

## REPORT 2

**APPLICATION NO.** [P06/W1353](#)  
**APPLICATION TYPE** FULL  
**REGISTERED** 21.12.2006  
**PARISH** STANTON ST JOHN  
**WARD** Ms Anne Purse  
**MEMBER(S)**  
**APPLICANT** Mr & Mrs J Belcher  
**SITE** Breach Farm, Stanton St John  
**PROPOSAL** Use of land for stationing a mobile home for occupation by agricultural worker.  
**AMENDMENTS** None.  
**GRID REFERENCE** 458467208340  
**OFFICER** Miss S. Bird

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application has been referred to Planning Committee as the officer recommendation differs from the views of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 This application seeks temporary planning permission to use land for the stationing of a mobile home for an agricultural worker.
- 1.3 The proposal forms part of a more comprehensive scheme to re-establish a working, self-contained farm at Breach Farm following years of use as set-aside. This application is linked to another current application at Breach Farm which seeks permission for the erection of two cattle barns, an isolation block and associated hardstanding.
- 1.4 The site lies within the Oxford Green Belt to the south of Stanton St John and to the north of Forest Hill, as shown on the **attached** location plan. The application site lies within a 139 hectare (345 acre) farm dedicated to mixed arable, sheep and cattle, a plan of which is also **attached**. An existing redundant stone built barn and foundations around an existing yard are located nearby.

### 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It is proposed to change the use of part of an agricultural field to allow for the stationing of a mobile home. The mobile home would be used to provide residential accommodation for an agricultural worker associated with the care of livestock on the holding. The land involved measures 17m by 6m and is sited close to an existing all purpose agricultural building and cattle barns and isolation boxes proposed in another current application. A block plan is **attached**. It is the applicants' intention to re-establish a working, self-contained farm following the use of the holding for many years as set-aside.
- 2.2 In support of the application, a report prepared by AJ Marshall, Agricultural Consultants, has been submitted and is **attached**. The Council commissioned

Reading Agricultural Consultants to carry out an independent appraisal of the new enterprise at Breach Farm and any requirement for agricultural workers accommodation. The resulting report is also **attached** for information.

### 3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **CPRE Rights of Way** – Nearby footpaths should not be obstructed or encroached upon.

**Monson Engineering Ltd.** – Details of a foul drainage system to serve the proposal should be required by condition.

**Stanton St John Parish Council** – Considers that the application should be refused on the grounds that the site is located on exposed and visible open land in the Green Belt and that the village has available housing tied to agricultural tenancy at 4 Cotterills Close.

**Forest Hill Parish Council** – No strong views subject to an agricultural tie and that a replacement dwelling would not be automatically approved.

### 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 **P06/W1354/AG** – Erection of an all purpose agricultural building – Agricultural Permitted Development: Application not required 17 January 2007.

This application followed a lengthy consultation period with SODC regarding the siting of a farm complex to serve the holding. A landscape analysis was undertaken to assess alternative locations within Breach Farm. The Council's Landscape Consultants concluded that such development could be sited to reflect landscape features, utilising screening, and did not rule out the potential for development.

The barn erected under this prior notification application is of the same size and materials proposed for the barns in the current planning application.

4.2 **P07/W0954** – Erection of livestock buildings comprising of two cattle barns, associated yard and isolation boxes – Undetermined.

This application is linked with the viability and acceptability of the proposed agricultural workers dwelling which is the subject of this report. The application to erect these agricultural buildings has also been referred to Planning Committee.

4.3 **P06/W0807** – Removal of agricultural occupancy condition at 4 Cotterills Close,

Stanton St John – Planning permission granted August 2007 for the removal of agricultural tie to allow for unrestricted occupation of 4 Cotterills Close.

## **5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE**

### **5.1 Adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 Policies:**

G1 – General Strategy

G2 – Promoting Good Design

G4 – Development in the Green Belt

### **Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 Policies:**

G2 – Protection and Enhancement of the Environment

G6 – Promoting Good Design

GB2 – New Buildings in the Green Belt

GB4 – Visual Amenity in the Green Belt

A6 – Agricultural Workers' Dwellings

C1 – Landscape Character

EP1 – Prevention of Polluting Emissions

### **National Planning Guidance:**

PPG2 – Green Belts

PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

## **6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **6.1 The main issues in this case are:**

- i. Whether the proposal is acceptable in principle
- ii. Whether the impact on the surrounding landscape and Green Belt would be acceptable, and
- iii. Any other issues.

### **6.2 Principle**

The application site lies within the Oxford Green Belt and outside of the built up limits of Forest Hill and Stanton St John in the open countryside. National guidance within PPG2 and Local Plan Policy GB2 state that new residential development in such locations would be inappropriate development unless required for agriculture. PPS7 and Policy A1 of the adopted Local Plan allow for new agricultural development provided there is a need for the buildings and Policy A6, following further advice in PPS7, also allows for agricultural workers dwellings in the countryside subject to certain criteria.

Given the specialist nature of the application, Reading Agricultural Consultants were employed by the Council to advise whether the proposal met the relevant criteria. A detailed response has been given which covers each criterion in detail and is **attached** to this Committee report.

Reading Agricultural has confirmed that the applicant's intention to introduce cattle onto the holding will generate a need for year-round housing of a substantial number of beef finishers. This would create a functional need for the key stockman to be readily available at most times in order that the enterprise can function properly and to provide the necessary animal husbandry that an enterprise of this size would demand.

The proposed enterprise is likely to require the equivalent of about four full-time workers and, in the view of Reading Agricultural, the functional requirement for the ready availability of one of these key workers at most times could only be met by the provision of on-site accommodation rather than by accommodation in a nearby settlement in order to ensure the proper welfare of the housed livestock.

Reading Agricultural was made aware of the availability of an agricultural workers' dwelling at 4 Cotterills Close in Stanton St John at the time, but concluded that this dwelling would not be sufficiently close to provide the necessary levels of care and attention required by a substantial beef finishing unit. The agricultural occupancy tie has subsequently been removed from 4 Cotterills Close.

Where a new dwelling is essential to support a *new* farming activity, Annex A to PPS7 requires clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned before permission can be granted for a temporary agricultural dwelling. At the time of submission, clear evidence to show the applicants' intention was missing. Subsequently, an application for two cattle barns and isolation boxes was submitted in 2007 and it is now considered that

applicants have demonstrated a firm intention to develop the enterprise. This further application is recommended for approval, subject to a decision by Planning Committee, and has a direct influence on the applicants' ability to develop the enterprise. If planning permission is granted for the beef finishing buildings, there will be a functional requirement for an on-site workers dwelling.

In line with Annex A, where a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, it should, for the first three years, normally be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. In this instance, a mobile home is proposed. It will also be necessary to require, by condition, a review of the enterprise after three years to assess its viability and requirement for accommodation. A condition to restrict the occupation of the dwelling to an agricultural worker is also recommended.

### **6.3 Landscape Impact**

The site lies within the Oxford Heights area identified in the Council's landscape character assessment as an area of open farmed hills and valleys. The application site is set close to a natural depression in the landscape and behind an established field boundary hedge when viewed from the south. From the north, the building would be seen against the backdrop of the existing hedgerow and settlement of Forest Hill. From the B4057, the structure would be seen as part of the wider farm complex that would be created. It is acknowledged that the mobile home would be seen but would not be so materially intrusive as to be of detriment to the visual amenity afforded by the landscape quality in the area. Details of the size, scale, materials and finish of the mobile home will be required by condition to ensure minimal visual intrusion within the landscape. Whilst this site lies within the Green Belt, national and local planning policy identifies that development required for agriculture is appropriate development in such locations. The siting of this development has been the subject of detailed discussions and landscape analysis in order to secure the most appropriate siting within this sensitive landscape and to reduce the development's impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

### **6.4 Any Other Issues**

This application should be considered in conjunction with P07/W0954 which seeks permission for two cattle barns, isolation boxes and associated hardstanding. The outcomes of the two applications are linked such that there will be no requirement for a temporary agricultural workers' dwelling unless planning permission for the livestock buildings is granted. Similarly, planning permission cannot be granted for the livestock buildings without suitable on-site accommodation to provide for the necessary livestock supervision.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted because the proposal complies with the relevant Development Plan policies. National and local planning guidance allows for the provision of new agricultural workers dwellings in rural areas and Green Belt locations so long as the development meets strict criteria. An assessment of the enterprise has shown that there is a functional need for on-

site accommodation to provide the necessary levels of livestock care and attention required by a beef finishing unit of this proposed scale. The siting of the dwelling has been informed by a landscape assessment to minimise its visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and surrounding landscape in this sensitive area of open countryside.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**81. That planning permission be granted subject to:**

- 1. Temporary building 3 years unless further permission**
- 2. Agricultural occupation – 1990 Act**
- 3. No development until agricultural buildings (P07/W0954) are in use**
- 4. Full details of mobile home to be submitted**
- 5. Details of foul drainage system**

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