

The Application is for full planning permission for the erection of an agricultural building for free range egg production, together with 2 feed bins. The proposed building would provide 1720m² of floorspace and will accommodate 16,000 birds.

The site lies within the open countryside, the Rural Area and an Area of Landscape Enhancement as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The statutory 13-week period for the determination of this application expires on 6th June 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

Permit subject to conditions relating to the following:-

- **Finishing colour of the building and the feed bins to be as proposed unless otherwise agreed**
- **Prior approval of levels**
- **Landscaping scheme**
- **Retention of hedgerow adjoining the building and protection measures during construction in relation to hedgerow and trees within hedgerow**
- **Routeing of servicing vehicles and type**
- **External lighting shall be as set out in the Design and Access Statement and submitted technical information unless otherwise agreed.**
- **Installation and retention of silencers on extraction fans of the same type and specification installed in connection with 10/00122/FUL**
- **Waste storage and disposal in accordance with the details set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement and Odour Assessment.**

Reason for recommendation

Although the building is large, due to the topography of the land and subject to the issue of the level of the building being resolved and the provision of appropriate additional landscaping the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the surrounding landscape. Subject to conditions, it is not considered that an objection could be sustained on the grounds of impact on residential amenity or highway safety.

Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with the planning application

The proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development in compliance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and no amendments were considered necessary.

Key Issues

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of an agricultural building for the production of free range eggs. The building would measure approximately 86m x 20m in plan with an eaves height of 2.6m and an overall ridge height of 5.4m. The materials would comprise tongue and groove weatherboarding in dark teak for the walls and profiled steel sheeting for the roof in slate blue. The proposal also includes the provision of 2 no. freestanding bulk feed bins of approximately 6.5m high in galvanised steel. The building will be accessed via a new farm track from the original farmstead to the site which was constructed in association with the construction of the existing free range egg production unit which was permitted in 2010 (reference 10/00122/FUL) located to the east of the unit proposed within this application.

The site lies within the open countryside, the Rural Area, and an Area of Landscape Enhancement as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The key issues in the determination of the application are considered to be as follows:

- The principle of development
- Impact on the visual amenity of the countryside
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on highway safety

Principle of development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates, at paragraph 28, that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. The NPPF indicates that to promote a strong rural economy that this includes, amongst other things, the promotion and diversification of agriculture and other land based rural businesses.

The applicant has already diversified the agricultural business through the construction of the free range egg production unit permitted in 2010. The previously approved building accommodates 12,000 birds and as this proposal is for 16,000 birds it will more than double the number of free range hens on this site. The principle of the development is therefore supported by national policy.

Impact on the visual amenity of the countryside

The site lies within an Area of Landscape Enhancement and saved policy N20 of the Local Plan states that within such areas, it must be demonstrated that development will not further erode the character or quality of the landscape. Policy CSP1 of the CSS states that new development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres.

The proposed building would be a sizeable shed with polyester coated sheeting on the roof and tongue and groove weatherboarding on its sides and gables. The building would be within open countryside adjoining the existing free range egg production unit. Ground levels rise from the centre of Aston up to the east, but because of the topography and the fact that the site is located over the brow of a hill, it would not be visible from most of the village. There are existing substantial hedgerows along the western and northern boundaries of the site and the land rises furthermore to the east of the building, providing natural screening.

From certain public viewpoints, on both the highway and public rights of way network this building will appear on the skyline, but importantly as with the existing building the view would be principally of the end gable elevation rather than of the longer face of the building. The applicant is proposing some planting to the southern gable end of the Unit which will assist in mitigating the impact on views from the south. Beyond the immediate valley which separates the higher ground of Minn Bank from the slightly lower land upon which the building is proposed, very limited and long distance views are occasionally had of the existing building and the proposed building will be also be seen in such views. The existing building is visible from within the valley, but in the wider context, this is not a particularly high, exposed or prominent location. It is not considered that the introduction of a second building of similar scale will have a greater impact on the landscape so as to be unacceptable. The Landscape Development Section has no objections subject to appropriate conditions including tree and hedgerow protection and details of hedgerow management/gapping up.

Impact on residential amenity

The proposed building would be sited to the north-east of Aston Farm and the closest residential property would be approximately 170m to the south (on Holloway Lane). The application is accompanied by an Odour Impact Assessment, and a Design and Access Statement which has demonstrated that the development as proposed will not give rise to unacceptable odour, dust, or pests and waste management will be suitably addressed. Concern has been expressed in the

representation regarding the issue of flies arising from the existing and the proposed units, however the supporting information set out the controls that will be put in place and the legislation that applies such as that relating to chicken manure spreading indicates that at the risk of nuisance from flies is very low.

It is not considered that the vehicle movements associated with the operation would have any significant harm on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

It is considered therefore, that subject to the imposition of appropriate ensuring that the development operates in accordance with the submitted details, no objection could be sustained on the grounds of impact on residential amenity. The Environmental Health Division concurs with this opinion.

Highway safety

The proposed egg production unit would operate on a 14 month cycle whereby the birds would be delivered at the start of the cycle and removed at the end as is the case with the current building. Currently 2 rigid HGVs deliver and collect at the start and end of each cycle (4 movements in total) and the proposal would double the vehicular movements to 4 vehicles at the start and end of the cycle (8 in total). During the cycle, 2 rigid HGVs per week collect eggs from the current building and the proposal would not result in any changes. 1 HGV delivers feed to the existing building every 2.5 weeks and the frequency will increase to 1 HGV every 2 weeks following the erection of the proposed new unit.

The level of vehicular movements that arises from the existing and proposed units will not give rise to highway safety concerns. However, in light of the lanes in Aston being narrow with twisting alignment and several sharp bends it was considered appropriate to restrict the size of HGVs accessing the site and the access route when planning permission was granted under reference 10/00122/FUL. It remains appropriate to impose such restriction in this case. The Highway Authority concurs with this approach.

APPENDIX

Policies and Proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP3: Sustainability and Climate Change
Policy CSP4: Natural Assets

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy N20: Areas of Landscape Enhancement

Other material considerations include:-

Relevant National Planning Policy and guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2012\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(March 2014\)](#)

[Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan](#)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

[Planning for Landscape Change - SPG to the former Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan](#)

Relevant Planning History

In 2010 planning permission was granted for a free range egg laying unit for 12,000 birds measuring 1,530m² (85m by 18m) reference 10/00122/FUL.

Views of Consultees

The **Environmental Health Division** has no objections being satisfied that the development does not raise concerns in respect of potential land contamination and will not have an adverse impact on the local community by virtue of transport noise, noise from ventilation systems, artificial lighting, mobile plant usage on site, nor dust or odour from the storage and handling of manures and bedding.

The **Landscape Development Section** has no objection and suggests the following conditions:

- Approval of Tree and Hedgerow Protection Proposals throughout the construction phase of this development in accordance with BS5837:2012
- Approval of landscaping proposals.
- Details of hedgerow management/gapping up.

The **Highway Authority** has no objections subject to conditions requiring all delivery and collection vehicles to access the site via the route as detailed on the submitted Route Plan and such vehicles being restricted to rigid type vehicle not exceeding 12m in length.

The views of **Maer and Aston Parish Council** have been sought, but as they haven't responded by the due date it is assumed that they have no comment.

Representations

One letter of objection have been received to date indicating that the residents of Aston already suffer tremendously with fly infestations, produced directly from chicken manure from this farm. It is already unbearable and allowing the farm to produce more will make it impossible to live safely there.

Applicant/Agent's submission

The applicant has submitted the following

- Design and Access Statement
- Odour Report
- Technical Data for the Feed Tanks
- Technical Specifications on the external lighting

These documents are available for inspection at the Guildhall and on the website that can be accessed by following this link <http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/17/00189/FUL>

Background Papers

Planning file

Planning documents referred to

Date report prepared

8th May 2017