

PLANNING STATEMENT INCORPORATING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

LAND FORMING PART OF STANDRIDGE FARM.

TOSSIDE ROAD

SLAIDBURN

BB7 4TR.

**ERECTION OF AN AGRICULTURAL BUILDING FOR FREE RANGE
EGG PRODUCTION TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED
FEED BINS, HARDSTANDING AREAS AND ACCESS.**

June 2018

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement incorporates a Design and Access Statement supporting a planning application for the erection of a new 27,000 bird egg production building and its associated works at the application site. It should be read in conjunction with the other submission documents and plans.

ASSESSMENT

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing agricultural enterprise that operates from Standridge Farm, Tosside Road, Slaidburn that extends to approximately 174 acres (70 hectares) of owner occupied land. The enterprise is situated about 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) to the east of the settlement of Slaidburn, on the B6478 road that connects Slaidburn to Tosside further to the east.
- 2.2 The agricultural enterprise comprises an existing free range egg production business with two existing poultry buildings of 16,000 birds each. These were constructed between 2015 and 2016 and also house egg packing and control area, egg store and bird house areas. The enterprise has been operated from The Cottage, Lower Edge Farm, Tincklers Lane, which is located just to the south of the application site. The enterprise however was granted planning permission in late 2017 for an agricultural workers dwellings to manage the egg production facility. The enterprise employs four full time staff. The enterprise has a long term contract to supply free range eggs to Chippendale Foods which these proposals will help to fulfil.
- 2.3 The image below shows the existing poultry buildings at the enterprise.



3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. In 2014, planning permission was granted for two livestock buildings for cattle accommodation (planning applications 3/2014/0189 and 3/2014/0190 refer). This enterprise diversified its operations at this site by gaining planning permission in 2015 for a free range egg unit building for 16,000 birds (application 3/2015/0723 refers). Following that approval, a further planning permission was granted in 2016 for an additional free range egg unit building for a further 16,000 birds planning application 3/2016/0916 refers). Those two egg production buildings are now operational on the site. In connection with that operation, outline planning permission was granted in 2017 for an agricultural workers dwelling in association with the egg production enterprise (planning application 3/2017/0313 refers). A detailed planning submission for that building is about to be made and so as yet, that dwelling is not constructed. Planning permission for an egg packing building was granted in July 2018 (application 3/2018/0345 refers).

4 THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1. These proposals are to add to the existing egg production enterprise at this site by providing a new building with capacity for a further 27,000 birds. The existing free range egg units are located about 150 metres to the north of Tossie Road and about 220 metres away from the buildings at Standridge Farm, which lies to the north east of the units. The proposed new unit does not adjoin those existing buildings but is to be located further to the east. It will be about 210 metres away from the existing buildings at Standridge Farm and about 400 metres from the existing two egg production buildings. A new track will be created to the new unit from the B6478 that runs along the route of an existing overhead pylon line.
- 4.2. The new building is reflective in style and appearance to those that have been previously erected at the site. It is of portal frame construction with vertical timber cladding to the walls, coloured green, above low stone plinths and a pitched roof of corrugated sheet roofing, coloured dark green. The building requires two hoppers at the south western end of the building.

5 PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 5.1. This is to be found in the National Planning Policy Framework (the framework) issued in March 2012. The framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

5.2. The framework describes the overarching aim of the planning system as being to secure sustainable development; paragraph 7 states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental and expands on those aspects and issues that are encompassed by each. Paragraph 14 in respect of the determination of planning applications states that this requires:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

5.3 Paragraph 17 details 12 core planning principles. The following extracts are of particular relevance:

- *Plans should be kept up-to-date*
- *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes ... and thriving local places that the country needs*
- *Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings*
- *Take account of the different roles and character of different areas ...*
- *Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*

5.4. Paragraphs 18-22 of the framework set out the Government's objectives for building a strong, competitive economy.

5.5. Paragraph 18 states : *The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.*

5.6. Paragraph 19 states : *The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to*

encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

- 5.7. Paragraph 21 addresses the need for local authorities for planning policies to recognise and address potential barriers to investment and sets out factors to be taken into account in drawing up local plans. In particular it states : Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations.
- 5.8. Paragraphs 56-68 are concerned with good design. In considering such matters, paragraph 59 advises : *.....design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.*
- 5.9. Paragraph 60 further advises : *Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular taste.....*’
- 5.10 At paragraph 65 goes on to state : *Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape....*’
- 5.11 Paragraph 115 sets out that great weight should be given to conserving the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and paragraph 116 states that major development in these areas should be refused except in exceptional circumstances including the need for the development; the cost of developing elsewhere and any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that can be moderated.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 5.11. This is to be found in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (CS), adopted in December 2014.
- 5.12 Policy DMB1 of the CS refers to the expansion of existing firms outside settlement being allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape.
- 5.13 Policy EN2 of the CS aims to protect the landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland AONB with the principle that the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape.

- 5.13. Policy DMG1 of the CS seeks a high standard of building design and considers scale, density, layout and massing and visual appearance; amenity and the environment.
- 5.14 Policy DME2 of the CS sets out to refuse proposals that significantly harm important landscape or landscape features
- 5.15 There is emerging planning policy in the form of the Council's Housing and Economic Development Plan Document (DPD) which is currently undergoing an Examination in Public but has not yet been adopted. It carries little weight for the determination of planning applications therefore. However, there are no changes proposed in this locality in the DPD that affect this development.

6 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 This application is for the expansion of an existing agricultural enterprise. That agricultural enterprise has been accepted as being financially viable on the approved application for the associated agricultural dwelling. In such case, the thrust of NPPF policy and policy DMB1 of the adopted CS is that such proposals should be allowed to secure growth and prosperity. Given that there are recently approved egg production buildings already approved at this site to which this building is associated, demonstrates that the principle of such buildings here are acceptable and there has been no change in that policy stance since those buildings were approved to indicate that any different decision on matters of principle should now be taken.
- 6.2 The application site is within the designated AONB where major developments should be refused as set out in the NPPF. It needs to be determined therefore whether this proposal is major development and if it is, whether the exceptional circumstances set out at paragraph 115 of NPPF should be applied, namely: the need for the development; the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area and; any detrimental effect on the environment and the extent to which that could be moderated.

7 WHETHER THE PROPOSAL IS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Paragraph 005 of Planning Practice Guidance- Landscape – sets out that whether a proposed development should be treated as major development, to which paragraph 116 of the Framework applies, .. *'will be a matter for the relevant decision taker, taking into account the proposals in question and the local context.'* Thus, the approach to be taken in determining

whether a proposal is major development is context specific and dependant on the particular application. What is also clear is that the definition of major development in paragraph 116 of the NPPF is not the same as that in the 2010 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order (England). This is confirmed in the Court Judgement *Aston v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (2013)*. Here the Judge applied the ‘normal’ use of the word major. This was further confirmed in the judgement of *R. (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks DC (2014)* which affirmed that the approach should be the normal meaning given to the phrase. It is therefore a matter of judgement for the decision maker having regard to all the circumstances. The approach of the Courts therefore is that the question of whether a proposal is major development is context specific and dependant on the particular application.

- 7.2 In this context, there have been similar approvals granted by the planning authority for egg production and packing buildings. Those egg production units were of a similar scale to this proposal and were deemed by the local authority not to be major development and therefore paragraph 116 of the framework was not applied. In that context, this proposal is also not major development and therefore paragraph 116 of the framework does not apply.

8. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SITING

- 8.1 This site already has planning permission for the accommodation of 32,000 egg laying birds. The flock size is determined by BEIC Lion Code rules. These set out that flocks must not be bigger than 16,00 birds, hence the current 32,000 bird accommodation is in two flocks in two adjacent buildings of 16,000 birds each. Under the rules, to avoid and minimise the risk of disease being carried over from one flock to another, either by direct contact or by air borne transmission, all birds housed in a flock in close proximity to each other are replaced all at the same time. This means this site is a ‘single age’ site where all the birds are reared together from day old chick to point of lay pullet, and then housed at the laying site at 16 weeks of age. Therefore, for this 16-week period there is no egg production and therefore no income for the farm. This is inefficient and has significant implications for the farm’s finances. Not only that, but the retail demand requires a continuous production supply and so a major disruption to supply from single flocks being turned around can put those retail contracts at risk.
- 8.2 To provide continuous production therefore, there needs to be separated flocks that are separated from the existing production site. Given the limitations outlined above, it is clear

that to expand this egg production facility to provide for continuous supply, another flock cannot be located close to the existing flock and therefore any new building needs to be separated from those already existing.

- 8.3 There is no specific separation distance between flocks recommended in the published rules for egg production, apart from that they should be well separated. However, free range birds require 1 to 2ha of land per 1,000 birds to comply with UK legislation. This range land needs to be within 350 metres of the bird housing and this imposes restrictions on siting.
- 8.4 These requirements are as given by Chippendale Foods Limited, a leading supplier of free range eggs in the UK and a copy of their brief to the applicant regarding flock requirements is attached at document 1.
- 8.5 This building therefore is to introduce another flock that will be rotated with the existing flocks so that this flock will be different ages to avoid replacement at the same time as the existing flock. This will avoid a non production period for the farm. The siting chosen achieves the desired separation from the existing flock buildings to reduce contamination risks. Taking account of the nature of the whole site, this siting is felt to be the least intrusive visually given that it avoids the high escarpment from the road, is next to an established tree line and is visually separated from Standridge Farm.

9 DESIGN

- 9.1 In terms of the new building, whilst the building sought with this application is functional in appearance, the former buildings and approved buildings reflected a similar design, therefore indicating that this type of building is acceptable at this location. The presence of an agriculturally designed building in the countryside is not uncharacteristic of a rural landscape such as this. The scale and form of the development in relation to the landscape would mean that the building would be appropriately integrated with its surroundings and seen as an appropriate agricultural building within a rural landscape.
- 9.2. The design of the building is such that it will have coloured timber cladding that will help to break down the visual bulk and mass of the building. It is also modest in height although the feed bins are higher. However they would be seen in the landscape but not be unduly prominent.

10 IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE

- 10.1 The Framework and local policy does not seek to resist all new buildings in the AONB of the countryside but rather supports sustainable businesses and enterprise in rural areas through well designed buildings. It has been noted on the earlier approved planning applications, that the enterprise occupies a natural depression in the landscape that shields it from prominent public and long distance views. The same applies to the siting of this new building which follows along the same depression line so that it is sited well below the road level.
- 10.2 The landscape is also characterised by large areas of upland farmland that has dispersed groups of farmsteads and small settlements across it. The previously approved buildings at the site were noted as being well related to existing groups of buildings and would not therefore be prominent.
- 10.3 The application is supported by landscape visuals from 2 identified viewpoints of the site provided by Squareyard Studio. These show and demonstrate the limited landscape impact of the proposals.

11 USE

- 11.1. The proposed use is for the housing of free range laying hens. This is an extensive and welfare friendly form of egg production. The built area of the building can accommodate 27,000 hens. Feeding and water systems are automated as is ventilation and temperature control. Access to the outside is given between 8 am and 9pm daily.

12 AMOUNT

- 12.1 The proposal is for 2 units to house 27,000 hens. The building measures 67 metres in length by 16 metres in width for each building plus the egg store and control room which is 6m by 35.7 m. It has a ridge height of some 5.17 metres. The feed hoppers are 7.5 metres in height. This gives the building a floorspace of 2,314 sq.m.

13 SCALE

- 13.1 The size of the proposed building is commensurate with the scale of the hens required, which is legislatively controlled to avoid over population. The scale of the enterprise is required to meet wider demand which meets the need for more production across the

UK generally in a more sustainable way.

14 LAYOUT

- 14.1 The proposed building is laid out to reflect its function to provide for egg production. Thus it is, in essence, two parts separated by a central access corridor for ease of access for cleaning etc. The building is orientated in an east west direction to take advantage of climate, wind and sun warming factors.

15 LANDSCAPING

- 15.1 The proposed building will have surround mounding with new tree planting which will screen a large part of the buildings from any views. The mounding is enabled by reusing earth excavated from the building construction. The landscape images provided by Squareyard Studios show this approach.

16 APPEARANCE

- 16.1 The proposed use will be contained within an existing undulation avoiding any ridge line so that the existing views of the site will be maintained and the building will not appear discordant in the landscape.

17 HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC

- 17.1 Egg collections are undertaken in an 18 tonne rigid lorry at the rate of 2 lorries a week. Bird collection and delivery is by a 16.5 metre articulated lorry as is feed delivery. Bird Collection and delivery is at the rate of 2 lorries every 60 weeks. Feed delivery is at the rate of 1 lorry every week. Therefore a normal week would see 2 lorries per week for egg collection and 1 lorry every week for feed delivery. The access to the site is on a straight stretch of road with good visibility.

18 OTHER MATTERS

- 18.1 The proposed development will be carried out to meet IPPC permit requirements as issued by the Environment Agency. The IPPC permitting requirements place the highest levels of protection on the operation of the proposed poultry unit in order to

protect residential neighbours and the environment as a whole.

- 18.2 Paragraph 122 of the NPPF confirms that if an Environmental Permit is required, the planning system should not focus on issues which are controlled by the permitting process. In this instance, the permit controls all emissions from the site – odour, noise, dust, ammonia, waste disposal, dirty water management etc. However, for planning purposes this application is accompanied by a noise report and an odour report which show that there are no environmental issues arising from these matters.

19 CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 19.1 These proposals will allow the expansion and continuation of this successful rural business that will contribute to the rural economy in line with national and local planning policies. Whilst this building would be an addition to the landscape of the AONB, it would not cause harm to the character and appearance of it. This is because of the siting of the proposed building is at a level lower than the road and therefore hidden from views from it, thereby protecting skylines and views into and out of the AONB. Even where views may be available from longer viewpoints, this is an agricultural building not unexpected in such an area and is designed with materials and colours to reduce any such impact. Neither is the building a major development, that approach having been already accepted by the local authority in its acceptance of the two egg production buildings and egg packing building at this farm. Therefore, the limitation imposed by paragraph 116 of the framework for major development in a designated AONB does not apply.
- 19.2 Taking the above into account, this proposal is not contrary to the development plan or national guidance.

Directors - Alan Kinder, Dip.T.P (Leeds). MRTPI & Val Kendall
2, Reedley Business Centre, Redman Road, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 2TY

Phone: 01282 834834 **Fax:** 01282 451666 **Web:** www.avalontp.co.uk **Email:** planning@avalontp.co.uk

Avalon Chartered Town Planning is the trading name of Avalon Town Planning Ltd, Company No 07852064. Registered in England and Wales