

## **Appendix B**

### **Officer's Update Report to Northern Area Planning Committee – 5 March 2015**

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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	12/00716/FULLN
<b>SITE</b>	Warrenfield Farm, Longstock Road, Goodworth Clatford, SP11 7QX, <b>GOODWORTH CLATFORD UPPER CLATFORD</b>
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#### 1.0 **AMENDMENTS**

- 1.1 Reference is made in paragraph 8.19 to comments received from a vet on 6 February 2015 who deals with the animals kept at Warrenfield Farm however this letter was not noted in the representation section (paragraph 6.3) of the main agenda report. The representation is set out in paragraph 3.1 of this update paper.

#### 2.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 2.1 **Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC) - Assessment of Report by Simon Garner submitted by the applicant on 26 January 2015.**
- Much is made in the report of the reference in the RAC assessments to the initial business plan submitted in support of the 2008 application. The business plan is relevant because it was on these projections that the 2008 assessment of essential need and financial soundness was based. I consider that this document is entirely relevant. I also accept that there is plenty of scope for a farmer to develop a business beyond (or outside) the plans proposed at the time the temporary dwelling was sought but it still remains necessary for the scale and nature of the business to grow to such levels so as to generate the essential need for a worker to live on site. This is simply not the case at Warrenfield Farm.
  - It is stated in their report that:  
“The new plan has been produced by a professional consultant and reflects a more thorough, realistic and commercially viable approach to developing the business. It draws on the first six years’ experience and shows how the business is now in a position to grow and build on the solid foundation.” [my emphasis added]. However, as noted above, this application is for a permanent dwelling. At this stage, the business should already be established and sustainable- it should not now need a further period to grow and build on the solid foundation as is the case being advanced by the report author. Mr Garner also suggests that the standard data used by RAC to assess the labour requirement of the holding is only relevant for large-scale production. In response, the report should have noted that the RAC assessment of labour included a 30% uplift to allow for the lack of economies of scale associated with smaller, more labour intensive systems.

- The report indicates that there is a need to live on site for the processing of poultry. But, this is wrong. Slaughtering animals does not require an on-site presence and the worker could easily travel to work and not increase stress levels for the birds.
- The report makes reference to the RAC comments that the enterprise must generate sufficient profits to support the construction of the dwelling and suggests that this is unnecessary as the applicants already have sufficient funds available. In response, the stance taken by RAC is a long-accepted principle (derived from PPG7 and PPS7) and is well-supported at planning appeals. Fundamentally, the planning permission inures with the land - not the person - and it is the land (and business) that must be able to generate sufficient funds to cover the all overheads, provide an appropriate wage for any unpaid worker, and then finance the build-cost of the dwelling. Such an approach ensures that a worker's dwelling will continue to be sustainable on the holding for the long-term and reduces the likelihood of an application being made in the future to remove an agricultural occupancy condition on the grounds that the holding is not sustainable.
- The report suggests that if the applicants are allowed to remain on site that there is a 'realistic opportunity that they build on the progress already made now that economic conditions are improving'. However, what would be the position if Mr Garner is not correct and Test Valley Borough Council had granted planning permission for a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling on an unsustainable unit. It could result in an application being made in the future to remove an agricultural occupancy condition on the grounds that the holding is not sustainable.

#### Conclusion

- The information provided does not alter the conclusions previously reached by RAC. Mr and Mrs Scott have had six years to prove that their business is sustainable and they have failed so to do. There is no existing essential need for a worker to live on-site and this is the foundation requirement for a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling; the welfare requirements of the limited livestock on the holding can be met from a dwelling located away from the holding.
- The enterprise has not demonstrated financial viability and sustainability.

### 3.0 REPRESENTATIONS

#### 3.1 1 x Letter - Comments

From a Vet at Endell Veterinary Group, Salisbury

- Applicants have told me that they are applying for permission to build a bungalow at this site, so that they will be best able to look after the sheep and cattle on this farm.
- The "Code of Recommendations of the Welfare of Livestock" produced by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs contains some points of interest on this subject.

- For example, the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000 No.1870) Schedule 1, paragraph 2, requires that: All animals kept in husbandry systems in which their welfare depends on frequent human attention shall be thoroughly inspected at least once a day to check that they are in a state of well-being. It also notes that at least twice a day, the stock-keeper should inspect all cattle close to calving.
- As you can imagine, lambing time is also very busy, as ewes regularly need assistance when giving birth to twins and triplets, and newborn animals need high levels of care. It is therefore often necessary to check on animals throughout the day and night.
- Animal welfare can be best optimised with frequent inspection, and it is my opinion that having a farmer or stockperson living on site is a real benefit to the animals.

#### 4.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The assessment of both the functional and financial justification for a permanent dwelling on the site is considered in the main agenda report. It is acknowledged that animals should be checked at least once a day and more often during calving and lambing however as discussed in paragraphs 8.17-8.22 of the main agenda report, this does not provide a justification for living on site. The conclusions reached in the main agenda report remain unchanged.

#### 5.0 **RECOMMENDATION** **No change.**

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