounding the silage clamp will require some excavation to the north and west in order to house the proposed building and provide access/egress into the building. Further information was requested as to the extent of the excavation required and where the excavated soil was to be disposed. Cross-sections were duly submitted, together with a Soil Disposal Statement that indicates the precise location and existing and proposed ground levels. The soil will be disposed to the southeast of an existing wind turbine and it will infill a hollow in the land edged blue. This is considered acceptable as it will not pose an impact on the surrounding landscape. The details should be conditioned accordingly.

The application site is located in a rural part of the District that comprises largely agricultural fields with dispersed farms. The site is within the 'White Peak' Character Area and the 'Limestone highland fringe' landscape character type, as identified in the Staffordshire Moorlands Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA). The LSCA states that this landscape character type is very sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change. In terms of new agricultural buildings, the LSCA states for this landscape character type:

*'The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.'*

The proposed building is agricultural in appearance and has been designed for its intended use. The use of timber to the walls and a grey roof will be acceptable within the surrounding landscape. The land slopes from north to south and due to the building being sited within the existing silage clamp, a large proportion of the building will be screened from views from the A52 to the north. The building will be sited to the west of the existing farm buildings and will be viewed as part of the existing farmstead. The extension to the existing yard will 'square-off' the farm complex and will be accessible to both the existing and proposed buildings. However, it will require the removal of a dry stone wall. Details should be submitted by condition regarding the boundary treatment to the new yard area to ensure the materials and height are appropriate within the rural landscape.

Subject to conditions in respect of soil disposal, materials and boundary treatments, it is not considered that the proposed building will have a significantly detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the area as it has been sited so as to cause minimal harm to the surrounding landscape. It is for these reasons that the proposed

development is considered to comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

### **Amenity**

Core Strategy policy DC1 and paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2019) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

There are no dwellinghouses, other than the applicant's farmhouse, that are located in close proximity of the application site. The proposed development will therefore not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity and it will comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

### **Highway Safety**

Policies DC1 and T1 seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development it serves.

The proposed development will not affect the existing access onto the A52, the existing access track or the existing parking and turning areas. The building will be utilised as a continuation of the existing farming operation. It is for these reasons that the proposed development will not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and will comply with policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

### **CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019). As such, the application is recommended for approval.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:      APPROVE subject to Conditions**

**Case Officer: Ailsa Berry**

**Recommendation Date: 22/06/2021**

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**