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Email: Harriet.McCartney@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Planning Officer: Harriet McCartney

Planning Application Ref: 3/2019/0706

Description of Development: Outline application for the erection of a farm workers dwelling (all matters reserved except access)

Site Address: Hall Trees Farm, Hough Clough Lane, Chipping, PR3 2NT

Dear Harriet,

Introduction

The planning application has been submitted by Mr Robert Black of Gary Hoerty Associates on behalf of the applicants, Mr and Mrs Robin and Eileen Dean of Hall Trees Farm for outline permission for a farm workers dwelling located on an existing farmstead. ADAS have not undertaken a site visit. However, it is possible to assess the application based on the information submitted and the lack of a site visit does not undermine the opinion given here.

Agricultural Consultants Assessment

The farm extends to 81 ha of grassland of which 40.5ha is owned and 40.5ha is rented. 16ha (40 acres) of rented land is on a periodic annual Farm business Tenancy and the rest on a grazing licence- neither of which guarantee long term security, although many farmers continue to rent land on this basis for many years.

The stocking comprises of 500 breeding ewes, 200 gimmer lambs (replacements for the ewe flock) and 10 rams. 50 lambs are retained as stores until November. The ewes lamb in April/May, thus reducing their requirement for conserved forage.

Labour

The labour requirements have been taken from NIX P 179-186 and are shown below:

	Quantity	SMD	Total SMD
Livestock			
Rams	10	0.5	5
Breeding ewes	500	0.45	225
Gimmer lambs	200	0.4	80
Store lambs	150	0.3	45
Total			355
Land			
One cut of haylage plus one cut of hay	16.2	2.58	41.796
Grazing (ha)	72.4	0.4	28.96
Total forage			70.756
Total			425.756
Plus			
15% addition for general maintenance and management			
	425.756	x15%	489.62
No of workers required	489.62	/275	1.8

Conservation comprises of 1 cut of haylage plus one cut of hay –figures taken from p.179 Nix.

The labour currently on the farm is Mr Robin Dean and his wife Eileen Dean.

Functional need

The size of the farm and the number of livestock means that it is necessary for help to be available particularly at lambing, as well as for the day to day running of the farm. The flock achieves good lambing percentage which can only be achieved by good stockmanship. The lambing takes place outdoors.

It is noted that Robin Dean, who is the main source of labour on the farm presently suffers from health conditions which affect his ability to work on the farm –severe osteoarthritis in both knees and he is also awaiting a hip replacement. These conditions would make it difficult to handle sheep.

The only dwelling on the farm is occupied by Robin and Eileen Dean, thus the applicant has requested an additional dwelling for his son so that he can run the business.

Financial viability

The accounts show the business to be profitable and viable.

Planning Appraisal and Policy Context

This planning appraisal has been undertaken to assess the site located at Hall Trees Farm, Hough Clough Lane, Chipping, PR3 2NT for outline permission for a new farm workers dwelling, located on the existing farmstead.

The site falls within the administrative boundary of Ribble Valley Borough Council and this appraisal has taken into consideration the national and local planning policies listed within the following table:

National Planning Policy	Description
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)	
Paragraph 38	Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way.
Paragraph 79	Paragraph 79 states that: <i>“Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:</i> <i>a) There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;”</i>
Paragraph 80	Paragraph 80 states that: <i>“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its own strengths, counter any weakness and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.”</i>
Paragraph 83	Paragraph 83 states that: <i>“Planning policies and decisions should enable:</i> <i>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;</i> <i>b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses’;”</i>

Paragraph 84	<p>Paragraph 84 states that:</p> <p><i>“Planning policies and 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.”</i></p>

Local Planning Policy	Description
Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adoption Version	
Policy DMH3: dwellings in the open countryside and AONB	<p>Policy DMH3 states that:</p> <p><i>“Within areas defined as open countryside or AONB on the proposals map, residential development will be limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Development essential for the purposes of agriculture or residential development which meets an identified local need. In assessing any proposal for an agricultural, forestry or other essential workers dwellings a functional and financial test will be applied.</i> <i>2. The appropriate conversion of buildings to dwellings providing they are suitably located and their form and general design are in keeping with their surroundings. Buildings must be structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for complete or substantial reconstruction.</i> <i>3. the rebuilding or replacement of existing dwellings subject to the following criteria:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>– The residential use of the property should not have been abandoned.</i> <i>– There being no adverse impact on the landscape in relation to the new dwelling.</i> <i>– The need to extend an existing curtilage.</i> <p><i>The creation of a permanent dwelling by the removal of any condition that restricts the occupation of dwellings to tourism/visitor use or for holiday use will be refused on the basis of unsustainability.</i></p>

The protection of the open countryside and designated landscape areas from sporadic or visually harmful development is seen as a high priority by the Council and is necessary to deliver both sustainable patterns of development and the overarching core strategy vision.”

This assessment has been completed using the information that was sent to the Council by the applicant and their agent. This includes an application form, location plan, and planning statement. Further to this, a mandatory additional information form was also submitted with the application. Additionally, the applicant has also provided financial records to support the application. As mentioned above within the agricultural consultant's assessment, it is considered that the applicant has provided a sufficient evidence base to demonstrate support for this application.

Within the NPPF, in paragraphs 83 and 84, there is an emphasis on supporting a strong rural economy, as long as there is a present and suitable need. Due to this application providing a clear need for this development, it is considered that this application accords with this element of the NPPF (Paragraph 83 and 84).

Further to this, the NPPF also states within paragraph 80 that planning decisions should allow for the support and development of a strong rural economy, if there is a present suitable need. As stated above, it is considered that through the included information provided in this application, there is a clear need for this development. It is considered that this is a required expansion of a farm holding.

In addition to this, Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided, unless, as is stated within section a), there is an essential need for a rural worker. It is considered that this need has been presented with this application. Further to this, whilst there is at present a dwelling located on the site, it cannot be expected that the current occupier should be required to vacate the premises for the required rural worker.

The Ribble Valley Adopted Core Strategy mirrors the position of the NPPF, stating specifically within Policy DMH3, that dwellings in the open countryside should be avoided unless there is an essential need for a rural worker for the purpose of agriculture. As a result of this, it is considered that this policy supports this application.

Due to these points, it is therefore considered that this outline application is supported by the relevant local and national planning policy.

Conclusion

To conclude, following on from the agricultural consultants assessment, it is considered that the applicant has provided clear evidence of a functional requirement for an additional dwelling located on the farm holding. As a result of this, it is therefore considered that this application is in accordance and supported by the relevant local and national planning policy. Further to this, it is considered that the development outlined in this application is not overtly excessive, or could be considered for use other than that described within this application.

Carolyn Smith & James Atkinson

Agricultural Consultant & Graduate Planning Consultant