Rob Duncan
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Mr. B. Haywood
Development Services
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

6th June 2023

Dear Ben

ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BEEF REARING BUILDING – LAND AT WESTWOOD HALL FARM, LEEK

On behalf of my client Mr. M. Shuker I would be grateful if you would find enclosed a planning application for the erection of 1no. portal framed agricultural buildings at the above site which is to be used for the keeping of livestock.

The application site lies within the rural area and is also designated as Green Belt. Policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) supports development in the rural areas which supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas. Policy SS10 goes on to state the strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by government policy.

The applicant is an established farmer, with a land holding that extends to some 141 acres, with an additional 41 acres near Mollatts Wood on the edge of Leek. The principal agricultural activity on the farm will be beef rearing, with the applicant currently having a head of 380 cows, with intentions to increase this up to 600 – 800 in the coming couple of years.

The proposed building is to be utilised as a beef rearing building and has been designed specifically for its intended agricultural purpose. It is of a size and type that is appropriate in the rural area and will comprise of a simple portal framed construction, with Yorkshire boarding to its gable ends, and a profiled metal roof, finished in juniper green. The building is to be located to the west of the existing equestrian building nearby, and north of the recently approved agricultural storage buildings on the site (DET/2022/0029 refers). The proposal therefore represents a form of development that supports the sustainability of the rural areas (agriculture), in accordance with the requirements of policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

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The application site is also located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt wherein there is a presumption against the erection of new buildings, as confirmed by paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework nevertheless also identifies a list of exceptions, which includes the erection of buildings for agriculture.

The proposed building is to be used solely for agricultural purposes (beef rearing) and therefore constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The submitted proposal consequently derives no conflict with the provisions of policy SS10 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan in this regard.

In terms of landscape impact considerations, the building is of a scale, massing and design which is in keeping with the character and appearance of the rural area and which will be sited on an existing area of hardstanding to the immediate west of the portal framed equestrian building nearby, and north of the buildings recently approved under application DET/2022/0029. The building will therefore have a close physical association with the cluster of other buildings associated with Westwood Hall Farm.

Owing to the site's location in a position rear of the properties in Westwood Park Drive, the proposed building will not appear strident or incongruous within its surroundings and consequently will not derive any material harm to the character and appearance of the area. The submitted proposal is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan in this regard.

In terms of residential amenity considerations, the proposed building will be located some 135 metres distant of the nearest neighbouring properties to the south / southeast, such that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of those dwellings, through either loss of light or by way of impacts from noise and other disturbance.

In support of this conclusion I draw attention to the Local Authority's grant of consent for a livestock building at Ball Green Farm, Norton-in-the-Moors (SMD/2021/0179) which was located much closer to its neighbouring residential occupiers (65m) than that which is proposed in this application. The proposed development will therefore not materially detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers, and meets the relevant requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

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I trust this proposal will be of interest, but should you have any queries or concerns then I would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you prior to the determination of the application.

Yours sincerely

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