

SUPPLEMENTARY UPDATE AGENDA Planning Committee – 8 March 2023

Planning Applications

Agenda Item 93

Site Address: Library Parade, Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, RG5 3LX

Application No: 222367, Pages 21-87.

Amendment to para 89 of the Ctte Report to clarify that the correct CIL rate for 2023 is £500.29 index linked.

Clarification to points raised by Cllr Shirley Boyt during February Committee meeting:

Amenity space is addressed in page 42, paragraph 44 of the Committee Report. It is concluded that whilst 7 units would not benefit from private amenity space, there is generally less expectation to outdoor amenity space within town centre locations, and there are opportunities for recreation and outdoor space in close proximity to the site, with the Woodford Park and facilities circa 200m walk providing high-quality amenity space for the enjoyment of future occupiers. On this basis, it is considered that the scheme affords adequate amenity for occupiers.

Clarification that the accessible units are not on the ground floor. This has been amended in the Committee Report with a clarification note provided within the Summary (page 22, paragraph 5). There is a lift to serve the development, and the distance from the lift to the front door of these units is 15m which is a fairly short distance.

The internal furniture shown on the units is for indicative purposes only. What is relevant for the purpose of assessing the application is compliance with the internal space standards, which they all do. All proposed units benefit from adequate, policy compliant internal amenity space.

Assessment on parking provision is provided on pages 44-45, paragraphs 58-65 of the Committee Report, and was also discussed during the Feb meeting, with further clarification provided by WBC Highways Officer. The extract from the Draft Minutes of the meeting has been also attached to the March Committee Agenda.

Delivery for the retail units has been assessed on paragraph 66, page 45 of the Committee Report. Service access for deliveries will remain as existing via the service yard and through the rear doors of the units. This is no different to the existing situation. At present, large vehicles cannot enter the parking area.

Clarification has been sought from the applicant with regard to the extraction/heating/cooling units, who has clarified that the proposed louvred "PLANT" area shown on the plans will serve the 3 ground retail units with the plant moved from the ground floor. A number of the existing plants on the ground floor currently serve

the now vacant first floor offices and will be removed, as the offices will become flats. This has also been added as a note within the Summary (page 22, paragraph 6).

A Briefing Note has been submitted by the applicant's consultant on 06/03/2023 in response to comments made by other speakers during the February Ctte meeting. This is included below:

Briefing Note by Paul Butt Planning Ltd in relation to planning application no. 222367 at Library Parade Crockhamwell Road Woodley Wokingham.

1. Separation with the Lidl building: at the 8 February meeting Mr Bruce Chappell of Flat 8 Sandford Court advised the Committee that **"the distance between the two dwellings is within planning guidelines"**. I trust that the Committee site visit last Friday was helpful in assessing the impact of the proposed development on neighbouring properties and to see the separation distance in particular and the angled window to apartment 13 on the proposed third floor plan (looking towards the public car park), together with the proposed internal window shutters to the bedrooms to Units 14 and 15 on the third floor examples of which are shown on the plan.

2. Affordable housing: the Planning Officer has added a note to the Supplementary Planning Agenda to clarify that it is 30% affordable housing that is required. This is why the Council's Affordable Housing Team has indicated that 5 x 1-bed apartments for social rent is desired. Whether the 5 include the proposed 2 x 1-bed wheelchair accessible apartments, with their disabled parking spaces, would depend on whether the Registered Social Landlord has a demand for them at the time. If so, I can advise that the applicant is agreeable to consider this.

3. Parking: at the February meeting the questions were raised over the adequacy of the proposed parking provision. This is addressed in Para's 58 – 61 of the officer's report. Provision is made for some of the residents to have cars, including both the wheelchair accessible apartments, and also for the existing three retail units whose leases grant them 5 car parking spaces in all, and all the parking spaces will have facilities for charging electric vehicles. 'Car free' apartments are not uncommon in town centre locations and in this case have been permitted opposite. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the occupiers of the 'Car free' apartments will have cars nor that they will park in nearby streets, nor that this would result in any inconvenience...indeed none of the 25 letters of objection from neighbours on page 421 and 422 of the Officer's report, including those from Sandford Court, refers to these matters as being an issue. Nor does WBC Highways;

4. From the speaker's comments to the February meeting:

- There would be no overlooking of Beechwood Primary School;
- There are 3 existing retail units, and not 5 as was reported, and the 5 parking spaces are allocated with 2 each for the larger existing retail units and 1 for the smaller retail unit. The existing parking area also serves the office use at first floor level, and which is to cease...it does not just serve the retail units. Being in a town centre, it has a high level of sustainability on foot, by cycle and by public transport. The ground floor plan

shows dedicated cycle racks for the retail units and there are public 'Sheffield' stands in Library Parade;

- There would be no loss of light to Mr Chappell's flat, nor would the proposed apartments be noisy. Being in a town centre location and next to a public car park a certain amount of noise is to be expected;
- R16 of the Borough Design Guide advises that new housing must provide "easy access to some form of amenity space". You were advised that amenity space is in short supply, although Para's 43 and 44 of the Officer's report refers to the proposed balconies and to the nearby Woodford Park providing high quality amenity space within an easy walk. The proposal therefore accords with R16;
- the proportions of all the apartments complies with the National Technical Space Standards;
- the lift is approximately 17m from the front doors of the two wheelchair accessible units on the first and second floors, and both routes would be sheltered by the walkways above;
- a level access shower room to the bathrooms of the wheelchair accessible units can be provided if needs be;
- the submitted roof plan PL09A annotates the "PLANT" and "riser", and the elevations on the submitted plan PL11C states "louvred screen around the plant area". This will serve the 2 double retail units & 1 single unit with the plant moved from the ground floor. A number of the plant on the ground floor served the now vacant first floor offices and will be removed, as the offices will become flats, and these will not need to be replaced; and
- para. 71 of the Officer's report advises that there is expected to be a significant reduction in traffic generation as a result of the proposal. The proposed access gate is not at a particularly difficult angle for delivery vehicles from the existing service yard.

5. Closing comments: considerable investment has recently taken place in the retail units since the applicant acquired the site. It is considered that the proposal would be in the best interests of business in the town centre. Similarly the proposed apartments would be in the best interests of housing, and of affordable housing, in the borough in this town centre location.

The proposal would make an efficient use of the site and in a way that has been well considered with the help of your Officers. As a result it works well on a number of levels.

- 16 flats on a *brownfield site* in a town centre location of which...in a town centre location of which...
- 5 would be much needed *affordable housing*;
- 2 of the flats would be *wheelchair accessible and each have a disabled car parking wheelchair accessible and each have a disabled car parking space*;
- all of the 10 car parking spaces would have facilities for *electric vehicle charging*;
- our energy consultant has advised that the flats could achieve *CO2 savings of approximately 65% over the Building Regulations* and exceed the Council's policy requirement.

This is not a greenfield site that is proposed for housing, and I hope that the committee will support it in this town centre location. I do think that the development of these sort of accessible, brownfield locations contribute well towards housing land supply in the wider Borough.

Agenda Item 94

Site Address: "The Emmbrook School", Emmbrook Road, Wokingham, RG41 1JP

Application No: 223604, Pages 89-129.

Condition 6 amended to read as follows:

Flood Voids details – Prior to the commencement of the development within each Phase, full details of the floodable voids along with a maintenance plan for their effective functioning shall be submitted for written approval to the local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency. The approved voids shall be permanently kept free of obstruction and shall be regularly maintained in accordance with the agreed maintenance plan.

Reason: To prevent any loss of flood water storage and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10 .

Condition 18 amended to be a pre-commencement condition, to read as follows:

Flood Risk Assessment – Notwithstanding the submitted details, prior to commencement of the development, an updated Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency. The updated FRA shall be in general accordance with the principles of the Flood Risk Assessment (Elliott Wood Partnership Ltd, Rev P1, dated 16/11/2022) and mitigation measures contained therein, but shall also include inter alia appropriate design of foul drainage system, safe refuge within the development, options for dry egress, front doors that reduce ingress of water at all times and ongoing management and maintenance plan for such measures. The approved mitigation measures contained within the revised FRA shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangements. These mitigation measures shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To reduce risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

Agenda Item 95

Site Address: St Crispin's School, London Road, Wokingham, RG40 1SS

Application No: 223603, Pages 131-186

No updates to report.

Agenda Item 96

Site Address: Rose Toop Boatyard, Wargrave Road, Henley

Application No: 220987 Pages. 187- 224

Representations:

21 additional representations have been received. It is understood that three comments supplement an original comment, eighteen comments are new. All representations offer their support of the application. The comments predominantly re-iterate similar points in the representations already received.

Support:

1. Thames Alive, Director of
 - Light industrial use of site
 - Retaining and improves facilities at boatyard
 - Retains Rose Toop Collection for future generations
 - River lost a boat yard to residential purposes at The George Wargrave
 - Improved appearance of the building
 - Improved landscaping around building
 - Improves current mooring facilities

2. Britannia Place, Henley
 - Improves the appearance of an industrial building
 - No considerations should be given from views from Henley side of river as this is outside WBC
 - EA have not objected to the proposal
 - Adjacent river users have not objected to the proposal
 - Paragraphs 69 and 70 are contradictory to the Highways Officer comments
 - Parts of the report are false or based on false assumptions
 - A mezzanine cannot impact on flooding
 - Storing boats does not breach any planning consent
 - No amenity is impacted
 - Building currently has external floodlighting
 - Prominent people e.g. MP and past Prime Minister support this application

3. 33 Queen Street Henley
 - Current yard has no aesthetic benefit of public access. This development of the yard should be approved.

4. Little Court, Shiplake

- Thoroughly appropriate and in the public interested.
 - Housing this collection is an invaluable part of Riverside history
5. 65 Friday Street, Henley
- Superb proposal
 - Huge economic benefit to the area
 - Sensitive designs; “inappropriate development” in Green Belt is nonsensical
 - No objections to the proposal
 - Huge economic benefit for local community
6. Matson Drive
- Brownfield use of site
 - Current buildings in poor state of repair
 - Proposed new building is in keeping with area
 - In keeping with riparian use
 - Community use has a significant benefit to the area
 - Contrary to other Green Belt decisions made by the LPA
7. No address provided
- Improve the landscape
 - Operates a small charter boat business and uses the boatyard
 - Economic benefits of scheme
8. Henley Resident
- This application should be approved
 - It will be an asset to the town for residents and visitors and improve the site
9. Wargrave Resident
- It is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt
 - It does not have a detrimental impact on the countryside and landscape character
 - Asset to the area and unique homage to river heritage
10. No address provided
- Exciting proposal for boatyard to house this collection
 - No objections from other people
 - Intention for local organisations to use the space is the icing on the cake
 - Improving the site for the future.
11. Rod Eyot Island
- Support the application
12. No address provided
- Active boatyard with industrial buildings/activity
 - Neighbouring rowing club has a large functional facility
 - The proposals will be an asset to the community
13. No address provided

1. Founder trustee of River & Rowing museum & Temple Island; Member of Henley Society & Chiltern Society & CPRE & Henley Rowing Club
2. Built up river front and large dwellings have been allowed along here
3. Development of boatyard will be an improvement
4. Continued use as working boatyard for nationally important collection

14. Henley Resident

- Plans are a huge benefit to local boating community
- Current buildings are unsightly and proposal will improve environment
- EA have no objections
- No objections to the application so why is it to be refused.

15. Harpsden Court Lodge, Henley

- Strongly support new home for Rose Toop collection

16. Wargrave Resident

- Strongly support that the history of the river should be accessible to all
- Not inappropriate development in Green Belt
- No detrimental impact on Countryside

17. The Corner shop, Lower Shiplake

- Significant improvement to facilities
- Not out of place on riverbank
- Great community asset.

18. No address provided (supporting comment 25 on report)

- Surprised at refusal reasons
- Beneficial project, difficult to understand why this should be refused

19. Henley resident

- Support redevelopment of boatyard
- Improvement to amenities and future use
- Improve visual impact of site
- Previous concerns have been addressed

20. Henley Resident

- Would you refuse the application if King Charles had supported it?

21. 6 Queen Street, Henley

- Cannot understand how this is inappropriate development in the Green Belt or detrimental to the Countryside/landscape character
- Great addition to area for display of boats.

22. 27 Langhams Way, Wargrave

- Visual improvement
- Home to the important Rose Toop collection
- Great public benefit with no adverse impacts

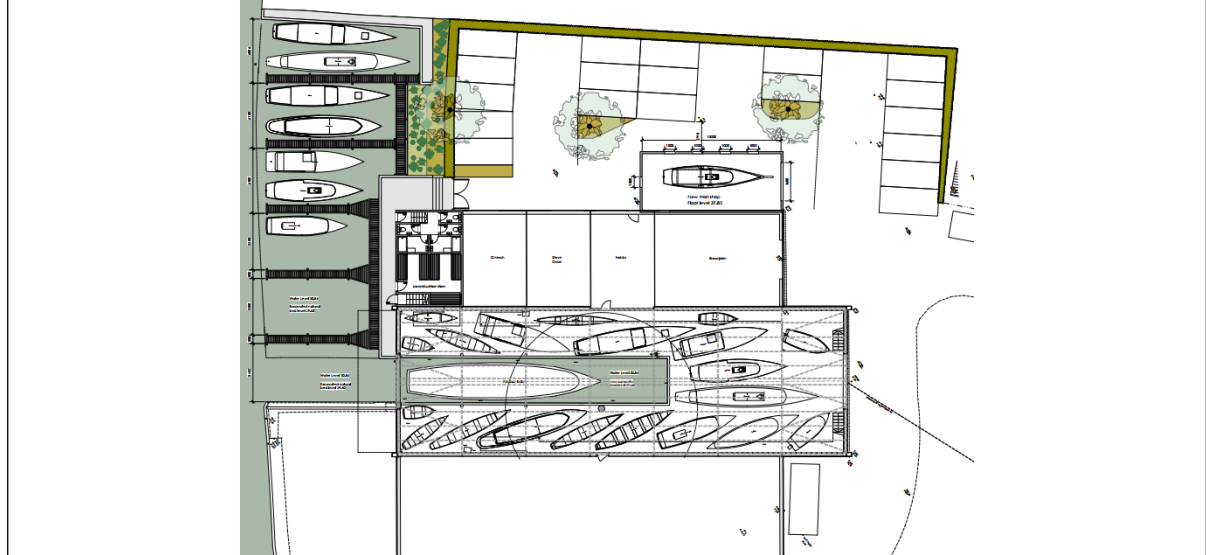
- Recommendation is contrary to the wellbeing of the Green Belt as it encourages negative impact.

Volume Calculations

At the site visit, further information was requested on the 'original building' prior to 2005 which was destroyed by fire to compare this to the 'existing building (on site now; approved under permission F/2005/4011) and the proposed building subject of this application. The 'original building' and 'existing building' can be seen in the images below:



Proposal (ground floor plan)



The Officer's report for F/2005/4011 states:

4. The former buildings had a footprint of 1,415m², whereas the proposed replacement would be only 1,290m², a reduction of 125m². In addition, the replacement buildings would be more compact form than the former L-shaped layout. The maximum depth would increase from 38.5 metres to 42.6 metres (an increase of 4.1 metres) but the spread across the width would be reduced from 53.5 metres to 34 metres (a reduction of 19.5 metres). The set back from the riverbank would remain 14 metres.

5. The height of the former buildings varied. The tallest was the building on the eastern side of the site, which was one of the more recent buildings and had a ridge height of 6.8 metres. The building now proposed would have a triple-span, shallow pitched roof. The central section would have a 5.8 metre ridge, while the side sections would have ridge heights of 5.4 metres and 5.2 metres.

Original	1,415sqm
Existing	918sqm (measured from existing submitted plans, regardless of the above refers to 1,290sqm)
Proposed	1,127sqm

Although volume figures are not readily available for the original building, the footprint of the proposed building remains less than that which originally stood on the site. The majority of the building will remain as existing but the increase in height of part of the central bay to 7.73m is significant when compared to both the original buildings, the tallest of which was 6.8m in height (existing 6.27m).

National Planning Policy Framework Clarification

The Applicant considers that the application should be considered under Green Belt Exception 149(c) of the NPPF. Exception 149(c) states that new buildings are unacceptable in the Green Belt except where: *“the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”*

However, as set out in the Report, Officer’s view that the proposal constitutes redevelopment of the site and more than solely an extension or alteration to the boat yard. The proposal comprises *“Full application for the proposed ground floor and first extensions to the existing buildings. To provide additional workshop, gallery and mezzanine level for dry storage along with recreational floorspace. Re-cladding of external walls with vertical timber boards. Creation of a river cutting to provide additional /replacement moorings”*.

Part of the proposal comprises an extension. It is not disputed that the extensions in isolation, are not disproportionate in terms of an increase in volume; however, this is only part of the proposal and consequently 145(c) is not fully applicable to the development. The reason being is the scheme comprises development over and above extensions/alteration to the original building (insertion of first floor, cladding, river cutting and additional/replacement moorings). The proposal is considered to fall within exception 149 (g) as a partial redevelopment of the site as set in the report. The only relevant Green Belt exception that allows a redevelopment in this case is 145(g).

The site represents previously developed land and elements of the proposal represent redevelopment of part of the site.

The applicant's contention is that because they do not consider there to be a change of use, it may be able to be considered under 145 (c). However, Officers do not share this view. The raising of the roof of the building i.e. the extension is inherent to the use of the building and is what facilitates the events space at mezzanine level. This raising of the roof impacts on the openness of the Green Belt.

The term openness is not defined in the NPPF, however given the lack of definition, it could reasonably be interpreted as the absence of built development. Openness can be harmed by (among other things) new built form, external storage, extensive hard standing, car parking and boundary walls or fencing. Landscapes are very important to the openness and amenity of the Green Belt. The visual impact on landscape forms part of the consideration of harm and is not just associated with views from public vantage points.

Redevelopment of this site would only be acceptable providing there is no greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings.

In considering this impact, factors such as massing, location and height of the proposed buildings, together with any increase in traffic to the site and changes to the patterns of traffic are material factors. Although the existing building could be argued to encroach into the countryside, the proposed development would amount to an increased degree of encroachment with a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

Although the footprint of the building may remain modest, the formalisation of a parking area, introduction of pontoons and river cutting and introduction of high hedgerows must also be considered as built form that impact on the open, rural and undeveloped character of the Green Belt that would be materially greater than the existing built form on site.

The loss of spatial openness, by reason of its height and prominence, would result in the proposed building would have a greater impact than the existing development on the visual openness of the site. As such, the scheme would not accord with paragraph 145 (g) of the Framework.

Local Employment:

A clarification was requested on the current number of employees vs. the proposed number of employees at the site to confirm whether the proposal would allow for local employment opportunities.

There are 7 existing full-time employees at present that work from the site – employed by the other existing occupiers of the buildings (marine engineers, boatbuilders etc). There is going to be one new part-time employee directly involved in the cleaning of the boats in the Rose Toop collection.

The Agent has stated that Paul Brownjohn Boatbuilders and G-mech Marine Engineers – are being engaged to assist in the day-to-day maintenance and repair of the boats, there is every prospect that they will take on some new employees. Indeed, in conjunction with the Thames Traditional Boat Festival, please note that it is my client's intention to help fund an apprenticeship opportunity for someone to work with Paul Brownjohn in the maintenance of the RT collection. However, at present this is only an intention and is considered speculative and an aspiration, acknowledged by Officers to be a noble goal, cannot be considered as part of this application.

The Agent also states that, there will be far more tradespeople employed on an occasional basis than would be required to maintain a regular fleet of low-maintenance fibre-glass boats. It is likely that these people would be specialists in their field and may not be locally based e.g. Steam boat boiler servicing for safety certification purposes.

Agenda Item 97

Site Address: Lockey Farm, Sindlesham Road, Arborfield, RG2 9JH

Application No: 230020, **Pages** 225-264

A committee site visit took place on Friday 3 March to enable members to gain a wider understanding of the site and its surroundings and to understand the extent of the agricultural activities taking place.

Financial Information:

In response to reason for refusal 2, the agent recently submitted a financial report detailing the agricultural enterprise's finances for the last 6 years. This document shows that the only farming income from the site is from eggs, and the other income is derived from the farm shop and café. Also included in this document are figures for the rental income from the two buildings/businesses subject to application 230020, as well as figures from government grants received by the farm. The summary of the report says:

"You will see that the farm shop and coffee shop produced a small profit in 2016, it has then produced losses each year in the main until Covid, the grants and furlough assistance enabled the farm to make profits. With the assistance from the government now stopped and the new road restrictions having been introduced, the footfall at the shop has massively reduced meaning that the income from the farm and coffee shop have and is likely to continue to fall going forward. Graham and Caroline have tried to diversify and make the location more appealing to a multiple demographic audience with an increased overall shopping experience with multiple retailers and businesses in one destination. It is only by diversifying and introducing rental income from the various business units that the business remains viable to any degree".

Agricultural Consultant Comments:

The Council commissioned an independent appraisal of the report by a qualified agricultural valuer who recently undertook a site visit. The appraisal sets out the definition of agriculture and provides the following view:

“The definition of Agriculture regards the growing of food. We saw no evidence that any arable/horticulture crops of any type were being grown for food despite the applicant describing the land as arable at section 2.2 of the Planning Statement.

With regards to livestock, by virtue of the pictures on the website and reference to Google Earth together with our own inspection, the primary purpose was as a leisure attraction for children visiting the site. It is what is generally described as a “Petting Farm” and the use is not within the definition of Agriculture. Whilst a “petting farm” might be an appropriate diversified use on a farm in our view it is not an agricultural use in its own right. No doubt some hay is made off some of the grassland at the northern end of the land for sustaining the “Petting animals” at all times of the year, but it is our view that the primary use of the land is for the leisure use with the hay making being ancillary to this.

The Farm Shop photographs on the website suggest that the majority of the food for sale is bought in and very little if any is produced on the holding itself. This is therefore more of a general retail use. You will be aware that the NPPF describes “retail development... leisure, entertainment... offices... culture and tourism development” as main town centre uses.

The Farm accounts submitted to us suggest some egg production but pictures on the web show children walking through the hen house.

Therefore, it is our opinion that the primary purpose of the property is a Petting attraction supported by a “Farm Shop” and café/restaurant with other buildings let out to an Architect, Hairdressers and others.

The agricultural activities appear to be limited to perhaps taking some hay off of the land to support the petting use, producing some eggs and grazing some ewes and lambs, although it is not clear that these are owned by the applicant and form part of an agricultural business. The application does not adequately set out the extent of an agricultural business or prove that this is the primary use of the site and that the uses forming part of the application are required to sustain an agricultural business. In our view the application is not a true diversification of an agricultural business but rather an application for commercial development alongside a leisure based enterprise. It does not represent the growth or expansion of an existing use on the site, but rather new specific uses which are unrelated to the other uses. There is no reason why the businesses in the application buildings need to be specifically located on the farm and could be more sustainably located within existing defined centres. Compliance with Policy CP11 has not been demonstrated.”

Officer analysis of financial report:

In the year 2020, income from farming (i.e. eggs) accounted for approximately 0.04% of the total turnover from the farm. The remaining 99.96% of income came from:

Rental income (approximately 0.33%), 74% farm shop, with the remaining approximately 25.9% coming from the café.

In 2021, income from farming accounted for approximately 0.22% of the overall turnover from the farm. Rental income accounted for approximately 1.03%. Approximately 95% of the turnover was a result of the farm shop, with the remaining percentage accounted for by the cafe.

Conclusion:

The applicant's main argument is that the rent from these two proposed buildings: "...contributes directly to the ongoing viability of the farm shop, café and wider farm enterprise" (*Planning Statement, Paragraph 6.4.*). However, it is clear that only very limited income is generated from farming activities and rental income. Therefore, the income from the two proposed buildings has very limited impact on overall revenue. It has not been demonstrated that the rent makes a significant contribution to farm diversification and therefore, there is insufficient evidence to justify the grant of planning permission (and their retention).

Furthermore, the evidence points to only a very limited wider agricultural use taking place across the site.

It may be the case that government grants decrease as the effects of the pandemic continue to ease. However, insufficient justification has been provided for the two proposed buildings, which do not visually relate well to the Countryside surroundings, are of an urban appearance and due to their close proximity to the site boundary are visually intrusive. The proposal is contrary to planning policies and on balance, the harm outweighs the benefits.

Pre-emptive site visits

None

Non-Householder Appeal Decisions

Non-Householder Appeal Decisions will be reported quarterly prior to the following meetings as part of the Supplementary Planning Agenda:

- April 2023
- July 2023
- October 2023

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