

PLANNING STATEMENT

**STABLE BUILDING AT GREATGATE ROAD
WINNOTHDALE**

DECEMBER 2025

Site Address:

Stable Building at Greatgate Road, Winnothdale, Nr. Cheadle, ST10 4HB

Applicant:

Mr. A. Whiston

Proposal:

Conversion of former stable building to form 1no. dwellinghouse

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 9th December 2025

Job Reference: RDP/2025/100

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. A. Whiston to seek planning permission for the conversion and alteration of a former stable block at Greatgate Road, Winnothdale, to form a single dwellinghouse.

1.2 Planning permission has previously been sought for the conversion of this building to residential use under application SMD/2018/0733 which was refused for the following three reasons:

1. The application site lies outside a defined Settlement boundary and within the open countryside. Policy SS1 (amongst other things) expects new development to provide easy access to jobs, shops and transport services and to contribute towards a reduction in carbon emissions. Policy T1 similarly states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces the reliance on the private car for travel journeys and reduces the need to travel generally. The application site is remote from services and facilities. As a result the majority of trips from the development would be car borne. Notwithstanding the limited economic contribution that a single dwelling would make and the fact that it would deliver a dwelling in circumstances of a significant housing undersupply, the environmental harm and conflict with Policies SS1 and T1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF is considered to be outweighing in this case.

2. As an isolated dwelling the proposal does not meet the tests of NPPF paragraph 79 as either a rural worker dwelling or one that would make use of a redundant building and enhance its immediate setting but as a result of the urbanising influences of creating a dwelling would in fact

harm the rural character of the location contrary to policies SS6c, R1, DC1 and DC3 adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF.

3. The internal ground floor area of the proposed dwelling scales from drawing 00608 AL(0)02 revision C at 46.32 sq m and as such fails to meet the Government's Nationally Described Space Standard as referenced at NPPF 127(f) footnote 46 which would expect a minimum of 50sq m. Accordingly it would provide a poor standard of residential amenities for future occupiers contrary to Policies H1 and DC1 of the adopted Core Strategy and the provisions of the NPPF.

- 1.3 This revised proposal responds constructively to the concerns raised within that previous application such that a clear distinction can be drawn between the two.
- 1.4 The submitted proposal constitutes a one-bedroomed dwelling, compared to the previously proposed three-bedroomed dwelling. It will, in turn, generate fewer vehicle movements compared to the previously refused proposal for the site.
- 1.5 The proposal also incorporates the provision of renewable technologies, including the use of photovoltaics and an air source heat pump, in addition to providing an EV charging point and a cycle store.
- 1.6 The application also proposes extensive new landscaping and planting, including the provision of a new boundary hedgerow to the northern site boundary and the planting of new trees at the western end of the site so as to enhance the setting of the building, which along the sustainability credentials of the development negate the previous concerns about the environmental sustainability of the development.

- 1.7 The internal floor plan also incorporates the provision of a study at mezzanine level so as to facilitate home working. The gross internal floor area of the building has been designed to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards, thereby addressing the previously held concerns about standard of amenity that the dwelling would provide.
- 1.8 In addition, it is noted that there has also been a material change in circumstances since the previous application was determined in that the policies of the former Core Strategy has been replaced by the new policies of the Local Plan and the adoption of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan, and there have also been updates to the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.9 The building proposed for conversion is constructed from facing brickwork with a tiled roof, and was granted consent under application SMD/1998/0178. It occupies a footprint of 57.2 square metres, and stands to a ridge height of 4.7 metres.
- 1.10 It is proposed to convert the building to residential use, encompassing an open plan lounge / kitchen / dining area, double bedroom and bathroom at ground floor, with home office provided within a new internal mezzanine.
- 1.11 The site benefits from an established vehicular access off Greatgate Road, which currently serves the stable block. It is proposed that this access be retained to serve the proposed dwelling. Within the site there is ample space to accommodate two parking spaces and associated manouvering space so as enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear.
- 1.12 An EV charging point is to be provided, with a cycle store located to the rear of the building to help facilitate and encourage more sustainable modes of transportation.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site lies is located within the rural area, and comprises a brick and tile stable building located within a parcel of land that extends to approximately 0.14 hectares.
- 2.2 The site is enclosed by mature vegetation on its eastern, southern and western boundaries, with a more open aspect to the north where agricultural land rises up in a northerly direction.
- 2.3 Greatgate Road lies beyond the southern boundary, onto which there is an established vehicular access. A private vehicular access serving Dam Farm runs beyond the eastern boundary of the site, separated by the existing mature vegetation and a grassed verge.
- 2.4 The site is not within a Conservation Area, nor are there any statutorily listed buildings located in close proximity of the site. The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 (low-probability of flooding).

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, taking into account any relevant material considerations.

3.2 The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan. The following policies of those documents are of relevance to the determination of the application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

3.3 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;

- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;
- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon

3.4 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that 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 policy confirms that the Council will meet housing requirements by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1.

- 3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. It goes on to state that all new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. It also requires that new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.
- 3.6 Policy H1 also states that in the rural areas, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted:
- a) Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H3.
 - b) A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.
 - c) Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.

- d) The conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.
- e) Proposals to redevelop previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value.
- f) The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling provided it is not in an isolated location.

3.7 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

3.8 Policy SD3 of the Local Plan relates to 'Sustainability Measures in Development' and states that the Council will support further carbon-saving or water-saving measures in both new and existing developments, in the following ways:

1. Supporting developers who propose exceeding the thermal efficiency or water conservation standards required by law for new buildings or extensions, at the time of the application. In the case of larger developments such as housing estates the Council will support measures such as 'communal' renewables, or District Heating installations.
2. The Council will support measures by landowners/developers designed to contribute to existing or emerging District Heating networks (for example by connecting 'exporters', with receptors, of heat).
3. The Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).

3.9 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to "Biodiversity and Geological Resources" and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) here is no appropriate alternative site available; and
- b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
- c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
- d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.

- Expecting all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

3.10 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by (amongst other measures):

1. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.

Checkley Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.11 Policy HSG2 of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to 'Housing Mix' and states that residential developments should include a balanced mix of house types, based on the latest evidence of local need, including consideration of the need for smaller houses suitable for first-time buyers and those wishing to downsize.
- 3.12 Policy DES1 of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to 'Design and states that:
1. Development must be well designed and sustainable, comprising distinctive and site-specific design, and meeting the following requirements of this policy, proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme.
 2. Development must complement the surrounding townscape in terms of scale, height, massing, spacing, and degree of set-back from streets.
 3. Development must support active travel and create attractive, safe and convenient environments for pedestrians and cyclists, including:
 - a) Streets and spaces overlooked by active building frontages, to create natural surveillance:
 - b) Safe and accessible routes on foot, by wheelchair and bicycle to local services, facilities, green spaces and public transport.
 4. Parking should be well designed, as an integral part of development, including:
 - a) Providing for parking of vehicles as an integral part of the layout, so that it does not dominate the streets and spaces.
 - b) Ensuring parking provision within the curtilage of each dwelling should be proportionate to the size of the property.

5. Use of local or recycled materials, where available.
6. Innovative architectural and building design will be particularly welcomed, especially where it involves superior environmental performance.
7. Development proposals should identify views into and out of the site, and local landmarks, considered to be of merit, and demonstrate how the layout and design of the proposal responds to views and landmarks identified.
8. Development should have no adverse impact from drainage of surface water and should:
 - a) Provide permeable hard surfaces, to allow water to drain away;
 - b) Take opportunities to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage into landscape design of all major developments

3.13 Policy DES3 of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to 'Landscape and Rural Character' and states that:

1. Development should minimise impact on, and where possible enhance wildlife habitats, ecology, local landscape character, and landscape features (see Plans Checkley Parish Green Infrastructure, Distribution of Known Priority Habitats and Landscape Setting), including:
 - a) Trees, hedgerows, semi-natural broad woodland, ancient woodland and other woodland;
 - b) The river Tean corridor and other water features;

- c) Priority Habitats, and other Nature Conservation Sites including Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Biological Importance (Broadgatehall Drumble, Greatgate Wood)
 - d) Landscape with High Visual Sensitivity;
- 2. Development should take opportunities to create biodiversity net gain, including:
 - a) Tree planting using local native species and landscape design;
 - b) Enhancement of Biodiversity Alert Sites (The Wing Drumble, Ferneyhill, Broadmoor Wood and Quarry, Yardhouse Farm Meadow).
- 3. Boundary treatments in new-build development should reflect the predominant boundary treatment in its surroundings, including hedges and low stone or brick walls. Within Hollington Village, use of Hollington Stone for boundary treatments is strongly encouraged.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development, and sets out policies, *inter alia*, in respect of boosting the supply of housing, including the delivery of rural housing, making beneficial use of existing buildings, securing high quality design, ensuring highway safety and securing a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Housing Land Supply Interim Position Statement (April 2025)

- 4.2 The Housing Land Supply statement confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing equivalent to 2.95 years supply against a requirement of 5 years plus buffer, as dictated by the National Planning Policy Framework. The content of this document is referenced within the Planning Assessment below.

SMD/2018/0278 – Paradise Nurseries, Cheadle Road, Winnothdale

- 4.3 The above application proposed the erection of a detached dwelling on land previously used as a plant nursery. The site concerned lies approximately 150 metres from the current application site, and is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of this application. The content of the delegated report accompanying that approved application is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan make provision for the delivery of new housing within the rural areas in certain specific circumstances. One such circumstance is where new housing is proposed through the conversion of existing buildings that are worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion.
- 5.2 The existing building is constructed from red facing brickwork and has a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop. It has an aesthetically pleasing appearance, and is of a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with the rural vernacular of the Moorlands.
- 5.3 It is evidently of a sound structural condition with no signs of physical deterioration, and its appearance renders it worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion. The proposal is consequently firmly in accordance with the provisions of policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Sustainability

- 5.4 The previously refused application cited concerns that the site is remote from services and facilities and as a result the majority of new trips from the development would be car borne. This led the Local Authority to conclude overall that the environmental harm arising from the development would be unacceptable. This revised application has sought to constructively address those concerns, which will now be discussed.
- 5.5 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands, and seeks

to encourage a mix of types and tenures of quality affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspiration of the existing and future communities. Policy SS1 also seeks to ensure that development provides easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community.

5.6 These provisions are reflected within policy T1 of the Local Plan which states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys and reduces the need to travel generally. In addition, policy SD3 of the Local Plan states that the Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).

5.7 We draw a clear distinction between the previously refused application on the site and this current proposal in that this application proposes a number of environmental benefits that the previous application did not. The development will incorporate the following:

- Provision of high-performance insulation to walls, floors and roof to minimise heat loss.
- Provision of high-efficiency windows that maintain the rural character while improving thermal performance.
- Provision of low-energy lighting (LED) throughout.
- Provision of air source heat pump
- Provision of solar PV panels to generate renewable electricity
- Use of sustainably sourced materials and durable fixtures
- Provision of low-flow taps, showers and dual-flush toilets
- Provision of rainwater harvesting
- Provision of permeable hardstanding to facilitate sustainable drainage
- Provision of new indigenous hedgerow to northern site boundary

- Provision of new tree planting to western end of the site
- Provision of pollinator friendly planting within the site
- Retention of existing boundary hedgerows
- Provision of cycle store
- Provision of EV Charging Point
- Installation of Bat and Bird Boxes
- Provision of study to facilitate home working

5.8 All of the above benefits contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental objectives of sustainable development, and draw a very clear distinction between this current proposal and the previous application on the site.

5.9 The proposal also encompasses a one-bedroomed dwelling, whereas the previously refused application had proposed a three bedroomed property. As a consequence, this revised proposal can be reasonably expected to generate fewer vehicle movements in comparison.

5.10 One also needs to consider the wider sustainability benefits of making beneficial reuse of buildings. It is inherently unsustainable to allow an existing building to remain vacant and unused, which in turn will eventually lead to its physical deterioration to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.

5.11 By comparison, making beneficial reuse of the building to provide a new dwelling is the much more sustainable option. Paragraph 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework reflects this conclusion, confirming that planning decisions should:

“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained”

(our emphasis)

- 5.12 Paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Authorities to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing at all times. The Local Authority’s Housing Land Supply Interim Position Paper (2025) confirms that there is a significant shortfall against that requirement, with the deliverable housing land supply standing at 2.95 years.
- 5.13 There is consequently a clear and unquestionable demand for new housing within the District. This proposal will help to meet identified needs for housing by delivering a new dwelling via the conversion of an under-utilised building. The provisions of paragraph 125 of the NPPF therefore lend significant weight in favour of planning permission being granted.
- 5.14 The application also proposes the delivery of a one-bedroomed dwellinghouse, which reflects the aspirations and objectives of policy HSG2 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan which specifically seeks to secure the delivery of smaller homes for first-time buyers and those wishing to downsize. Policy SS1 of the Local Plan seeks to achieve likewise. Such benefits lend further weight in favour of planning permission being granted.
- 5.15 The proposal is also consistent with paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework which confirms that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one a limited number of circumstances apply, including:

“the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting”

- 5.16 The site is already occupied by built development that is commuted to and from on a regular basis and which is occupied by hardstanding to the front of the building. It may not be domestic in character, but it is already 'developed'. The close proximity of the building to Dam Farm to the north, and the buildings associated with Carncroft to the east, and further residential properties to the west where Great Gate Road meets Dale Bank Road, means the proposal will not result in the creation of an isolated home in the countryside.
- 5.17 If the Local Authority were to disagree with that conclusion, the proposal would still be consistent with the provisions of paragraph 84 of the NPPF in that the development would reuse an otherwise under-utilised / disused building to provide new housing, and the provision of new landscaping and planting within the site, including the provision of a new hedgerow along the northern site boundary and new tree planting at the western end of the site, will serve to enhance its immediate setting.
- 5.18 In support of the application we also draw attention to the Local Authority's approval of consent for the erection of a new dwelling at Paradise Nursery, approximately 150 metres from the application site. In recommending approval of the application, the Planning Officer commented that:

"The NPPF also resists new houses in "isolated" locations in the countryside although it is debatable if the site could be classes as isolated as there are existing dwellings either side of the site, a number of dwellings a short distance away and the site is also just 2km from a large village, reached via main roads".

- 5.19 The delegated report went on to acknowledge the significant under-supply of housing in the District, and that the proposed dwelling would deliver some

limited benefits in terms of providing a dwelling to help meet the under-supply of housing, and would also have some economic benefits during construction.

5.20 The delegated report thereafter went on to acknowledge the provisions of section 11 of the NPPF, which relates to the efficient use of land and which also promotes and supports the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be more effectively.

5.21 The delegated report accompanying application SMD/2018/0278 concluded that:

“Although the site is in the open countryside in an unsustainable location, there is significant weight to allowing new dwellings in areas of under supply such as in Staffs Moorlands. The Core Strategy policies would resist new market-value dwellings in the countryside but these policies are considered to be out-of-date. The proposal would not lead to a significant increase in vehicle movements, would not lead to the significant loss of employment and has the opportunity to improve the appearance of the site. It is considered there are no adverse impacts with the proposal and that the social, economic and environmental benefits of redeveloping the site to provide a dwelling, albeit limited, would still outweigh any harm, of which none have been identified which are significant. The proposal therefore complies with para.11 of the recently revised NPPF and does not conflict with any other part of the NPPF. It amounts to sustainable development and is in line with the overarching social, economic

and environmental aims of the NPPF. On balance, the redevelopment of the site to provide a dwelling is acceptable.

- 5.22 We draw favourable comparisons between the approved application at Paradise Nurseries and the current application, in that the development will provide a new dwelling by making beneficial reuse of an otherwise disused building, in circumstances where there is a considerable shortfall in housing.
- 5.23 The proposal will furthermore not give rise to a significant increase in vehicle movements, as the site is already 'developed' and generates vehicle movements in its own right with people commuting to and from the site on a regular basis.
- 5.24 It is submitted that the reuse of the building as a one bedroomed dwelling will not give rise to any material intensification in vehicle movements compared to the existing use. Any journeys that are undertaken by car will furthermore be short in nature given the relatively short distance of the site to day-to-day facilities on offer in Upper Tean and Cheadle.
- 5.25 Overall, we submit that a very clear distinction can be drawn between the previously refused application on the site and this current proposal when it comes to the matter of sustainability. Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that:

*"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, **which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways**" (our emphasis)*

- 5.26 Whilst the location of this site has not changed, and the Local Authority may consequently consider this to weigh against the proposal, the development incorporates a number of material changes compared to that previous application which tip the planning balance firmly in favour of approval and render the proposal as a sustainable form of development.
- 5.27 Firstly, the previous application proposed the creation of a three bedroomed dwelling. This revised proposal by contrast encompasses the provision of a one-bedroomed property and thus it can be expected to generate fewer vehicle movements in comparison to that which would otherwise be expected from the previously refused application.
- 5.28 The provision of a dedicated study / home office area will help to facilitate home working, in line with the objective of paragraph 86 of the National Planning Policy Framework in supporting flexible working practices, and this in turn will also lessen the number of vehicle movements that the site will generate. The previously refused application by comparison did not include any such home office / study space.
- 5.29 The proposal will also be far more energy efficient and benefit from renewable heating and electricity. It will utilise sustainably sourced materials and make efficient use of water resources. It will also help to facilitate the use of electric vehicles through the provision of its EV charging point, and will also encourage the use of bicycles to access day-to-day services. Biodiversity benefits will also ensue. Most pertinently the proposal will also make beneficial reuse of an existing building to deliver a new dwelling, as explicitly supported by paragraph 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.30 We consequently submit that the proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development that accords with the provisions of policies
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SS10, H1, SD3 and T1 of the Local Plan, Policy HSG2 of the Neighbourhood Plan and guidance set out within paragraphs 8, 78 and 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Layout

- 5.31 The submitted proposal adopts a sympathetic design approach which makes beneficial reuse of existing openings within the building, with the only new openings proposed being the insertion of four rooflights in the western roofslope of the building. These are to be flush fitting, conservation style rooflights, and by resultant effect the works to convert the building will not materially harm the character and appearance of the existing building.
- 5.32 The building sits within a well-enclosed parcel of land that benefits from good screening to its western, southern and eastern boundaries. Such screening will ensure that the use of the land as domestic curtilage will not give to any material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.33 The applicant is furthermore agreeable to undertaking additional planning within the site to improve the natural screening along the northern boundary of the site, and has proposed to plant a new hedgerow along the northern site boundary, along with new tree planting at the westernmost end of the site. In doing so the development will enhance the setting of the existing building.
- 5.34 Having regard to the above considerations it is submitted that the proposed development will not give rise to any adverse harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and thus accords with the provisions of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan and policy DES1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 5.35 The previous application on the site was refused, in part, because it failed to provide adequate internal floor areas to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard. These standards have subsequently been adopted within policy H1 of the Local Plan.
- 5.36 The Nationally Described Space Standards dictate that for a one bedroomed / two person dwelling, a minimum floor area of 50 square metres should be provided. They also prescribe minimum standards for bedroom sizes (11.5 square metres for a double bedroom), and minimum ceiling heights (2.3 metres for at least 75% of the gross internal area) with an area with a headroom between 900mm – 1500mm counted at 50% of its floor area).
- 5.37 Based on the aforementioned requirements, the proposed development will provide a gross internal floor area of 50.25 square metres, and have a bedroom with a minimum floor area of 11.5 square metres. The ceiling height of the accommodation will furthermore exceed 2.3 metres for 78% of the gross floor area. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 5.38 Externally an area of amenity space will be created to the front of the building which will exceed the minimum required standard of 65 square metres. There are no immediate neighbouring occupiers such that a breach of the minimum space about dwellings standards would occur.
- 5.39 Having regard to the above consideration it is concluded that the proposed development will provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling, and as such the proposal meets the requirements of policy DC1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.40 The application site benefits from an existing means of access off Great Gate Road which serves the existing stable block. The access is located towards the westernmost end of the site. The access affords reasonably good visibility in both directions on egress from the site, and there is ample room within the site for vehicles to turn around. There is also ample space to provide at least two parking spaces, in accordance with the Local Authority's adopted car parking standards.
- 5.41 It is noted that in determining the previous application on the site (SMD/2018/0733) no objections were raised by the Local Highway Authority on highway safety grounds, nor did highway safety concerns manifest themselves as a reason for refusal. Given that there has been no material change in circumstances in the intervening period, those conclusions remain pertinent to this present day. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Ecology

- 5.42 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Survey prepared by Fauna Forest Ecology. The report confirms that habitats beyond the site boundaries will not be affected by the proposals on the condition that nocturnal lighting is controlled to prevent unnecessary spill over semi-natural habitats surrounding the site. Overall it concludes that the proposals will have a negligible effect on biodiversity.
- 5.43 The building was also assessed for evidence of bats, with some evidence of bat droppings identified. Subsequent nocturnal bat surveys confirmed that no bats were seen entering or emerging from the building. The building is therefore concluded to constitute an infrequently used day roost.

- 5.44 A bat licence will therefore be required from Natural England in order for the works to progress. The report identifies a number of other recommendations and these can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition. In doing so the proposed development will meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and policy DES3 of the Neighbourhood Plan in this regard.
- 5.45 A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report has also been prepared by Fauna Forest Ecology. It has considered the baseline habitats on the site and assessed the impact of the proposed development thereon. The BNG Report confirms that the proposal will result in a 51.75% net loss in habitats, an 18.72% net gain in hedgerows, and a 16.09% net gain in watercourse units.
- 5.46 A deficit of 0.15 habitat units will consequently need to be compensated for off-site and the applicant intends to do this by purchase of biodiversity credits in an off-site location. The applicant is agreeable to entering into a S106 Obligation to secure the delivery of these off-site enhancements. In doing so a 10% net gain to biodiversity will be achieved.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The principle of development is acceptable as the proposal entails the conversion of a rural building that is worthy in structural, character and architectural terms for conversion.
- The proposal is consistent with the objectives of the NPPF in delivering sustainable development.
- The proposal is consistent with the objective of the NPPF in delivering new housing through the reuse of disused buildings in circumstances where there is a shortfall in housing.
- The design and layout of the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
- The proposal will provide a good standard of amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling.
- The proposal will not give rise to any adverse impacts to highway safety within the locality.
- The proposal will safeguard protected species, and will deliver a 10% net gain to biodiversity by way of off-site provision.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1, SD3, DC1, T1 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, policies HSG2, DES1 and DES3 of the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan, and policies set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.