

Agenda Item 97.

Application Number	Expiry Date	Parish	Ward
230020	15/03/2023	Arborfield Arborfield Newlands	Cross, and Arborfield;

Applicant	Mr. Graham Adams
Site Address	Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, RG2 9JH
Proposal	Full planning permission for the erection of 2 buildings for Class E use. (Retrospective)
Type	Full
Officer	Kieran Neumann
Reason for determination by committee	<p>Listed by Councillor Gary Cowan:</p> <p><i>"I support this planning application. Lockey Farm is an integral part of the village and community of Arborfield and has been for some years now. Lockey Farm also serves the needs of the residents of the wider Wokingham Borough and beyond.</i></p> <p><i>In the current very difficult environment following the impact of the pandemic on small businesses the pressures on survival are considerable and any action by Wokingham to help a local business to survive should not be missed.</i></p> <p><i>If the Officer recommendation is for refusal I would like to ask that this Planning Application is brought forward to the Planning Committee."</i></p>

FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Planning Committee on Wednesday, 8 March 2023
REPORT PREPARED BY	Assistant Director – Place and Growth
RECOMMENDATION	<p>Refuse for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposals are located outside of Development Limits and are an unacceptable and unsustainable form of development for which inadequate justification exists. The proposals would have a harmful, urbanising impact on the otherwise rural character and appearance of the countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy. 2. In the absence of adequate financial information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed buildings and associated uses are economically related to the primary agricultural holding of Lockey Farm and are essential to its continued financial viability. The proposals have an unacceptable urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and are

therefore contrary to the NPPF, Policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

3. The buildings, by reason of their design, immediate proximity to the road and cumulative increase in built form, would result in an excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original farm buildings. This would have a harmful urbanising and industrialising impact on the visual and spatial amenities of the open countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.
4. By reason of their excessive scale, massing and footprint, the buildings fail to protect and enhance the valued landscape and in particular the condition, character and features that contribute to the Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape. As such the proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document Policies TB21 and CC03 and the Borough Design Guide.

SUMMARY

A Committee site visit took place on 3rd March 2023.

Lockey Farm, formally known as 'Newlands Farm', is located immediately north of the Arborfield Cross settlement boundary and as a result is located within the designated Countryside. There has been a number of changes/expansions in recent decades and the site now hosts a number of different leisure, commercial, office and agricultural uses and buildings. A number of these uses are authorised and the remaining unauthorised development on site remain under investigation.

The proposals involve the erection of 2no. buildings with Class E Use (Commercial, Business and Service) adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site; a shipping container and a portacabin. The shipping container was previously in use as a florist but this use has now ceased and is being used temporarily for farm shop storage, whereas the portacabin remains in use as an architect's office. The application is retrospective.

There is no justification to demonstrate how the development directly contributes to the farm, or whether they relate to the farm at all. The development and diversification of a farm should involve uses that relate to the farm and supplement it financially. It does not seem realistic, especially in the absence of any financial information, that the excessive number of new businesses and uses on the farm are all necessary to keep the farm financially viable.

The cumulative impact of the additional built form on site has in turn eroded the rural nature of both the site and the surrounding Countryside. The retention of these two buildings and their uses would exacerbate this impact to an unacceptable extent.

PLANNING HISTORY		
Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
021518	Proposed erection of agricultural building for use of free range chickens.	Approved 03/10/2002
031196	Application for temporary permission to site a temporary dwelling.	Approved 11/07/2003
040679	Proposed erection of 1m high earth shelter (bund) for chickens. Retrospective.	Approved 05/04/2004
041389	Application for a prior agricultural determination for the erection of an agricultural polytunnel	Approved (permitted development) 29/11/2004
050783	Proposed demolition of existing farm shop building and proposed erection of a replacement farm shop (A1) and cafe (A3) with widened access and provision of car park for 16 cars.	Approved 11/01/2006
072398	Application for an Agricultural Determination for the erection of an agricultural barn.	No objections 23/08/2007
101637	Proposed erection of permanent agricultural dwelling. Demolition of existing temporary dwelling.	Approved 17/06/2010
111176	Proposed change of use of land for the erection of tea room building and childrens play area	Refused 28/04/2011
112094	Application for variation to conditions 2 and 7 of planning consent F/2005/5155 to remove cafe element, the whole building in use as farm shop. Retrospective.	Approved 29/12/2011
112302	Proposed change of use of land from agriculture to a mixed use for the stationing of a cafe building and children's play area	Approved 24/08/2011
221245	Full application for the erection of buildings and fenestration alterations to accommodate the single storey extension to farm shop/café. Single storey infill and extension to create a hair salon. Siting of a Portacabin for use as an Architect's office. Siting of a shipping container for use as a florist. Storage of caravans (RETROSPECTIVE).	Refused 13/07/2022
223670	Full planning permission for recreational vehicle storage and erection of an infill building for use as	Approved 28/02/2023

	a hairdresser plus associated works (retrospective).	
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DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION	
Proposed commercial units	2
Previous land use	Agricultural
Existing parking spaces	35
Proposed parking spaces	35
CONSTRAINTS	Countryside Arborfield Cross Conservation Area

CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
WBC Highways	No objection subject to condition(s)
WBC Drainage	No objections
WBC Built Heritage Officer	No objections

REPRESENTATIONS

Town/Parish Council:

Arborfield and Newland PC remains supportive of Lockey Farm as an important business in the local area and therefore we have no further comments on this application.

Local Members:

Councillor Gary Cowan:

"I support this planning application. Lockey Farm is an integral part of the village and community of Arborfield and has been for some years now. Lockey Farm also serves the needs of the residents of the wider Wokingham Borough and beyond.

In the current very difficult environment following the impact of the pandemic on small businesses the pressures on survival are considerable and any action by Wokingham to help a local business to survive should not be missed.

If the Officer recommendation is for refusal I would like to ask that this Planning Application is brought forward to the Planning Committee."

Neighbours:

Two objections received on the following grounds:

- Uses have no functional relationship with the farm
- Visual harm to Countryside setting – piecemeal development
- Unsustainable location
- Reasoning behind listing request is inadequate
- Current economic climate not a material planning consideration

- Children's play area broken and unsafe (**Officer comment: This is not relevant to the proposed development**)
- Other unauthorised uses prevalent on site not addressed (**Officer comment: This is not relevant to the proposed development and is the subject of investigation**)

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework
National Design Guide
National Planning Practice Guidance

Core Strategy (CS)

CP1 – Sustainable Development
 CP3 – General Principles for Development
 CP6 – Managing Travel Demand
 CP7 – Biodiversity
 CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals
 CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits (Inc Countryside)

MDD Local Plan (MDD)

CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 CC02 – Development Limits
 CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
 CC06 – Noise
 CC07 – Parking
 CC09 – Development and Flood Risk
 CC10 – Sustainable Drainage
 TB01 – Development within the Green Belt
 TB17 – Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops
 TB18 – Garden Centres and other small rural units outside Development Limits
 TB21 – Landscape Character
 TB23 – Biodiversity and Development
 TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets

Other

Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
 CIL Guidance + 123 List
 Arborfield and Newland Village Design Statement

PLANNING ISSUES

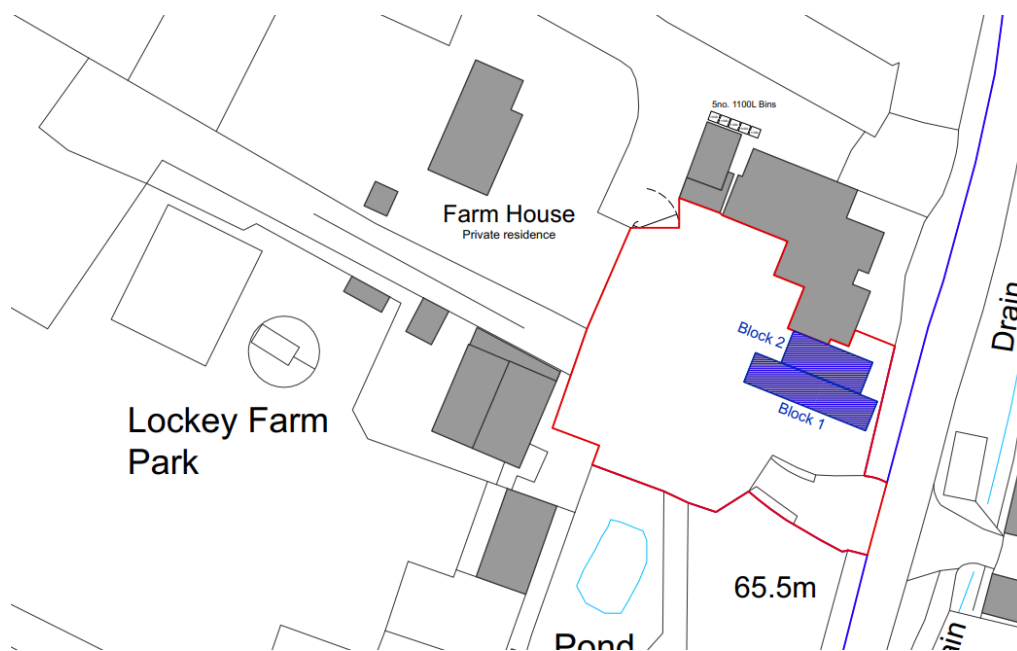
Site Description:

1. Lockey Farm, formally known as 'Newlands Farm' is located immediately north of the Arborfield Cross settlement boundary and as a result is located within the designated Countryside. There has been a number of changes/expansions in recent decades and now hosts a number of different leisure, commercial, office and agricultural uses and buildings, a number of which that remain unauthorised. In addition to unauthorised uses, there is unauthorised hardstanding and other operations.

2. The site is accessed from Sindlesham Road (B3030) and upon entering the farm there is a small, confined courtyard/parking area which is surfaced with a loose gravel. To the east of the site lies the majority of the commercial activity/buildings on the site, whereas further to the west and south-west lies the farm café and main residential dwelling. To the north-west lies the majority of the agricultural buildings still actively in use in relation to the farm. A large area of hardstanding adjacent has been laid on agricultural land and surfaced with recycled plastic grass turf for the purpose of storing of recreational vehicles and this area is enclosed by an approximately 2 metre high green metal fencing and connects to the vehicular access to the south-east where a large automatically opening gate has been installed. Further to the south/south-west lies an open playing field/park with associated paraphernalia.
3. The site is located in a rural area. To the immediate south lies the settlement of Arborfield Cross and to the west lies the settlement of Arborfield. To the north lies predominantly open fields lined with vegetation, with the exception of a small number of dispersed dwellings and agricultural buildings. To the east lies predominantly open fields with the exception of a handful of large, dispersed dwellings.
4. The settlement edge of Arborfield Cross terminates before the roundabout to the south-east and does not overlap the extent of the application site, providing a clear delineation of the settlement boundary. Due to its location near the settlement edge, it is important to carefully control new development and maintain the definition between the countryside and settlement.

Proposal Description:

5. This application seeks permission for the retrospective erection of 2no. buildings for Class E Use (Commercial, Business and Service).



Extract from submitted Block Plan (drawing reference: 2203 – P121 Rev. P2)

6. Shipping containers and portacabins are often a use of land rather than permanent building operations. The primary factors which have been identified as decisive of what is a 'building' are identified in case law such as *Cardiff Rating Authority and Cardiff Assessment Committee v Guest Keen and Baldwin's Iron and Steel Co.Ltd [1949] 1 KB 385*; its pertinence to planning cases confirmed in *Barvis Ltd v Secretary of State for the Environment [1971] 22 P&CR 710* and *Skerrits of Nottingham v SSETR and Harrow BC [2000] EWCA Civ 5569*. These are:
 - (a) that it is of a size to be constructed on site, as opposed to being brought on to the site,
 - (b) permanence, and;
 - (c) physical attachment.
7. No one factor for determining whether development is considered a building operation is decisive. With this in mind, both the shipping container and portacabin are generous in size and have existed on site, in the same positions, since 2020. Both structures also are physically attached to each other and are also attached to the farm shop building to the immediate north. Alterations have been made to both structures in the form of timber cladding, formal roofing and air conditioning units. Both structures, from visiting the site, also appear permanently fixed to the ground.
8. Based on the above assessment of the structures, the Council is of the view that the shipping container and portacabin both constitute 'building operations' and will be assessed as such.
9. The first of the two unauthorised buildings, labelled as Block 1 in the plan above, is a flat roofed portacabin with black stained timber cladding situated immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site that faces onto the adjacent Sindlesham Road (B3030) which also hosts the main access to the site. It is currently in use as an Architect's Office.
10. The second of the two unauthorised buildings, labelled as Block 2 in the plan above, is a shipping container that is sited immediately adjacent to the portacabin and subsequently also to the eastern boundary of the site that faces onto the adjacent Sindlesham Road (B3030). This container was previously in use as a florist but this use has since ceased and more recently it has been used in conjunction with the farm shop for the purposes of general storage.
11. These two buildings were originally proposed under application 221245 along with a number of other unauthorised structures/uses. The application was refused on the following grounds:
 - The proposed uses and development, by reason of their location and impacts, represent unacceptable and unsustainable development within the countryside. Furthermore, they would not represent sustainable uses of the land within the countryside and would have a harmful urbanising and industrialising impact on the visual and spatial amenities of the open countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.
 - By reason of their excessive scale, massing and footprint, the proposals would fail to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the

Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape. As such the proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document Policies TB21 and CC03 and the Borough Design Guide.

- The proposed uses on the site are not sustainable and do not therefore encourage the fullest possible use of walking, cycling or public transport as an alternative the motor car. This will result in a high level of car dependency contrary to the sustainable transport goals of the Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP6 and the National Planning Policy Framework.”

Principle of Development:

Relevant key policies

12. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
13. The site lies within the Countryside as designated in the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy. Core Strategy policy CP11 states, in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:
 - 1) *It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*
 - 2) *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and*
 - 3) *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement;*
14. Paragraphs 84 of the NPPF titled ‘Supporting a prosperous rural economy’ state that 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;*
 - c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
 - d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*
15. Paragraph 174(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

16. Policy TB18 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan states that planning permission will be granted for existing shops outside of settlement boundaries subject to three criteria;

- The proposal is connected to or adjacent to the primary holding
- The proposal is economically related to the primary holding and is ancillary to the primary existing use
- There would be no adverse impact on the vitality or viability of retail centres, neighbourhood or village shops within the locality.”

Assessment

17. The two buildings are unauthorised and do not appear to be linked to a wider agricultural use of the land. The Planning Statement claims that: *“The income generated from the buildings contributes directly to the ongoing viability of the farm shop, café and wider farm enterprise”* but provide no financial information to justify/support this. There is therefore, inadequate information as to how they relate to the wider use of the site as a whole. The proposals fail to comply with exception 1 of Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy as there is insufficient justification to demonstrate how the development directly contributes to the relevant rural enterprise, or whether they relate at all.

18. Furthermore, as will be explained further in the Character of the Area section, the proposals are considered to result in an excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings and therefore fails to comply with exception 2 of Policy CP11 and is also contrary to paragraph 174(b) of the NPPF, policy CP3 of the Core Strategy and Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. Exception 3 is not relevant as these proposals do not involve the conversion of buildings, rather the erection of new structures.

19. The applicant states the proposals demonstrate compliance with Policy TB18 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, but it is important to note that this policy specifically supports alterations and extensions to existing shops and these proposals are for new buildings. Even if the criteria of Policy TB18 was relevant, the proposals would not comply with it as there is no evidence to demonstrate that the uses are economically related to the primary holding.

20. General support is given for developing and diversifying rural economies at both Local (CP11 of the Core Strategy) and National level (NPPF paragraphs 81, 84 and 85). Support can be seen through approvals for the Farm Shop, Café Building and more recently the recreational vehicle storage and hairdresser’s building. However, there has been significant, unauthorised development recently, and there are now 12 different uses including: the hairdressers, office space, shipping container (previously a florist), recreational vehicle storage, car storage/maintenance, general industrial storage (rubble etc) and overflow parking area.

21. This uncontrolled and continual expansion of uses, buildings and hardsurfaced areas has had a detrimental and urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the area.
22. The development and diversification of a farm should involve uses that relate to the farm and supplement it financially. A long term strategy should be prepared and shared with the Council. It should supplement the farm enterprise. It does not seem realistic, especially in the absence of any financial information, that the excessive number of new buildings, uses and hardsurfaced areas are all necessary to keep the farm financially viable.
23. Therefore, in the absence of adequate justification including financial information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed buildings and associated uses are economically related to the primary agricultural holding of Lockey Farm and are essential to its continued financial viability. The proposals are therefore unacceptable in principle contrary to the NPPF, Policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Character of the Area:

24. Policy CP11 supports development in the countryside only where it maintains the high quality of the rural environment. Policy CP1(1) similarly only supports development that maintains or enhances the high quality of the environment, with policy CP3 supporting development of an appropriate mass, layout, built form, height and character to the area CP3(a) and which makes a positive contribution to the sense of place contributes to the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings CP3(f).
25. The Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance for developers with general guidance that development should respond positively to its site and local context (G1) and respond positively to the local character of the area (G2).
26. Policy IRS1 of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan titled 'Preservation of separation of settlements' relates to development within countryside areas and seeks to preserve the character and appearance of the countryside. This policy is consistent with CP11 and introduces a new emphasis on character and visual separation and perceived coalescence of existing settlements.
27. Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals should retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.
28. Historically the land and buildings were primarily related to farm and agricultural use. The northern/north-western area of the site remains in such use, but the current unauthorised development on site further south/east has ostensibly changed this rural character.

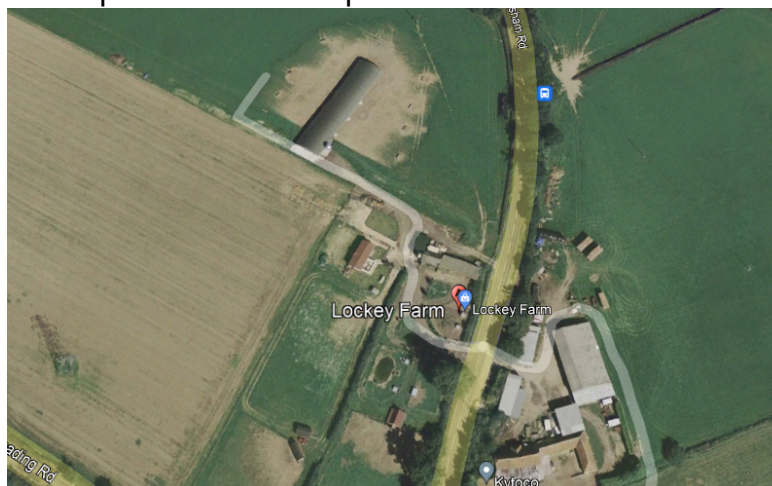
29. The proposed shipping container (Block B) by its very nature is urbanising and therefore out of keeping with the rural environment. Similarly, the architect's office (Block A), whilst finished with black timber cladding, is a portacabin which is inherently urban in its character and therefore completely out of keeping with the rural character of the site/area. Additionally, the portacabin and shipping container are in a prominent location, very close to the eastern site boundary making them highly visible from the roadside which only further exacerbates their impact. The Planning Statement claims that the current vegetation lining the eastern boundary sufficiently obscures the buildings from view, but the photo below clearly demonstrates the portacabin's prominence and visibility from the road:



Impact on Valued Landscape:

30. The landscape character area for this area is J2 - Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay, has a main landscape strategy to “conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape.” The site acts as a visual barrier between the settlement of Arborfield Cross and the open rural fields to the north/north-east and it is these areas of countryside adjacent to settlement boundaries that are at the most risk of adversely impacting the open and rural character of their surroundings.

31. The changes to the site between 2004 and 2022 (seen below) via historic aerial photos and demonstrates the excessive expansion of development and the detrimental impact this has had on the open rural landscape:



2004 aerial photo of the application site (Google Earth)



2022 aerial photo of the application site (Google Earth)

32. As can be seen in the aerial images above, the cumulative impact of the additional built form on site has eroded and blurred the transition between the countryside to the north and the Arborfield Cross settlement boundary to the south, to the detriment of the character of the area and in conflict with Paragraph 174(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework. The two buildings subject to this application are seen to have one of the greatest visual impacts due to their immediate proximity to the street and main access to the site.
33. As outlined above in paragraph 16, the number of buildings/uses on site has more than doubled since 2019. The development, most of which are industrial or commercial in nature, would be better suited to a more urban location. The site, in terms of its appearance and level of activity, is now more akin to an out-of-town retail centre rather than a farm.
34. Based on the assessment above, it is clear that instead of conserving or enhancing the rural character of the immediate area, the proposals would erode it. The development is a continuation of creeping urbanising encroachment on the site and has caused harm to the Countryside and valued landscape.

Landscape and Trees:

35. As outlined above, Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues. Proposals should retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.
36. The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment indicates that this site is located within landscape charter area J2 - Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and

Farmed Clay which is principally an agricultural landscape set in a wooded context. The Landscape Strategy is identified as follows:

“To maintain the landscape character of the Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay the following strategy is required: to conserve and enhance the remaining rural character of the landscape. The key aspects to be conserved and enhanced are the field pattern with mature hedgerow trees, wetland and woodland habitats, rural lanes and historic features. In terms of development, the aim is to integrate new development into its landscape setting, and retain the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements.”

37. The proposals fail to enhance, let alone retain, the valued characteristics highlighted above, in particular the goal of retaining the open and rural character of the landscape between settlements. Instead, the proposed development is at odds with the prevailing rural character of the area, to the detriment of the wider landscape for which no adequate landscape mitigation has been provided to address the identified impacts.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

38. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:

- Demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car in line with Core Strategy Policy CP6

39. Policy CP6 states that planning permission will be granted for schemes that:

- Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice
- Are located where there are or will be at the time of development choices in the mode of transport available and which minimise the distance people need to travel;

Sustainability:

40. It is acknowledged that there is no direct pedestrian access to the site, nor is there a crossing point or street lighting immediately adjacent to the site. However, the closest viable bus stop is located on Eversley Road is located approximately 244 metres away from the entrance to farm and is served by footpaths up until directly opposite the site. The farm is also within immediate proximity to the settlement of Arborfield and is within adequate walking distance for a number of dwellings.

41. The lack of direct pedestrian access is considered to broadly conflict with policies CP1 and CP6 however the site is already without such connectivity. Furthermore, whilst there is no lighting on the path next to the farm, the use's opening hours would largely coincide with daylight hours and therefore this shortcoming is not considered to warrant a reason for refusal.

42. In the submitted parking plan, it shows that there are 27no. visitor car parking spaces provided on-site, with 4no. staff parking spaces and 4no. overflow staff parking spaces. WBC Highways consider this sufficient enough to serve the uses.

43. Cycle parking has been requested as part of a condition but due to the other concerns raised above regarding the proposals, this has not been requested.

Flooding and Drainage:

44. The site is located within Flood Zone 1. WBC Drainage have no objections to the proposed development.

Planning Balance:

45. The Council accepts that the development does contribute to the local economy. The Council also recognises that the current economic climate continues to cause difficulties for businesses. There are two members of staff within the Architect's office and the Florist within the shipping container previously employed one.
46. It is recognised that paragraph 84 of the NPPF sets out that decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. The limited economic and social contribution this development makes is therefore considered to carry moderate weight in the overall planning balance.
47. Nevertheless, the development has clear and obvious shortcomings in terms of its environmental contribution, through the harm caused to the countryside and valued landscape harm to the Countryside and valued landscape.
48. Overall, in the light of the Framework and Development Plan policies taken as a whole, the development causes harm to the character and appearance of the countryside. Having weighed the various factors in support of the development in the balance of planning considerations, there are no other material considerations that would outweigh the identified conflict with the Development Plan.

Conclusion:

49. The proposals are located outside of Development Limits and are an unacceptable and unsustainable form of development for which inadequate justification exists. The proposals would have a harmful, urbanising impact on the otherwise rural character and appearance of the countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.
50. In the absence of adequate financial information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed buildings and associated uses are economically related to the primary agricultural holding of Lockey Farm and are essential to its continued financial viability. The proposals have an unacceptable urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and are therefore contrary to the NPPF, Policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.
51. The buildings, by reason of their design, immediate proximity to the road and cumulative increase in built form, would result in an excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original farm buildings. This would have a harmful urbanising and industrialising impact on the visual and spatial amenities of the open countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 &

CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.

52. By reason of their excessive scale, massing and footprint, the buildings fail to protect and enhance the valued landscape and in particular the condition, character and features that contribute to the Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay Landscape. As such the proposal is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3, Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document Policies TB21 and CC03 and the Borough Design Guide.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

APPENDIX 1 - Reasons for refusal

Refuse on the following grounds:

1. The proposals are located outside of Development Limits and are an unacceptable and unsustainable form of development for which inadequate justification exists. The proposals would have a harmful, urbanising impact on the otherwise rural character and appearance of the countryside which does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy.
2. In the absence of adequate financial information, it has not been demonstrated that the proposed buildings and associated uses are economically related to the primary agricultural holding of Lockey Farm and are essential to its continued financial viability. The proposals have an unacceptable urbanising impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and are therefore contrary to the NPPF, Policies CC01 & CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan and Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.
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APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Comments

PLANNING REF : 230020
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Arborfield Village Hall
: Eversley Road, Arborfield
: RG2 9PQ
SUBMITTED BY : Arborfield & Newland Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/01/2023

COMMENTS:

Arborfield and Newland PC remains supportive of Lockey Farm as an important business in the local area and therefore we have no further comments on this application.

APPENDIX 3 – Councillor Gary Cowan Comments

PLANNING REF : 230020
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 1 Barker Close
: Arborfield, Berks.
: RG2 9NQ
SUBMITTED BY : Cllr gary Cowan
DATE SUBMITTED : 12/01/2023

COMMENTS:

I support this planning application. Lockey Farm is an integral part of the village and community of Arborfield and has been for some years now. Lockey Farm also serves the needs of the residents of the wider Wokingham Borough and beyond.

In the current very difficult environment following the impact of the pandemic on small businesses the pressures on survival are considerable and any action by Wokingham to help a local business to survive should not be missed.

If the Officer recommendation is for refusal I would like to ask that this Planning Application is brought forward to the Planning Committee.