



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Proposal to construct a farm shop and drive through ice-cream facility, alongside a new access and on-site parking.

at

Longshaw Farm,
Bradnop
ST13 7NJ

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1. Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a proposal to construct a farm shop, with drive-through ice-cream sales, new access, and parking facilities at Longshaw Farm, Bradnop.

Longshaw Farm is a large dairy farm currently milking 400 cows, on 480 acres on the south side of the A523 at Bradnop. Currently employed in the business are Giles and Jo Clark who are both full-time, with their son Jeremy who works in the business full-time, along with two other full-time members of staff, an apprentice, and one part-time member of staff.

The proposed farm diversification project will generate one additional full-time job, that is hoped to be filled by their daughter Clarissa, and 7 or 8 part-time jobs. The proposal will also include the processing of milk (within existing buildings in the farm) to make the ice cream and other products for sale in the farm shop, this contributes to the additional workload. There is potential for additional jobs as the success of the farm shop grows.

The main issues that are considered relevant to the proposed scheme are:

- **Highway safety:** The existing access to the farm from the public highway does not meet the required visibility splays;
- **Farm diversification:** Longshaw Farm has identified a way to diversify in the aftermath of 'Brexit' and the Coronavirus pandemic, with changes to farm subsidies and the next generation's ambition to work in the business;
- **Tourism and visitor safety:** The farm business has identified an opportunity to benefit from a growing tourism economy in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The issue of visitor safety at the farm will be mitigated through siting the new development at the western edge of the existing farm complex, with a new access point from the highway; and
- **Landscape & Visual Impact:** The materials used within the development have been chosen to help the new building and access blend to the existing landscape, as set against the backdrop of the existing farm complex. Furthermore, proposed landscape planting will also provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and habitat creation.

2. The Context of the Proposed Development

As set out in the introduction, the farm has identified a need to diversify as a result of Brexit, changes to farm subsidies, to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, and to provide an opportunity for the next generation to take over the farm business; in this case, it would be the son and daughter of Giles and Jo Clark.

The farm has already diversified by installing an anaerobic digester as a means to generate renewable energy to supply the farm with electricity. This breaks down farm slurry in the absence of oxygen to generate methane gas. The gas then runs an electricity generator, which powers the farm and the farmhouse, with any surplus exported to the grid in the locality. This contributes to lowering the carbon intensity of mains electricity in the area and also demonstrates the farm's commitment to becoming more sustainable in the move to a Zero-Carbon Britain.

The business has also diversified in to Holiday Accommodation, by converting buildings on a nearby site (Hollydale) they provide accommodation for 20 visitors. That part of the business employs 8 part-time cleaners and a part-time gardener.

A further way that Longshaw Farm can diversify is to open a farm shop, selling their own produce direct to the consumer at retail prices. This results in a larger proportion of the cost of food products being paid to the actual producer of the food. A dairy farm can process their own liquid milk on site into a higher value product, such as butter, cheese, cream, ice cream, or yoghurt. These higher value products can be sold on wholesale or retailed directly to the public. The tourism sector is identified as one of Staffordshire Moorlands District's key areas for diversifying its economy, and with the farm business already committed to the tourism sector in the local area, this facility will provide an educational function by enabling holidaymakers to visit the farm and understand how dairy farms operate, and where their food comes from.

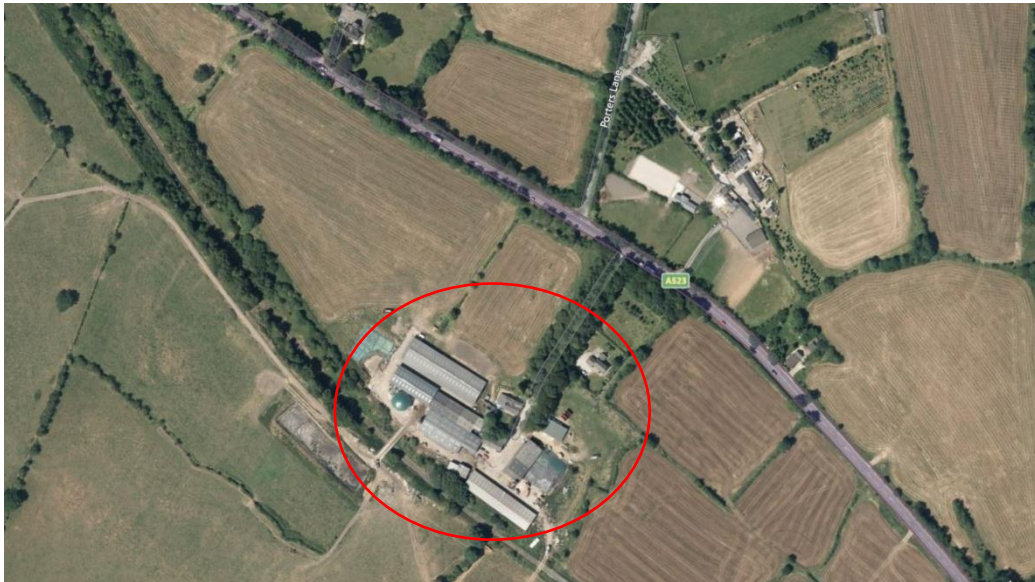
2.1 Planning History

There is an extensive planning history to the site at Longshaw Farm, as would be expected for a working dairy farm, new buildings were required over the years as the business has grown and expanded. The most relevant was the permission granted for the proposed cubicles shed extension and replacement of slurry tank, with a slurry-only bio digester tank as part of the wider farm diversification objectives on the farm [SMD/2017/0228].

3. Design and Access

3.1 Features of the existing site

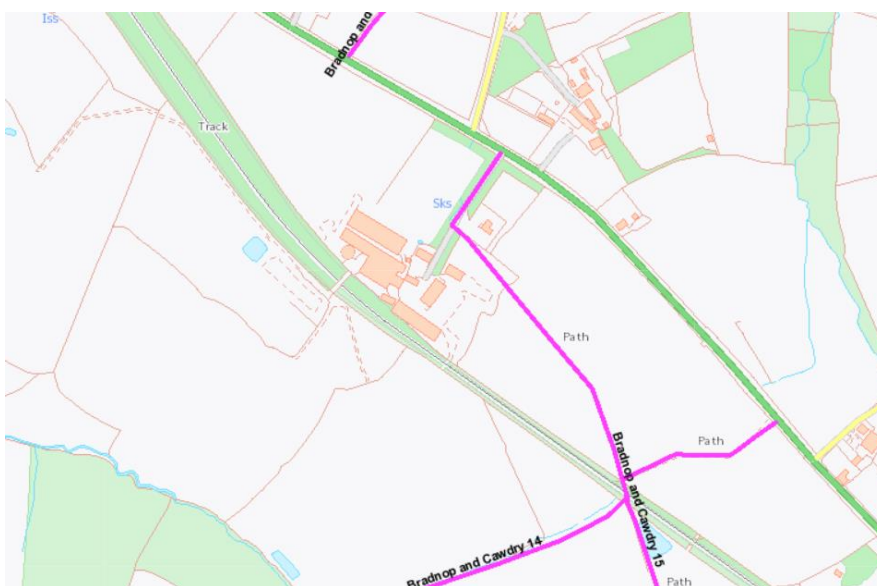
The existing site layout of Longshaw Farm is shown below.



Aerial view of Longshaw Farm, Bradnop from Google Maps

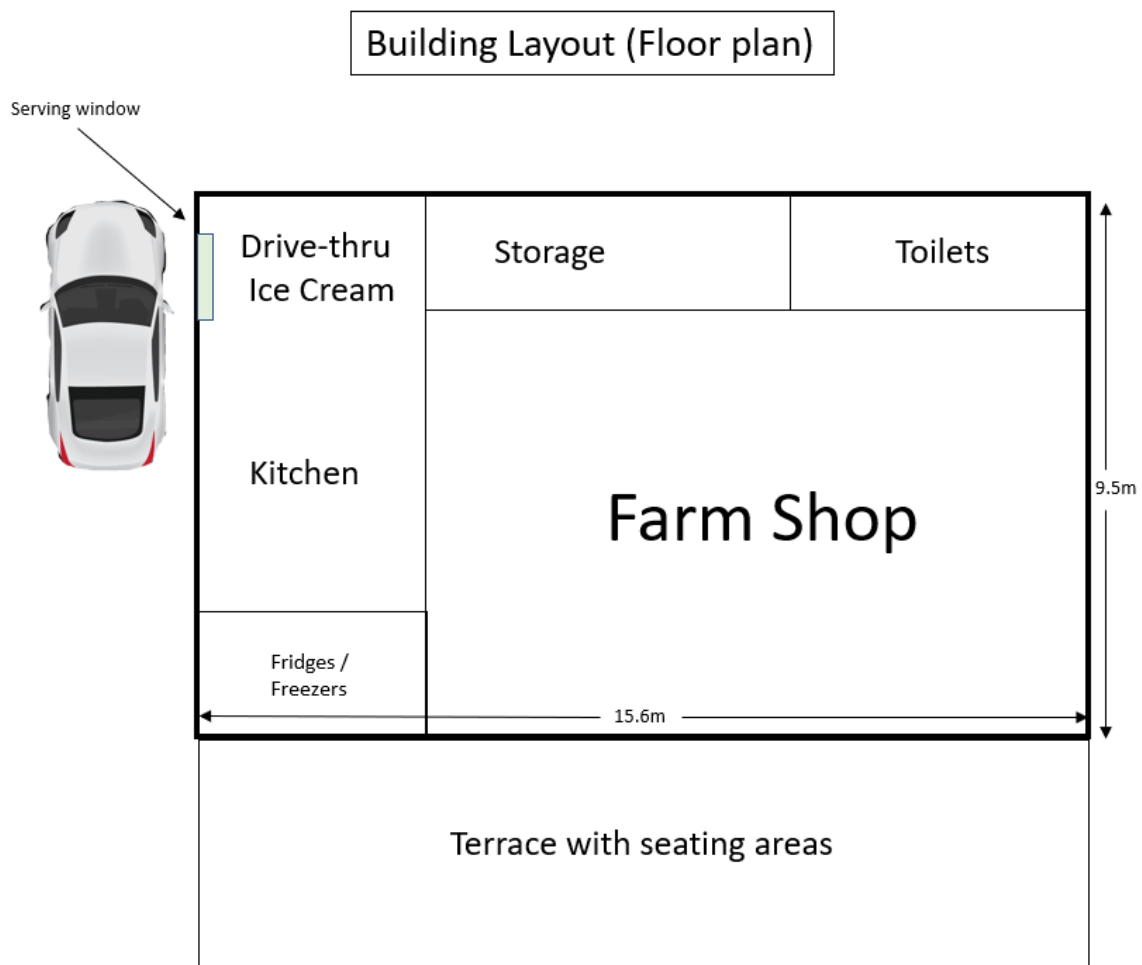
It is an active agricultural site of 480 acres to the south side of the A523 at Bradnop. To the west and running along the south side of the farm complex is a disused railway line, field boundaries across the site consist of managed hedgerows, except to the A523 where the boundary has traditional dry-stone walling.

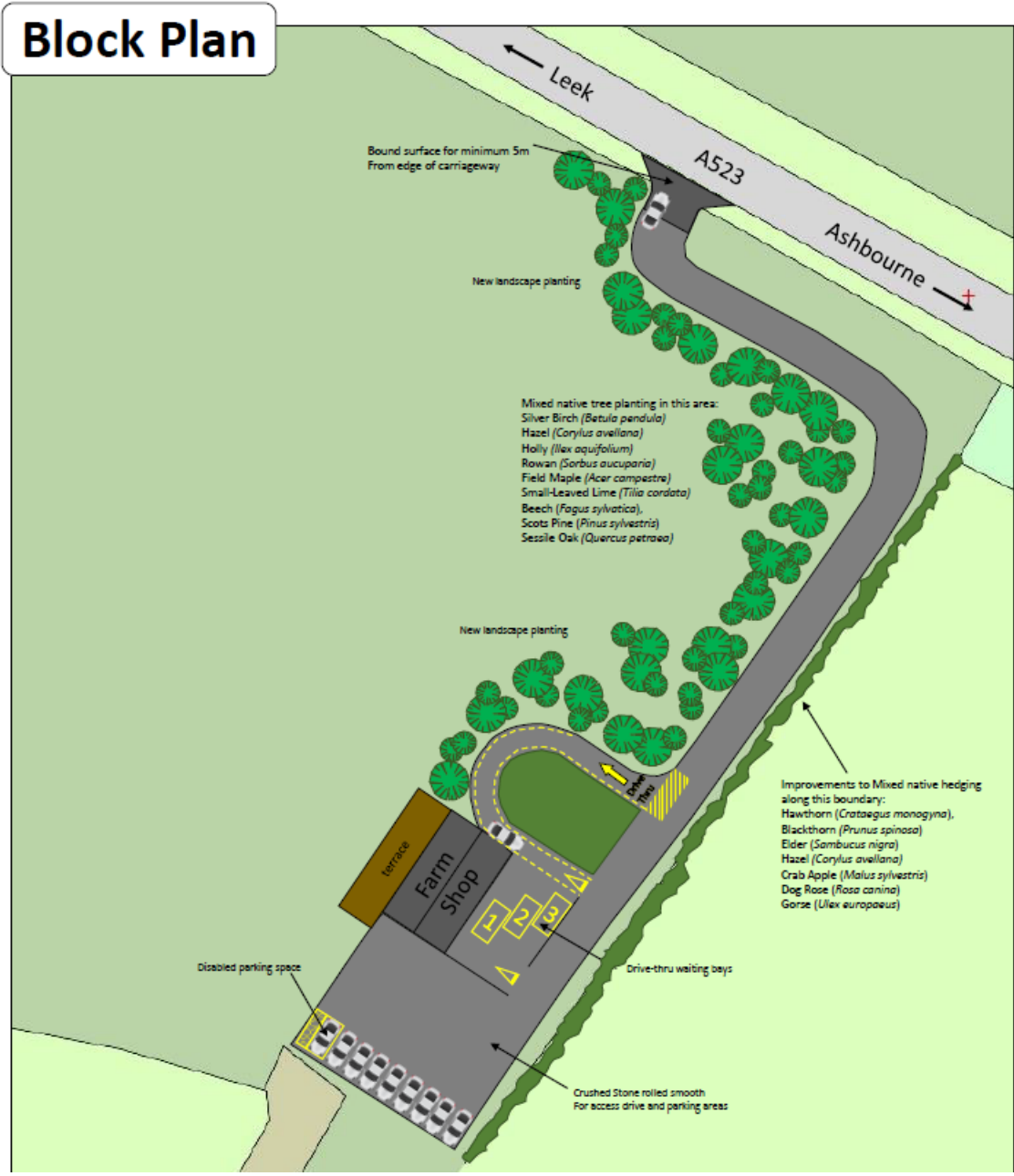
There are no public rights of way running through the farm yard itself, and none that would be affected by the proposed development. However there is an existing footpath that runs along part of the existing access drive to the farm (Bradnop & Cawdry 15):



3.2 Layout of the proposed development

The development proposed is the construction of a farm shop with drive-through ice cream sales, including the creation of a new highway access, drive and parking areas. Diagrams below give an indicative view of that proposed layout. As you can see, the footprint of the building is proposed at 150 square metres, to match the floor area that is allowed to change use to retail under Class R of permitted development. The reason for this is explained later in this statement in relation to the “Fall-back position”.





The Block Plan shows the proposed new access, drive-thru & parking areas along with the farm shop.

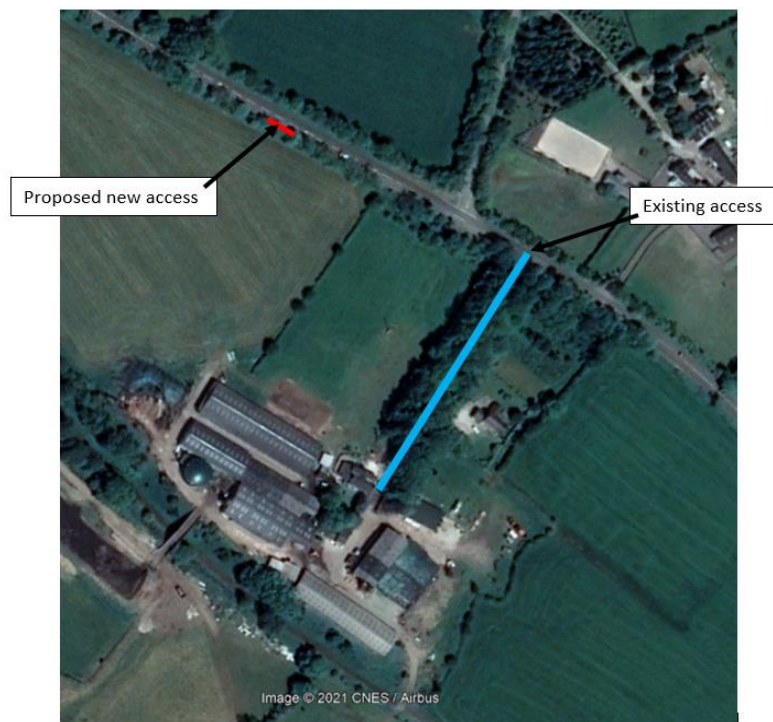
3.3 Highway Safety - Access

The reason for proposing a new access is due to safety concerns over the existing farm access. The pre-application enquiry response from Staffordshire County Council Highways confirms that the existing access is substandard and that the officer would prefer to see a new access to serve the farm shop, and to keep the public separate from the operational farm traffic (tractors, loaders, etc.)

The proposed new access will also be off the A523 but further west along the road towards Leek. The existing access point from the public highway A523 has a speed limit of 50mph. Visibility from the point of access is good to the west, however to the east there is a bend in the road meaning that for vehicles emerging from the driveway to join the road, it is difficult to see approaching vehicles beyond approximately 70 metres:



The bend in the road from the existing access to Longshaw Farm



New access and old, with visuals from Google Earth

The visibility distance required for a speed limit of 50mph is typically 160m, which cannot be achieved at the existing entrance, and cannot be improved due to the applicant not owning the land in this direction. The proposed new point of access deals with the issues raised in the pre-application

advice received from County Highways. Sufficient visibility to the east can be achieved from this new location (more than 160m from the bend in the road) and there would be no conflict between visiting members of the public and the farm traffic associated with the farm yard, either in cars or on foot.

Facilities within the farm shop will include WC provision, and safe accessibility for visitors. Provided as part of the facility, signage for safe access and parking will be clearly shown. Farm shops are by their very nature located where the farm is, which is almost always in a rural location. This location is not served by public transport and therefore in the context of the site as a drive-through most users will arrive by private cars or possibly bicycles.

Sufficient car-parking is therefore proposed as part of the layout of the development, to the east side of the farm shop. This is 'behind' the building as viewed when approaching the site along the main road from the west.

The farm shop will also provide a community facility in Bradnop by creating a destination for local people to meet up for lunch or a coffee, where no such facility currently exists.

The applicant intends to meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 (which incorporates the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) through disability-compliant access and parking availability on the site.

3.4 Design

The design of the proposed building for the farm shop is of timber-clad construction, with a corrugated cement fibre roof (Big 6 profile) to match the other agricultural buildings on the site. The proposed building is identical to an agricultural building that could be constructed under permitted development, and it would read visually as part of the group of farm buildings on the site. Should the Council prefer an alternative type of building or choice of materials, the applicants will take on board any suggestions they may have, however no issues have been raised in relation to the design of the proposed building during the pre-application enquiry.

3.5 Landscaping

The new access drive and parking/turning areas would be surfaced in a dark material so as to not appear stark in the landscape and blend in better with the grass field surface. A scheme of

supplementary landscape planting is submitted with this application to thicken existing boundary hedgerows and plant additional native trees. This will have the double benefit of helping to assimilate the new development into the landscape, as well as providing a biodiversity enhancement through habitat creation.

4. Relevant Planning Policy

The recently adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local plan (September 2020) is the statutory development plan for the local area, the most relevant policies are as follows:

Policy SS 5 – Leek Area Strategy

Policy SS 9 – Supporting Smaller Villages Strategy

Policy SS 10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy

Policy E 1 – New Employment Development

Policy E 4 – Tourism and Cultural Development

Policy SS 5

Policy SS 5

Leek Area Strategy

The Council and its partners will seek to consolidate the role of Leek as the principal service centre and a market town and support its regeneration. This will be achieved through the following actions:

4. Promote Leek's special character and heritage and strengthen its role as a visitor destination by:
 - Increasing tourist opportunities for visitors through additional high quality accommodation, promoting links with the Peak District and the development of new tourist attractions linked to the Churnet Valley (see policy SS 11);

The proposed development meets this policy because it is promoting Leek as a tourist destination as a link into the Churnet Valley. Tourists will be able to stay in local accommodation and visit Longshaw Farm as part of a diverse experience in and around the Peak District and Churnet Valley.

Policy SS 9

Policy SS 9

Smaller Villages Area Strategy

The following are identified as smaller villages:

- Bradnop

These settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

2. Meet community, social or economic need by:

- Enabling small-scale new employment development including 'live-work' developments which are for a rural enterprise or an existing authorised business use;
- Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises

This policy is too met by the proposed development. The farm shop and ice-cream drive through creates small scale new employment with the potential for further expansion; it also creates the opportunity for diversification of an existing farm enterprise.

Policy SS 10

Policy SS 10

Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

2. Sustain the rural economy by:

- Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified
- Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises

5. Enhance tourist opportunities by:

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;
- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E 4);
- Establishing strong linkages between recreational and tourist resources;
- Recognising and developing the close linkages to the Peak District National Park.

Policy SS 10 (5) notably encourages tourism development and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11, which is too met through this development. The farm shop and ice-cream drive through creates an opportunity for an employment use as encouraged in SS 10 (2) and will clearly become an example of further farm diversification alongside the already present anaerobic digester. The farm is already committed to the tourism sector with the holiday accommodation that it provides at Holly House Farm, this proposed development would foster strong links between the tourism and farming sectors by providing a facility for visitors to the area, and would be an added benefit to other holiday accommodation in Bradnop and the surrounding areas as well.

Policy E 1

Policy E 1

New Employment Development

New employment development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports and improves the local economy in terms of providing for the needs and skills of the existing and future local resident workforce and meeting identified business needs, having regard to the Spatial Strategy Policies in SS 2, SS 3, area strategy policies, and

general employment land requirements set out in Policy SS 4. In general the Council will endeavour to support the expansion of existing businesses and new businesses in the District, subject to the provisions below.

In addition:

- All proposals should help maintain or enhance an appropriate range of employment premises and sites across the District in terms of their scale, location and type.

New-build developments not on existing or proposed employment sites and outside of the settlement boundary may be supported where a rural location can be justified.

- The sustainable redevelopment, intensification or improvement of existing employment sites for new business and industrial developments will be supported provided it would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities, character or appearance of the area.
- Schemes involving the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, will be considered favourably where the proposed use does not harm the building's character and/or the character of its surroundings.

The proposed development at Longshaw Farm meets the requirements of this policy. Policy E1 emphasises the importance of new employment opportunities to support the local economy. Particularly, this development creates a new layer to the farm business as a small scale, farm shop in a rural area. It certainly represents an improvement to an existing business at the farm which will add to the character of the area. The rural location can simply be justified in that it is a farm shop, which are almost always located on the farm itself.

Policy E 4

Policy E 4

Tourism and Cultural Development

New tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS 5 to SS 10 and and Churnet Valley Strategy Policy SS 11.

In addition:

2. Developments in other locations may be supported where a rural location can be justified.

New accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

A) support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities; and

B) all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance.

The application at Longshaw Farm represents an opportunity for tourism and cultural development in SS 5, 9 and 11 area strategies, as policy E4 sets out. This is a development which can be justified despite its rural location, as the benefits the facilities will provide will certainly expand the tourist, visitor and cultural facility of the rural area with an appropriate quality, and scale which is suitable to the development's location. Furthermore, the proposed additional planting (see E 4. 2 (b)) will improve upon the landscape and biodiversity of the area without harm of acknowledged importance.

3.1 Other Policy relevant to this application

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework has national policies also relevant to this development:

Part 6 – Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy

Part 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Part 6

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

The proposed development is supported by this part of the framework. The context of the development rests on tourism and diversification of farming is highlighted though paragraph 84 (b).

Part 8

8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

92. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
 - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
 - c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
93. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
- a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

Similarly, Part 8 of the NPPF also supports the relevance of this application; it is highlighted through Paragraph 92 (c) and 93 (a). This development not only is promoting the healthy lifestyles community through the creation of a local shop but is providing a new community facility in Bradnop.

Staffordshire's Rural Economy

Around 80% of Staffordshire's total land area is classified as rural and 25% of its population lives in a rural area. Whilst many people living in rural areas travel to towns for employment and key services, it is vital that rural communities remain vibrant and prosperous - offering a choice of local jobs and services. Transport can make a big difference to the quality of life for rural residents, especially those living in the 12% of rural households that do not own a car. Many rural residents say that they are reliant on a car for most of their journeys and the West Midlands region is the worst region in England in terms of car dependency⁵.

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It can also be considered that this development represents a creative farm diversification opportunity for Staffordshire. It must be taken to account that 80% of Staffordshire's total land area is classed as rural with 25% of its population living in a rural area. It is emphasised that *'rural communities are to remain vibrant and prosperous – offering a choice of local jobs and services.*

5. Pre-Application Consultation

5.1 A pre-application enquiry was submitted to both the LPA and the County Highways Department at the inception of the project. The Permitted Development Fall-back position was set out clearly and the reason for proposing a new access and a building on this side of the farm instead were explained. The responses received have informed the design and layout of the proposed development at this site.

Some key outcomes of this are listed below.

- **Access points:** The existing access to Longshaw Farm does have restricted visibility towards Ashbourne however there is no scope to improve this as the owners of the farm do not own the field on this side of the access. Visibility towards Leek is good and the A523 at this point is subject to speed limit of 50mph. For comparison, visibility required for a new access onto a 50mph road would be 2.4m x 160m. The proposed new access to the farm shop does provide better visibility towards Ashbourne and the proposed visibility towards Leek is good. Visibility splays would need to be provided and the verges maintained. Some lower branches of roadside trees would also likely need to be cut back. The proposed access slopes gently away from the highway so would not be visually prominent.
- **Safety:** Any gates/barriers would be set back 5m from the carriageway edge. Parking will be in line with the Local Plan standards. There are no recorded personal injury collisions (PICs) on A523 within 160m of the existing or proposed accesses within the last five years.
- **The Proposed Development:** The development proposed is the construction of a farm shop with drive-through ice cream sales, including the creation of a new highway access, drive & parking areas.
- **Farm Diversification:** The farm business needs to diversify in the face of a changing legislative environment in the aftermath of Brexit, changes to UK Farm subsidies, and with the next generation of the family keen to work in and grow the business. One way that farms can diversify is to open a farm shop, selling their own produce direct to the consumer at retail prices. This results in a larger part of the cost of food products being paid to the actual producer of the food.
- **Permitted Development Rights:** The existing farm has traditional buildings in the centre, under 150 square metres in area, that could change use to a farm shop under this class of permitted development, in which case there is no requirement to apply for prior approval.

- **Policy:** Inter alia Policy SS10 (2) sets out to Sustain the rural economy by: Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises and SS10(5) sets out to enhance tourist opportunities by ref to SS11 and E4.

The advice from the pre-application enquiry was given in good faith on the basis of the information available at the present time. The advice may be subject to revision following further examination or consultation, or where additional information comes to light, and is therefore not binding on any future recommendation that may be made by the Council, or any formal decision by the Council.

5.2 An informed development proposal

The pre-application advice has been carefully to considered to inform the following:

- **Access:** For a new development, it is understood the visibility required for a new access onto a 50mph road would be 2.4m x 160m and so this will be managed as a requirement for this development. Because the proposed new access point slopes away from the highway, its gradient will not exceed 1 in 20 for the first 5m then 1 in 15 thereafter.
- **Safety:** It is considered a new access point will be safer for visitors to the proposed attraction.
- **Farm Diversification:** The development is a logical step for the next diversification of this dairy farm. Farm shops are typical in rural areas and especially the Peak District National Park, they are always located on the farm itself so that the food producer can sell directly to the public.
- **Permitted development fallback position:** Existing agricultural buildings benefit from a permitted development change of use under Class R to Class A1 (now Class E). The use of this right would intensify the existing access at Longshaw farm, which in terms of safety is not desirable, however this is an important consideration for this development - should planning permission not be granted, the applicant will have no choice but to pursue this route towards farm diversification.
- **Policy:** This development also complies with the relevant polices in the Local Plan.

5.3 Permitted Development – Fallback Position

Class R of permitted development allows for the change of use of an agricultural building to a flexible commercial use, including A1 (shops):

Class R – *agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial use*

Permitted development

R. Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a flexible use falling within Class A1 (shops), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (restaurants and cafes), Class B1 (business), Class B8 (storage or distribution), Class C1 (hotels) or Class D2 (assembly and leisure) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order.

R.3— (1) Before changing the use of the site under Class R, and before any subsequent change of use to another use falling within one of the use classes comprising the flexible use, the developer must—

(a) where the cumulative floor space of the building or buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit does not exceed 150 square metres, provide the following information to the local planning authority—

- (i) the date the site will begin to be used for any of the flexible uses;
- (ii) the nature of the use or uses; and
- (iii) a plan indicating the site and which buildings have changed use;

The existing farm has traditional buildings in the centre, under 150 square metres in area, that could change use to a farm shop under this class of permitted development, in which case there is no requirement to apply for prior approval.



The existing buildings in the centre of the farmyard (under 150sqm) that could change use under Permitted Development, however there is conflict with farm vehicles and the access from the highway is substandard.

5. Conclusion

It is our opinion that identified problems and challenges at the site have been addressed by engaging with the pre-application advice service from both Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, and the Staffordshire County Council Highways. The proposed development at Longshaw Farm, Bradnop should therefore be supported.

- This proposal seeks full planning permission for a farm shop, with drive-through ice-cream sales, new access, and parking facilities at Longshaw Farm, Bradnop.
- The proposal will have minimal impact on the landscape character of the area, set against the backdrop of the existing farm complex.
- The development proposes additional planting to contribute towards net biodiversity gain, with the creation of new habitats.
- As a result of allowing this development, the new access proposal is providing safer access for visitors. This is as opposed to the viable option of change in use class from Class R to Class A1. The LPA cannot consider highways or anything else under these circumstances.
- This is a strong “fall-back position” that it is hoped the Council will acknowledge and therefore work with the applicants to develop a scheme that results in a much safer access from the highway, but that also includes a new modestly sized building intended for the same purpose on the edge of the existing farm complex to avoid conflict between visitors and farm traffic.
- This development adheres to planning policy requirements, and is in compliance with policies SS9, SS11 and E4 as set out in this Planning, Design and Access Statement. It is hoped the Council will acknowledge the compliance of the proposed scheme with the relevant policies within the Local Plan.

It is respectfully requested that this application is supported by the Local Planning Authority and approved without delay