

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT – PART 6 SECOND STAGE

DET/2026/0016
Valid 09/06/2026

LANE ENDS FARM
ASHBOURNE ROAD
BRADNOP

**APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED
NEW AGRICULTURAL
ACCESS TRACK**

**(AGRICULTURAL/FORESTRY
DETERMINATION)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Compliance with GPDO(2015) Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A
- siting and
- means of construction of the private way

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Prominent rising ground commonly known as the slopes of Morridge which climb in a north easterly direction from the Ashbourne Road towards Morridge Top. The farmstead known as Lane End Farm stands slightly set back alongside the Ashbourne Road.

The farmstead is on about the 250m contour. The north easterly limit of the track would be at about the 290m contour. The location is, in general, prominently visible from the Ashbourne Road and from the wider surroundings. A network of public footpaths also criss-crosses the nearby land and the track would overlap with a short (c.60m) stretch of one of these paths.

Sheep and a specialist herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle are kept and bred at the c.38 hectare farm holding.

PROPOSAL

The proposed track would begin from the rear of the farmstead at a point some 40m away from the road.

As a prior notification (as opposed to a Planning Application) there are no statutory requirements with regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

According to the applicant's submitted statement the track would run to c.500m *"to link existing farm tracks and established agricultural access routes within the holding"*.

The track would be constructed as *"a compacted stone agricultural track suitable for agricultural vehicles, livestock management and forage handling operations"*. Details of the type of stone, the width of the track or any excavation or levelling that might be required were not initially submitted.

Further details have since been received and the LPA visited and walked the length of the proposal route on 7th August 2026. Photo evidence of the public site notice required for a Part 6 stage II decision was provided showing the notice in place from 22nd July and it was seen present at the LPA site visit.

From the additional information it is stated:

- The track will have a finished width of 3.0m
- Excavation will be kept to the minimum necessary to achieve a stable formation and will generally follow the existing ground profile and natural contours to minimise earthworks and visual impact.
- The track will be constructed with a base of suitable coarse crushed aggregate, laid and compacted to provide a stable formation. This will be blinded where necessary with smaller aggregate and finished with a compacted limestone running surface. The precise aggregate grading will depend on material availability and local ground conditions.
- The overall construction depth will typically be between 150mm and 300mm, increasing where necessary to suit local ground conditions and achieve a stable formation.

Drainage

- See section 3 of the additional information
- The track will be constructed with a slight crossfall to prevent surface water from running along its length. Cross drains will be installed on steeper sections where required to intercept accumulated surface water and minimise erosion of the running surface.

Watercourses

- See section 4 of the additional information
- There are two crossing points for minor watercourses taken into account in the additional details proposed

Intended finished appearance

- See section 5 of the additional information
- The track edges will feather naturally into the surrounding ground without kerbs or formal edging.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024)

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities; 9 – Promoting sustainable transport; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None on record of specific relevance to this scheme but to note:

12/00552/PNOT_2 [SMD/2012/0465] – Extension of existing hard surface road
[also submitted and accepted under Part 6] – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

In accordance the stage II determination under GPDO(2015) Part 6 a site notice is shown to have been displayed since 22nd July – expiry 12th August 2026.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The formation of the proposed track or 'private way' must comply with the definitions and limitations set out under GPDO(2015) Schedule 2 Part 6. Fundamentally, in order to be eligible under Part 6 the development must be '*reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture*' within the unit. To qualify as Permitted Development under Part 6 Class A the unit must amount to 5 hectares or more. In this case the

holding is a single block said to extend to c.38ha. The overall area is shown by blue edge on a submitted 1:5000 scale plan.

'Agricultural unit' is defined at Part 6 D.1 and "means 'agricultural land' which is occupied as a unit for the purposes of agriculture, including—

- (a) any dwelling or other building on that land occupied for the purpose of farming the land by the person who occupies the unit, or
- (b) any dwelling on that land occupied by a farmworker."

'Agricultural land' is defined and "means land which, before development permitted by this Part is carried out, is land in use for agriculture and which is so used for the purposes of a trade or business, and excludes any dwellinghouse or garden."

Farm business test

In the supporting statement it is stated that, *"the holding supports a flock of 104 breeding ewes plus followers together with a herd of pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle"*.

The holding has been familiar to the LPA through a series of planning applications over a number of years. It can readily be understood to be operating as a farm business and therefore the Part 6 procedure can be accepted in terms of the 'agricultural land' and farm business definition.

Reasonably necessary test

This is discussed by the applicant at section 4 of their statement:

The track will provide reliable internal access between agricultural fields and areas of the holding that are currently difficult to reach during periods of wet weather. It will enable year-round access for machinery, forage handling and livestock operations. The improved internal access will also reduce the need for movements between separate parts of the holding via the public highway. The adjoining road is subject to relatively fast-moving traffic and visibility can be limited in places, particularly for slow-moving agricultural vehicles entering and leaving the carriageway. By allowing movements to take place within the holding, the proposed track will improve the efficiency and safety of agricultural operations.

Sheep are routinely outwintered on the holding, and access is required for tractors and trailers transporting round bales and other feedstuffs. The proposed track will support winter feeding operations while reducing damage to agricultural land and improving access during adverse ground conditions.

The proposal will reduce repeated vehicle movements across unsuitable ground and support more sustainable land management by reducing localised soil damage, compaction and erosion.

The development is designed solely for the purposes of agriculture and will support the efficient management of the holding through improved access for livestock husbandry, forage production and general farm operations.

The reasons given are understandable. It can also be noted from air photos that much of the track shows clear indications of current vehicle use along the route with vehicle tracks making impressions on the ground. Whilst on the one hand it could be said that the farm can evidently operate without the more substantial track as now proposed, the assessment under Part 6 is not that the track must be 'essential', only that it must be 'reasonably necessary'. Historically there would not have been the reliance on vehicles to the extent commonly adopted today. It must be recognised also that this is moderately steeply sloping land, at least in places. It can be concluded that the case in support of the proposal is not unreasonable in the terms set out in the application.

Design

In terms of the positioning of the track the application says in the statement:

The route has been selected to follow existing field boundaries and established agricultural access alignments wherever possible. This approach minimises disturbance to agricultural land and follows existing patterns of agricultural use within the holding.

The majority of the route lies adjacent to existing drystone walls and within the valley bottom, limiting its visibility within the wider landscape.

Construction will comprise a compacted stone agricultural track. The track will retain a simple agricultural appearance and is expected to naturally grass through along the centre and margins over time, helping to soften its appearance and integrate into the surrounding agricultural landscape.

The Stage 1 report noted: *The type of the stone surfacing is not stated. It could be either gritstone or – more typically – limestone. As this is a gritstone location a gritstone surface finish would be more appropriate. No specific details of the track width are given or the depth of construction; arrangements for dealing with water run-off or any edging or levelling that may be involved.*

The construction details submitted for Stage II – as summarised under the Proposal section (above) have addressed all the points raised. It is not in this case judged necessary to have further more detailed plans. It is clear to the LPA that the intention is for the finished appearance to blend 'naturally' into the existing lie of the land. Any more technically detailed drawings would not be proportionate or especially helpful for this scheme. The width is stated and the edges are to be 'feathered' into the adjacent ground. No formal or kerb edging is proposed.

Whilst there has been some discussion about the finished surface appearance it can be recognised that over time limestone will weather and blend in, especially once grass grows back from the edges and along the centre line, as has occurred with previously constructed track sections. Limestone can therefore be accepted.

Amenity

No adverse implications for neighbour amenity are likely.

Highway Safety

No issues are likely as the proposal does not connect with the public highway. The applicant includes in the reasons for the scheme that it would help them avoid using the main road to reach the 2012-approved track on the south east edge of the land. This can be seen as a significant benefit to Highway safety.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It was previously noted (Stage I) that whilst a good understanding of the scheme could be derived from the submitted details, specific information was needed about the width and type of stone. Clarity should also be obtained about the nature of any sub-base material involved (if any).

The determining points in the assessment are: "the siting and means of construction". The plans show clearly the position or 'siting' but whilst the Stage I application gave an indication of the probable form of the track there was a lack of certainty about some aspects related to the means of construction, including the specific materials proposed. The LPA having now had opportunity to visit the site and view its full length and now also having the benefit of the additional information supplied there can be sufficient confidence that the scheme is acceptable.

It has previously been determined that prior approval is required. It can now be recommended that this prior should be granted based on the additional details as submitted and the evidence from the LPA visit.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Prior approval required and granted

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 13.08.2026

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council