

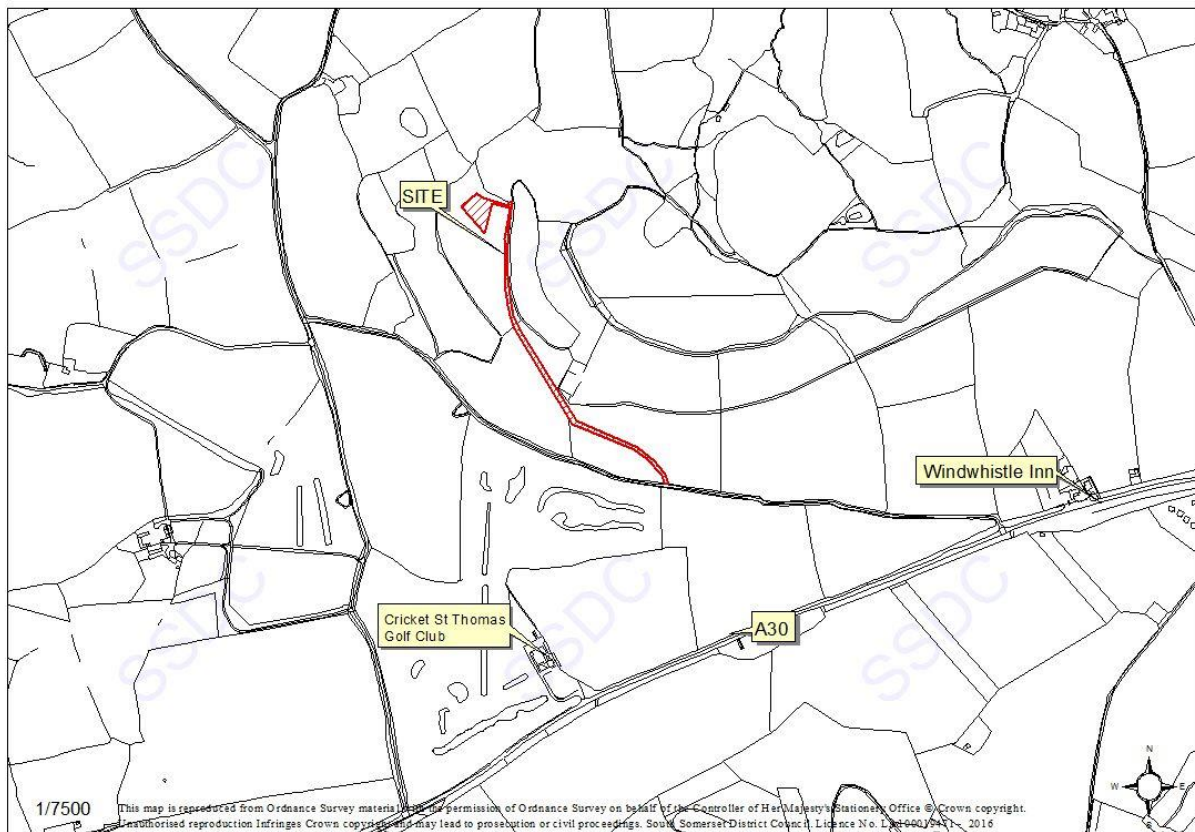
## Officer Report On Planning Application: 15/05536/FUL

<b>Proposal:</b>	The siting of a temporary agricultural workers dwelling and associated vehicular access track from New Lane. (GR 336994/110112)
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land OS 0005 At Knight House Farm New Lane Cudworth
<b>Parish:</b>	Cudworth
<b>WINDWHISTLE (SSDC Member) Ward</b>	Cllr S Osborne
<b>Recommending Officer:</b>	Case Mike Hicks Tel: 01935 462015 Email: mike.hicks@southsomerset.gov.uk.
<b>Target date:</b>	16th February 2016
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Simon Saunders
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	
<b>Application Type:</b>	Minor Dwellings 1-9 site less than 1ha

### REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

With the agreement of the Chair and Ward member to consider the relevant planning issues.

### SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



The application is made to site a temporary agricultural workers dwelling. The site is located on the northern slopes of the Windwhistle Plateau, within the northern corner of a pasture field. The field is bound by woodland to the southern and northern edges which are connected by a hedgerow. The site is at an elevation of 165 metres and provides sweeping

views across the district in a northerly direction. There is a public right of way (CH9/21) that runs through the site connecting the hamlet of Cudworth with the head of Windwhistle Hill.

The holding comprises approximately 101 hectares. Traditionally the holding has been managed from existing farm buildings and farmhouse at Knightshouse farm at the bottom of Windwhistle Hill. These are located approximately 550 metres to the north and are accessed from their northern side from Cudworth. The existing buildings consist of a range of stone built and modern agricultural buildings.

There is a grade II\* Listed Building (St Michaels Church) which borders the land holding and is approximately 140 metres to the north of the existing agricultural buildings. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments within this vicinity, fish ponds to the south of the church which border the existing agricultural buildings and a medieval village approximately 150 metres to the east.

This application is for the siting of a temporary agricultural workers dwelling for 3 years in association with a new livestock farming enterprise. There are three concurrent associated applications for the re siting of the farmstead from the original cluster of buildings at Knightshouse Farm to the proposed position adjacent to the temporary dwelling.

The applications have been substantially amended since the original submission. The amendments to the scheme are summarised as follows:

- Removal of vehicular access to the site from New Lane and installation of vehicular access from Knights House Farm.
- Re-siting of the new agricultural buildings approximately 20 metres to the south/amendments to design of agricultural building.
- Revised landscape mitigation in the form of additional planting.

The application is accompanied by an agricultural appraisal which addresses the functional need for the dwelling. The appraisal has been assessed by an independent consultant on behalf of the Planning Authority.

## **SITE HISTORY**

15/05534/FUL- The erection of a general purpose agricultural building- Pending consideration

15/05535/FUL- The erection of a general purpose agricultural building- Pending consideration

15/05537/FUL- The erection of an agricultural store and animal care building- Pending consideration

90/00905/OUT (Outline Application)- The erection of a farmhouse- Permitted with conditions.

## **POLICY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that the decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the Local Planning Authority considers that the relevant policy framework is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework and the South Somerset Local Plan 2015. The Local Plan was adopted by South Somerset District Council in March 2015.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

South Somerset Local Plan Policies

SD1- Sustainable development

EQ2- General Development

EQ4- Biodiversity

EQ5- green Infrastructure

EQ6- Woodland and Forests

EQ7- pollution Control

HG9- Agricultural workers dwellings

TA5- Transport impact of new development

TA6 Parking Standards

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Chapter 1- Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 3- Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Chapter 4- Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Practice Guide (2013)

The following sections are of most relevance-

Determining a planning application

Rural housing

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Agricultural Consultant:**

1. Considerable background information has already been submitted to the Council in relation to this application and I do not intend to repeat it; rather a brief summary is provided as a point of reference for the appraisal that follows.

2. Knight House Farm extends to 101ha and was purchased by the applicant in April 2015. Included in the sale was agricultural land, woodland and a range of agricultural buildings but (it was thought) that no dwelling was available. Information has been submitted with the planning application in the form of Land Registry documentation that shows that the existing dwelling on the property was purchased by the applicant's son (Henry Saunders). As there is no record of the applicant's name on the LR documentation there can be no suggestion that the applicant bought and immediately the sold the house to his son.

3. However, an email from the applicant's agent to SSDC (16th June 2015) during the pre-app discussions states:

- "The dwelling nearby, Knight House Farmhouse, originally served the farm but was divided into separate ownership on the death of the owner. The house does not form part of the holding and is not available".

4. Although RAC has not investigated the veracity of this statement in detail, the Humberts Sales Particulars for the property (attached) clearly indicate that the sale was for:

"A most attractive ring fenced livestock, sporting and arable holding with the benefit of far reaching views, situated in a private and sought after part of South Somerset

- A detached period three bedroom farmhouse set in lawned gardens, with potential for expansion
- In all extending to about 251.14 acres (about 101.635 ha)
- For sale as a whole by Private Treaty".

Thus the suggestion that the house was divided into separate ownership - with the implied meaning of permanently - seems inaccurate; as does the statement "does not form part of the holding". The dwelling was demonstrably part of the holding at the point of sale and the land, buildings and house were offered for sale as a whole by Private Treaty.

5. The land and buildings (but not the house) were purchased with the express intention of developing an agricultural business producing premium lamb and beef for direct sale to the general public. The applicant, Simon Saunders, is a career businessman and entrepreneur and the documentation submitted with the application states:

"Simon Saunders brings a wealth of business and project management skills to the company, together with an understanding of niche markets, their customers and the particular demands of niche products. Simon set up Ariel Motor Company in 1999, now manufacturing the Ariel Atom and Ariel Nomad sports cars as well as the Ariel Ace motorcycle in Crewkerne. The vehicles have achieved international success as well as much acclaim and the company has expanded steadily. Although far removed from livestock rearing Ariel has operated in a market dominated by very high volume manufacturers and produces low volume, high quality, and premium products for a niche of the market. There is therefore some comparison between the automotive and food business and operation in a high quality, niche area. The Ariel companies are profitable, self-funded, have grown in terms of size, employment and profitability consistently, and continue to do so. His two sons have taken over the majority of the Ariel business leaving Simon able to pursue the farming business, a long held ambition".

6. The farming system to be adopted will be based on beef and sheep enterprises utilising the land available and housed in the proposed new buildings during the winter months. Beef cross calves will be sourced from local farms or a trusted livestock marketing business (Meadow Quality Ltd) and bucket-reared for the first 6 weeks. They will then be taken through to 30+ months of age and finished as high quality beef. Rearing 30 calves a year will provide a steady flow of cattle to meet the proposed direct sales of "Somerset" beef.

7. The ewe flock will be expanded from an initial 300 ewes with purchased and home-bred ewes to reach a maximum proposed 480 ewes by Year 3 (although the pre-app email of 16th June refers to 750 ewes or 75 suckler cows). Lambing will take place from March through to April allowing the ewes and lambs to then be turned out onto grass.

8. Approximately 20ha of arable crops will also be grown each year, as part of land rotation, and will provide bedding for the livestock, as well as crops to be sold. Timber and logs will also be harvested from the 22ha of existing woodland as part of active woodland management, and sold either as timber or firewood.

9. Four new buildings are proposed. These will be arranged in a courtyard configuration in the middle of the holding and will provide:

- General purpose/livestock building - 450 m<sup>2</sup>
- General purpose/livestock building - 130 m<sup>2</sup>
- General purpose/livestock building - 170 m<sup>2</sup>
- store/isolation unit - 297 m<sup>2</sup>

10. Labour will mainly be provided by Simon and his wife, Kate, with the assistance during peak periods from a neighbouring farmer and from temporary labour such as veterinary students; shearing, foot trimming, drenching etc will be carried out by specialist sheep contractors. Marketing will be undertaken by Simon and Kate using direct sales and e-commerce.

11. In order to develop the business as planned, and provide appropriate supervision for the stock, the applicant contends that there is an essential need to live on site and the

application seeks permission for an agricultural worker's temporary dwelling.

#### Development Plan Framework

12. The Development Plan includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published in March 2012 and which revoked Planning Policy Statement 7 which had been used for assessments of such applications in the past. The NPPF deals with rural workers' dwellings at paragraph 55, noting:

"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

o the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside..."

13. The Local Development Framework against which this application will be determined includes South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) Policy HG9 "Housing for Agricultural and Related Workers". This states:

"A development proposal in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of a full-time worker in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other business where a rural location is essential should demonstrate that:

- Provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business
- No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity
- It does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing
- The dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business
- The siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimises the impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of internationally designated sites.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be the subject of a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, equestrian activities or other rural business, or a surviving partner of such a person, and any resident dependants".

14. There is though, no policy provision for agricultural workers' temporary dwellings to enable new or putative agricultural businesses to be established prior to an application for permanent residential accommodation. However, the Council will be aware that applications for such dwellings continue to be submitted (and permitted) and the following appraisal assesses the application based on the assumption that such applications can be appropriate - subject to similar criteria to those set out above.

#### Appraisal

##### Essential need

15. It is accepted that there is no established existing functional need, so the assessment below examines whether there could be an essential need in three years' time and whether provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business.

16. Keeping livestock on farms requires close attention to detail to ensure the welfare of the stock is not compromised. Legislation vests a responsibility with stock keepers to ensure that animals are kept in a manner which accords them freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition; appropriate comfort and shelter; the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and

treatment of injury, disease or infestation; freedom from fear; and freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour.

17. As far as the cattle are concerned, whilst I often support applications for an on-site presence to provide for the welfare needs of young bucket-reared calves, the numbers on this holding will be low with only 30 calves being reared per annum and spread out over the year to ensure "a steady flow of cattle to meet the proposed direct sales of "Somerset" beef"<sup>1</sup>. As such it seems likely that batches of 10 calves will be purchased in say March, May and September and bucket-reared for six weeks. Thereafter, the calves will be reared on concentrates and fodder.

18. Whilst there is a need to provide appropriate supervision for calves, such small numbers do not warrant the provision of a year-round dwelling; the older cattle do not require on-site supervision at all and will be at grass, or loose housed in the barns. (The statement in the Agricultural and Business Appraisal (ABA) (paragraph 3.7) that the Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Cattle "requires constant attention" is simply incorrect).

19. With the sheep, the period of essential need is during the lambing window (on this holding it is referred to as "March through to April"<sup>2</sup>) and historically shepherds have made use of seasonal workers' accommodation during the lambing window to provide the necessary care and attention. For the remainder of the year the sheep will be out at pasture and there is no essential need to live on the holding to provide for their welfare needs.

20. The starting premise is thus that there is no essential need to live on the holding all through the year to provide for the welfare needs of the livestock. Reference is made in the appraisal to the Codes of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock<sup>3</sup> but nowhere in these documents is there any reference to the need for on-site residential accommodation - simply appropriate supervision. Indeed, even the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (as amended) does not make any mention to the need for on-site accommodation - simply the need to check stock daily (or young calves twice-daily) and the need to respond to welfare needs propitiously.

21. However, I have recently reported in West Dorset that "with 450-500 ewes lambing in two distinct periods I would support an application for a key worker to live on site to provide for the needs of the stock"; thus, the issues are not straight forward.

22. When Planning Policy Statement 7, Annex A formed the Government guidance the test in policy sought to examine whether it was essential for the "proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times" which allowed a slightly wider interpretation that simply looking at the essential needs of the livestock. In this case whilst the livestock may not warrant year-round on-site residential accommodation, I have little doubt that the business planned by Mr Saunders will not be established as he wishes without on-site accommodation (and goes to the heart of Local Plan Policy H9, Bullet 1).

23. The investment, the desire to have hands-on capability at most times, the fear of intruders and other security risks will simply render the business plan untenable.

24. Thus, whilst the livestock elements do not generate an essential functional need, the overall business need does and in my opinion will not be developed without accommodation.

25. The NPPF seeks to encourage rural development and paragraph 28 states:

"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. To promote a

strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship".

26. The provision of a dwelling will promote economic growth, but does not sit comfortably with the requirement of paragraph 55 that the need is essential.

27. Finally though, there is the issue of the former dwelling attached to the land that Mr Saunders knowingly and presumably willingly chose not to purchase whilst knowing (himself) that there was a need to live on the holding to provide for the welfare needs of livestock. Although planning policy cannot be used to force the purchase of a dwelling, the sale of a dwelling can constitute a perceived lack of need, as is referred to at Bullet 3 of the Local Plan policy. In this case the applicant has suggested to SSDC that there was insufficient finance to purchase the house and the land but it remains the case that the applicant has sufficient funds remaining to construct the farmstead, and finance the temporary dwelling.

28. Perhaps with hindsight the applicant should have purchased a smaller area of land and retained the agricultural dwelling.

Is the enterprise economically viable?

29. For a temporary dwelling financial plans and projections are required to demonstrate that the proposed business has a reasonable prospect of success.

30. In this instance a five-year cash flow and business plan has been submitted that suggests that the business ought to be generating an income in excess of £120,000 at the end of Year 3 and a gross profit margin of about £30,000, after £20,000 of labour has been allocated. Unfortunately, the cash flow does not include all costs necessary to estimate a gross profit, as depreciation has been omitted as have various fixed costs such as the cost of the temporary accommodation.

31. However, I consider that for a temporary dwelling the costings are sufficiently sound to enable the business to be developed. In writing this I am mindful of a Planning Inspector in Wiltshire who concluded:

(APP/Y3940/A/13/2200283, Land at Ashley, Box, Chippenham, Wiltshire)

"Turning to the proposed viability of the suggested enterprise, the appellant has submitted a Business Plan which sets out estimated costs and revenue for the proposed operation. There is some dispute regarding the trading price of alpacas and the future health of the alpaca industry in this country generally. However regardless of these matters, when taking into account the cost of the labour identified as required (using the minimum wage), the variable and relevant fixed costs and return on capital, the alpaca and small scale rabbit breeding side of the suggested operation would be relatively close to meeting the viability test in year 3 and 4. This would be the case whether the income from the stress therapy sessions for humans, experience days, birthday parties and meditation courses were taken into account

or not. Therefore, for the time being it would appear premature to reach a judgement that financial viability for the suggested enterprise would be out of the question at the end of the trial period. Therefore, on the basis that the alpaca and rabbit breeding enterprise is already up and running, there is little reason to dismiss it as not having been planned on a sound financial basis before it has had an opportunity to prove itself during a trial period". (Emphasis added)

32. I consider the same reasoning could be applied to this application, albeit the applicant will need to incur significant costs in the development of the buildings.

Does any suitable accommodation exist (or be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity?

33. I am not aware of any dwellings in the immediate vicinity that is available (now) to provide for the residential needs of the holding. Clearly, the former dwelling was available prior to it being purchased by the applicant's son, but it is now no longer available.

Does the proposed dwelling involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing?

34. The Local Plan Policy expressly poses the question whether the proposed new dwelling replaces a dwelling recently sold as general market housing and it is crystal clear that the proposed new temporary dwelling does exactly that. Although there is no suggestion that the applicant bought and immediately the sold the house on to his son the house - that was providing for the functional needs of the holding.- did form part of the whole package offered for sale and it has recently been disposed as general market housing.

Is the dwelling larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business?

35. This element does not fall to be considered for a temporary dwelling.

Does the siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimise the impact upon the local landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside and ensure no adverse impact upon the integrity of nationally and internationally designated sites, such as AONB.

36. RAC does not comment on non-agricultural issues.

This is a difficult application to assess but the livestock generate only limited - and of short duration - essential (functional) needs. However, it seems likely that the business will not be developed in the manner proposed if there is not a dwelling on site, or nearby.

#### **Landscape Officer:**

Response to amended plans:

We now have a number of amendments before us, which from a landscape perspective, have made some useful changes to the proposal;

(a) Amended access drive.

My initial response identified the access proposal off New Road to be significantly adverse, both in the point of access, and its intrusion across undeveloped upper hillside. This is now removed from the scheme, with the new proposal intending an approach from the north, rising gradually from Knights House farm, to cross two fields to reach the application site. The access will be expressed as a stone track, which will have capacity to blend in to the agricultural landscape, with sections visible to local walkers, but otherwise relatively unobtrusive. Whilst there remains a negative impact, I consider it minor adverse, and this change to be a substantive improvement on the initial proposal.

(b) Re-sited farm building group.

The building group is relocated circa 20 metres to the south, and reconfigured to result in a



slight reduction in both the building footprint, and in its profile, such that the office building no longer projects above the ridge elevation of the other buildings in the group. This shift will marginally reduce the visual profile of the buildings as viewed from the northern approaches, and allow space for greater substance to the landscape mitigation, which I view to be improvements over the initial site arrangement and building mass.

(c) Additional planting proposals.

Further planting is added to the plan, particularly in the vicinity of the new farmstead, to play down building presence, and I acknowledge this to be positive. I would recommend some changes to the proposed planting mixes, but this is not pertinent at this stage. I also acknowledge the positive intention of local-species orchard planting to the east of the site.

In the 4th paragraph of my initial response, the landscape case against the siting of the farm buildings is set out, and it remains pertinent to provide a case for refusal, LP policy EQ2. However, I acknowledge that the weight of the landscape objection is now lessened by these latest changes, particularly to the site access, as (a) above. I accept that the holding will benefit from fit-for-purpose buildings to assist farm management, and to that end, have suggested that a more landscape-sympathetic siting would be to build upon the established farm building group by Knights House Farm, in a manner that would not compromise the adjacent heritage assets. This solution remains the favoured landscape option, but I understand that it does not best capitalise on improvements that can be gained for improved management of the stock and the farm enterprise. Ultimately that is one for the planning balance, but if you are minded to support this revised application, then some reduction in the farm building form at Knights House Farm should be sought, to gain some balance from the overall proposal.

First response:

The above applications intend the potential relocation of the main farmstead from its current location to the south of Cudworth church (where the current farmhouse - not in the applicant's personal ownership - and building group are to remain) to a pasture field between the northern ends of Higher and Old Woods. It intends the construction of 3 agricultural buildings; a farm store/office; a temporary dwelling; and two hard-surfaced yards. It is sited adjacent the corner of a pasture field, contained on either side by woodland, on a relatively level platform circa 165m aod, where the steep scarp slopes of the north face of Windwhistle Hill merge into the rolling land of Windwhistle's foothills. The site is divorced from existing built form, the nearest being the host farmstead, 0.55km to the north. A new site access is proposed, coming off New Lane, at the head of Windwhistle Hill circa 205m aod, and descending northwest across the open upper escarpment.

The recently published PPG (Natural Environment) has re-iterated the necessary role of landscape character assessment in planning for change due to development without sacrifice of local character and distinctiveness. An understanding of landscape character is also utilised to help determine a view on what may - or may not - be acceptable in terms of development in any particular landscape. Characterisation is about what is distinctive and particular in a place, and these qualities of place are matters to which planning weight is given when assessing the potential impact of new development, along with the need for any proposal to conserve and enhance local landscape character, and reinforce local distinctiveness, to comply with local plan policy EQ2. This policy guidance provides the planning context for this landscape evaluation:

The landscape of the northern face of the Windwhistle plateau is characterised by a steep, folding scarp, with a landcover of pasture fields, and extensive woodland blocks - some of which are fragments of ancient semi-natural woodland - that cover much of the main, upper escarpment. From the toe of the escarpment, the gradient eases into a broader, undulating

landform, formed by the incision of the River Isle's headwater streams, which create a series of north-south valleys separating mixed rolling agricultural land. Other than the singular hamlet of Higher Chillington, 2 km to the east, the main Windwhistle scarp is characterised by a lack of development form, and it is notable that the local farms and hamlets all lay at a lower elevation, below the spring-line, and are located on the lower Windwhistle foothills to the north. This is the broad landscape context within which this proposal is located.

Turning to the application site, the development proposal lays within a landscape pattern that is long-established - indicated on the Somerset Historic Environment Record as anciently enclosed (pre-17th century) farmland. It is characterised by its meadow context; woodland setting; and the steep, sheltering hillsides to the south. The hillsides and woodland bring a strong sense of enclosure to the site, which with its lack of development presence, and separation from the characteristic pattern of local farm settlement, establishes a strong sense of remoteness by South Somerset standards, which is both distinctive, and becoming increasingly rare. The introduction of a group of farm buildings into this deeply rural landscape, will establish built elements where development form is far-removed, to erode the unspoilt and locally distinctive character of the area. The introduction of building, and vehicular, nightlight to both the farm site and its access across the face of the upper scarp, within what is a dark-sky location, similarly erodes the tranquil character of this part of the Windwhistle scarp. Additionally, visibility becomes an issue when a proposal is either incongruously scaled or located, and in being sited in a location that is served by, and thus visible from, the well-used local rights of way network, the building complex will be seen as visually intrusive. I would assess this aggregation of landscape impacts to be both significant and adverse, which in substantively eroding local landscape character and distinctiveness, does not meet the requirements of policy EQ2. The suggestion of a new access off a narrow rural lane, with its incongruous bellmouth access - 7x the width of New Lane; the loss of circa 30 metres of hedgerow; the obtrusive level of that access relative to the falling slope, which will be circa 600mm above the general ground level circa 12 metres into the field, to then cross steeply-falling, highly-visible, non-developed land, is also considered a significant adverse landscape impact, to similarly tell against this application.

I accept that the holding will benefit from the introduction of fit-for-purpose buildings to assist future farm management. In the face of this landscape objection, is raised the need to look for possible alternatives, by which the landowner's main objectives can still be achieved. I agree with the application D&A statement that there are few ready options, and having walked the site, the only alternative that works in landscape terms is the redevelopment of the current farm site; its extension south; and use of the current access. As built form is already established in this location, and the site characterised by the existing farm building forms, the landscape impact would not be so extensive as would result from this application proposal, providing building scale, form and finish is strictly controlled, and there is no footprint spread toward, or increased visual intrusion upon, the heritage assets to the north and east.

Should you consider there is a case for the proposal as submitted, that would over-ride the weight of the landscape objection, then I consider it essential that a number of amendments to the proposal are sought, to lessen visual impact, and provide a level of enhancement, as is required by policy EQ2:

- 1) The grouping and varied heights of the proposed farm buildings is sensible, and potentially helps to play down massing impacts, yet having the tallest building - the store/office (ridge height almost 9.00 metres above lower yard level) - at the more visible edge of the complex, and at a raised elevation, will appear obtrusive, and potentially draw the eye. I would suggest either the height is reduced, or the building shifted south to the opposite corner of Building 1, to appear less obvious in the approach from the north. I would also suggest that the 1st floor windows are removed from the north elevation, for these are

uncharacteristic of a traditionally-styled farm building range; and aligned along the most prominent part of the building group's elevation, will project both an incongruity; and nightlight.

2) I note from consultation responses that the suggestion of the complex being shifted further south, to a more visually contained location, has been mooted. Whilst this does not deal with the major impacts I have outlined above, I do agree that in shifting the farmstead further south along the woodland's side, it would appear less imposing as viewed from the north as approached on the local rights of way, and this would be beneficial.

3) Whilst the proposal for screen planting to the south of the buildings is welcomed, I consider that a more comprehensive approach is needed to landscape mitigation. To that end, I would suggest further hedgerow enclosure of the upper yard, linking into other woody features, is essential to provide both visual and physical containment of the farmstead. Further planting to consolidate the existing landscape pattern, in relation to both the track, and the farmstead, should also be agreed pre-determination.

4) The access off New Lane appears over-scaled alongside the narrow, enclosed width of the lane itself, and there is little that can be done to modify the incongruous ground profile of the access track. There is similarly little scope for a reduction in the size of the access. It may be possible to counter the worst excesses of the track's visual impact, by use of dark mortar tones; and washed, larger dark aggregate finishes.

5) There is an acknowledgement in the D&A statement of the sensitivity of the northern end of the holding, relative to the scheduled monuments and listed buildings located to the north and northeast of the present farmstead. Noting that the current farm buildings are now deemed inadequate, and that there will be limited use of them, and to compensate for the adverse impact of the new site, I believe there is scope for environmental enhancement in the removal of these buildings, with any necessary replacement (for hay storage) being of more restrained footprint and form, with appropriate landscape treatment, to thus present a more balanced scheme overall.

6) Finally, I am advised that - in acknowledging the applicant's highly successful auto business - some local apprehension has been expressed that the challenging terrain of the farm holding would be suited for testing off-road vehicles. I had similarly expressed such a concern at an earlier stage, for the introduction of such a use within this landscape would be both significantly adverse and damaging. We were subsequently re-assured by the applicant and his positive plans for both the land and woodland, that such use is not intended. However, aware that in a challenging economic climate, business needs may generate change, then to placate local concern, is there the possibility of the removal of PD rights of such use of land, such that the only vehicular use of the land is for the purposes of agricultural management only? I would welcome your thoughts and further discussion on this.

### **Parish Council:**

Third response (In response to most recent amended plans):

At the Parish Meeting on the 17th October, the amended plans were considered and discussed. Whilst some of the concerns of the parish have been addressed, there is still considerable concern that this development is proposed on an entirely greenfield site in a prominent position away from the main hub of the village and removed a considerable distance from the existing farm buildings. The impact on the beautiful hill that rises up to the iconic Windwhistle Ridge will be irreversible.

It was appreciated that changing the access to the proposed site by getting rid of the track from New Lane would be an improvement, along with the reconfiguration of the proposed buildings. However, the proposed two storey building still gives cause for concern as its use remains unclear and it is difficult to see how this suits a farming operation.

The change of orientation of the temporary dwelling, whilst shown on the plans, is not mentioned, therefore we were unsure why this has changed. The concern still remains (see parish response of 26th January) that the temporary dwelling should only be built if the other

applications are passed, and then to ensure it is built simultaneously with the other buildings. The intended use of the existing buildings seem very vague. Please refer to the Parish response of 26th January 2016, where the Parish Meeting asks the council to consider a condition whereby the existing buildings, which are dilapidated and contain asbestos, are removed if the planning for the new buildings should be approved.

The view of the majority of parishioners at the meeting is that the existing site remains more suitable for developing a more up to date and appropriate range of buildings, as it would be developing what is, in effect, a brown field site.

Whilst the existing site remains more visible to many of the homes in the village, we have a responsibility to maintain the peace, tranquility and beauty of the landscape.

Most of the concerns of the first two Parish responses remain (26th January and 29th March), and we ask that these are taken into consideration along with this response, when examining the amendments to these applications.

First response:

The parish support the idea of sustainable farming at Knights House Farm but raised the following concerns at the Parish Meeting held on January 7th 2016.

The application is for General Purpose agricultural buildings whereas the business plan states that the buildings will be used for a livestock enterprise. There are concerns that the proposed buildings are not suitable for livestock re design & ventilation particularly roof ventilation.

Concern re slurry, dung storage, & run off re water supply to village properties & risk of contamination. There are no facilities for this in the plan.

The parishioners have concerns that farm traffic will not be reduced as stated in the plan, due to the existing buildings at Knights House Farm still being in use for storage of fodder & bedding etc. according to Mr Saunders at the said meeting. This will involve tractors travelling through the village to the proposed new buildings and thus negating the benefits as stated in business plan of farm traffic reduction through the village. While there is a known track across the farm it is unlikely that this would be passable during the winter months when the proposed buildings will need to be serviced with fodder and bedding.

The Parish Meeting would ask the council to consider a condition whereby the existing buildings; which are dilapidated and contain asbestos, are removed if the planning for the new buildings were approved. We would also like consideration to permissible rebuilding of the original barns to be restricted.

There is a statutory duty to consider the impact this development will have on listed buildings & heritage assets, in conserving the natural environment. The proposed buildings are in the sight of St Michaels Church, The Old Vicarage, & the ancient monument, which includes the moat, carp ponds & site of medieval village. The footpath from New Road runs past the proposed site close to the General Agricultural Buildings the visible impact of the proposed buildings on views from public vantage points should also be considered.

With regard to the 4 applications for this site, there is concern that application 15/05536/FUL (siting of temporary Agricultural Dwelling) should not be considered unless the other applications are successful. There is also concern that the application 15/05537/FUL that consists of a 2 storey animal care Centre with 'storage' above' would be too visible and consideration should be given to reducing the height to 1 storey. The Parish Meeting would prefer a larger footprint on the Southside of the plan to house the storage facility; this would have a lesser impact on the landscape and would allay concerns of the Parishioners.

The buildings, if set back south approx.140m would sit in a natural dip and therefore be less visible and have a lesser impact on the listed buildings in its sight line.

Second response (in response to first set of amended plans):

Following the first Parish Response to this application, all the original concerns contained in that response remain. The proposed amendments to the plans are minimal and do not address the concerns of the Parish.

The visibility of & need for the two storey general purpose building/ animal care centre with the upper floor being used for 'general storage' was again brought into question and while the roof line has been lowered it was still deemed preferred that the buildings, if passed should be single storey.

The Parish is supportive of sustainable farming at Knight's House Farm, and from the minutes at the meeting to discuss the amendments on 23rd March, it was apparent there would be a more favourable view if the applicant considered re-developing the original farm site, with the correct permissions and consideration to the historic sites and listed buildings nearby.

This view was unanimous at the Parish meeting held on Wednesday 23rd March although no formal vote was recorded. It must also be recognised that the site of the original buildings is far more visible to many of the residents homes, but they would prefer any development and improvement to take place on what is, in effect, a brownfield site, rather than the proposed site, which would cause a huge and irrevocable change to a previously unspoilt and untouched landscape.

The original farm site has been the centre of a farming business for hundreds of years and we see no reason that this should not continue to be the case.

**Highway Authority:**

In response to amended site access:

The application is an amended plan for an application that my colleague Mr Malcolm Jones commented on previously where the Highway Authority raised no objection. This current application has the proposed access on to Knights Lane which is to the north. This proposal would mean that no agricultural access would need to be constructed as the red line adjoins Knights Lane in a location where traffic flow is likely to be extremely low as Knights Lane terminates next to the red line on the plan. Knights Lane leads on a rural road that does not have a high traffic flow and due to its agricultural surroundings, is likely to have an existing level of agricultural traffic.

Taking the above into account, the Highway Authority does not wish to raise an objection to the proposal, however, should the Local Planning Authority grant planning permission then I would recommend that the following conditions are attached:

1. The area allocated for parking and turning on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.
2. The building hereby permitted shall only be used in connection with the working and management of the adjoining farmland. It shall not be used for any other purpose without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

**Ecologist:**

Most recent response in relation to submitted bat surveys: (The first and second responses are included as an appendix to this report).

I confirm I no longer maintain an objection to these applications following completion of bat activity surveys.

I agree with the 'Overview of the ecological survey results, mitigation and enhancements' (KP Ecology) and that the application site isn't particularly sensitive in terms of the bat species that forage and commute in and around the site, and that the proposed development is therefore unlikely to cause significant disturbance to any local bat populations.

Whilst it would still be preferable not to place such a development amongst features that are mapped as components of the local ecological network (as detailed in my original response of 12 January 2016), the proposed tree, hedge and orchard planting could be considered as appropriate mitigation. Provided this can be ensured (e.g. by condition) then I do not maintain an objection in this respect.

The only other matter I originally raised was that of the new entrance off New Lane and possible impacts of a visibility splay upon dormice. Due to the amended access arrangements this is no longer an issue.

**Environment Agency:**

We are not aware of any imminent plans to make everywhere under NZV designation. However, there is always the possibility that the NVZ designated areas will be altered or enlarged to encompass sites that haven't previously been with an NVZ area. We therefore always recommend that when farmers are considering constructing slurry/dirty water system they aim for the NVZ storage requirements.

Outside of NVZ areas there are not specific controls for solid manure storage, but drainage from solid manure heaps is considered to be 'slurry', so where this poses a risk to controlled water, it must be collected and contained. The code of good agricultural practice (CoGAP) recommends that stores should only be constructed with a sealed floor, and any containment tank used to collect drainage must meet SSAFO standards.

For field heaps follow the CoGAP advice, but where other storage is on permeable ground the risk to groundwater or other pollution pathways have to be considered to decide if it's acceptable. Normally such areas will be unacceptable as you can't collect and contain any drainage.

If field heaps are within an NVZ area then there are controls:

If you have poultry manure or other types of solid manure YOU MUST store them:

- In a vessel;
- On an impermeable base, with appropriate collection and containment of runoff;
- In a roofed building; or
- In an appropriately located temporary field heap. Field heaps must be of material that is stackable and doesn't give rise to free drainage.

Again, as good practice we would recommend that the NVZ guidance is followed even for those outside of current NVZ areas.

**Environmental Monitoring Officer:**

I've attached a map showing the location of the private water supplies within the vicinity of this planned development. The nearest one is approximately 600m to the north of the development so this is not of concern. All of the properties down in Cudworth are on private water supplies I believe, either spring chambers, wells or boreholes. Due to the location of the proposed development though being such a distance from the sources of these private water supplies it is unlikely to directly affect them. Associated activities with the new farm, such as location of manure heaps etc. may potentially cause issues if they are located close

to the private water supplies.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Following consultation, letters have been received from 16 nearby properties, 11 objecting, 3 making representations and 2 in support of the proposals. Representations have been received from The Ramblers objecting to the application. The following comments are made objecting to the proposal:

Landscape considerations:

- The site is inappropriate from a landscape perspective and will have an adverse impact on the tranquil character of the hillside and will have an adverse impact on users of the public right of way.
- The proposed site is impractical for future occupants.
- There is an existing site at the bottom of the hill which is more appropriate.
- Weather conditions at the proposed site are harsher (cold, misty, north facing) than at the bottom of the hill and therefore inappropriate for young animals.

Justification:

- Knightshouse farmhouse was removed from the holding by the applicant when the site was purchased, contrary to Local Plan policy.

Highways:

- Concerns that the revised access will bring additional traffic through the village.
- The highway network surrounding the site is substandard.
- If permission is granted it should be on the condition that existing buildings at the bottom of the hill are removed to alleviate concerns of these being developed in the future.
- There is likely to be conflict between commercial vehicles and pedestrians on the public right of way.

Other comments:

- The proposed site would be isolated and not subject to surveillance from surrounding properties, hence more vulnerable to thefts.
- Concerns over effluent produced from the buildings. There is currently an issue with effluent discharge from the existing buildings.

The following comments are made in support of the proposal:

- The proposed buildings would be in a central position within the holding.
- The proposed buildings would provide protection from the weather and good security for livestock.
- Buildings will not affect anyone and will have minimal landscape impact.
- Application will benefit wildlife.
- People who want to get into farming should be supported.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Principle of development:**

The application site lies in open countryside. In terms of determining the application the key consideration relates to whether the proposal complies with the development plan and if not whether material considerations indicate that planning permission should be granted. In addition to this, the NPPF is a material consideration that is given enhanced weight where local policies are absent, out of date or silent on any given issue.

Overall the NPPF provides that there should be a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development'. Paragraph 7 sets out three dimensions to sustainability, economic, social and

environmental. More specifically, paragraph 55 of the NPPF relates to dwellings in rural areas and seeks to promote housing where it will enhance and maintain the vitality of rural communities. Of significance it states that Planning Authorities should avoid 'isolated' dwellings unless there are special circumstances of which the following is of relevance:

- The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;

Having regard to the above, it is considered that the site is isolated and therefore paragraph 55 would apply.

Policy HG9 relates to housing for agricultural and other related workers and is considered to be the basis for determining such applications. It states that housing in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of a full time worker in agriculture or other businesses where a rural location is essential should demonstrate that:

- There is a clearly established existing functional need;
- The enterprise is economically viable;
- Provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the business;
- No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity;
- It does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing;
- The dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business;
- The siting and landscaping of the new dwelling minimises the impact upon the local landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside and ensures no adverse impact upon the integrity of nationally and internationally designated sites, such as AONB.

The established methodology for assessing rural worker dwellings is contained within Annexe A to PPS 7. Whilst PPS7 is superseded by the NPPF, it remains the established methodology for assessing 'essential need' and this approach has been backed up many times at planning appeal.

The relevant criteria within Annexe A require the following:

- "(i) clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (Significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
- (ii) Functional need (see paragraph 4 of this Annex);
- (iii) Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
- (iv) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
- (v) Other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access, are satisfied".

The above criteria are addressed as follows:

**Functional need:**

The Councils agricultural consultant suggests that some of the claims in relation to functional need for a continuous onsite presence are not proven, however it is accepted that the business plan would not come to fruition without an onsite presence. This conclusion is considered to comply with the requirement of Policy HG 9 which requires applicants to demonstrate that 'provision onsite is necessary for the operation of the business', although it is accepted that the need for onsite presence is unclear purely from a livestock perspective



has not been fully demonstrated.

Notwithstanding the above, regard is also given to paragraph 28 of the NPPF which advises (inter alia) that Local Planning Authorities should:

- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

Additionally, the Agricultural Consultant also states:

"However, I have recently reported in West Dorset that "with 450-500 ewes lambing in two distinct periods I would support an application for a key worker to live on site to provide for the needs of the stock"; thus, the issues are not straight forward".

Taking the above statement into account, the scale of the business is such that with two lambing periods it would be possible to demonstrate an essential need. Weight is also given to the NPPF which is positive in its support for rural enterprises and this is an enterprise that would not be viable without the provision of a dwelling. There is also a degree of conflict with paragraph 55 of the NPPF which refers to the "essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside".

Having regard to the above, it is considered that a case could be made either way in relation to the requirement to reside on site. Whilst there is a degree of conflict with policy HG9 in this regard, on balance taking into account the combined needs of the livestock and business, it is considered that the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated a need to reside on site and therefore the proposal can be supported in this regard.

**The enterprise is economically viable:**

The Councils Agricultural Consultant concludes that the proposed business would be economically viable and therefore the proposal would comply with Policy HG9 in this regard.

No suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity/disposal of existing farmhouse:

The applicant has not included detail of other potential available dwellings within the locality that would be suitable for an agricultural worker and therefore the availability of other dwellings is unknown but the number within a reasonable distance is likely to be very low or nil. Of note there was an existing dwelling located adjacent to the existing farm buildings which was for sale (under separate title) at the same time as the remainder of the holding. The existing dwelling is not subject to an agricultural tie and as such it does not have to be occupied by an agricultural worker and it is understood that it has been occupied independently from the functioning of the holding and agricultural buildings since the late 1980s.

The applicant did not to purchase the dwelling, rather it was purchased by a close family member and as such the applicant maintains that it is not available. Additional information submitted by the applicant indicates that the applicant could not afford to purchase the dwelling at the time and it states that the dwelling due to being on a separate title could not be purchased with the land. These veracity of the statement on affordability is difficult to prove.

The loss of opportunity to utilise the existing house with the farm holding is unfortunate and on the basis of the circumstances around the purchase of the holding a case can be made that the proposed new dwelling would be contrary to bullet point 5 of Policy HG9. In these circumstances however, on balance the degree of conflict is not sufficient to warrant refusal given that the dwelling has not been associated with the farming activities on the holding for a number of years and the son of the applicant is understood to be not involved in the

farming enterprise or the provision of labour for it. The situation is slightly distinct from a situation whereby a dwelling currently used in connection with a holding is sold on the open market. Accordingly the proposal is on balance acceptable in this regard.

**Character and appearance:**

The applicant has undertaken various alterations to the proposal in response to a strong objection by the Councils landscape officer. The Landscape Officer states that the original objection is still pertinent; however the weight of objection is reduced. The removal of the access track from the top of Windwhistle Hill represents the most substantial improvement in landscape terms and the applicant has proposed additional landscape mitigation which can be secured via a planning condition.

As stated by the Councils Landscape officer, the site is very isolated and an area of very distinct and special character, due to various characteristics such as surrounding topography and very isolated character. The landscape Officer states:

"the main Windwhistle scarp is characterised by a lack of development form, and it is notable that the local farms and hamlets all lay at a lower elevation, below the spring-line, and are located on the lower Windwhistle foothills to the north".

In the first response the Landscape Officer further stated:

The hillsides and woodland bring a strong sense of enclosure to the site, which with its lack of development presence, and separation from the characteristic pattern of local farm settlement, establishes a strong sense of remoteness by South Somerset standards, which is both distinctive, and becoming increasingly rare. The introduction of a group of farm buildings into this deeply rural landscape, will establish built elements where development form is far-removed, to erode the unspoilt and locally distinctive character of the area. The introduction of building, and vehicular, nightlight to both the farm site and its access across the face of the upper scarp, within what is a dark-sky location, similarly erodes the tranquil character of this part of the Windwhistle scarp. Additionally, visibility becomes an issue when a proposal is either incongruously scaled or located, and in being sited in a location that is served by, and thus visible from, the well-used local rights of way network, the building complex will be seen as visually intrusive. I would assess this aggregation of landscape impacts to be both significant and adverse, which in substantively eroding local landscape character and distinctiveness, does not meet the requirements of policy EQ2.

This response highlights the visual sensitivity of this particular site and on the basis of the original plans it was considered that the impact would be significantly adverse.

The applicant has since made amendments to the proposals including the removal of the access from the head of Windwhistle Hill (New Lane) and this was one of the most harmful aspects of the proposal. Alterations have also been made to the farm buildings including re-siting 20 metres to the south, reduction in scale and lowering in height of the two storey 'office' building and the introduction of additional planting to mitigate the visual impacts.

In the most recent response to these amendments, the Landscape Officer has since stated that the re-sited track would result in minor adverse impact, although it would be a significant improvement over the original proposal. In respect to the principle of siting buildings within the location proposed, the Landscape officer states:

In the 4th paragraph of my initial response, the landscape case against the siting of the farm buildings is set out, and it remains pertinent to provide a case for refusal, LP policy EQ2. However, I acknowledge that the weight of the landscape objection is now lessened by these latest changes, particularly to the site access, as (a) above.

The improvements to the scheme in landscape terms are fully acknowledged, in particular the improvements to the location of the vehicular access. The applicant has been willing to concede and make improvements in a number of areas including setting the building 20 metres southwards and the provision of additional soft landscaping. However, the fundamental case for objection remains in relation to the siting of the farmstead and the dwelling. In particular the aspects of harm identified above result from the location of the proposed dwelling and farmstead and as such the alterations to the configuration of the buildings and additional planting do not overcome such a fundamental and significant impact in landscape character terms. It is acknowledged that the dwelling would be temporary, however in granting permission in this locality at this stage, the Planning Authority would essentially be accepting this general vicinity for a permanent dwelling should the functional and financial tests be met in three years time. The acceptability of the location for a permanent dwelling therefore needs to be considered.

The applicant has made a case for the proposed site on several grounds and these are relevant in balancing the harm identified above. The proposed site is relatively central within the holding and is an improvement on the original farmstead in this regard. The applicant has also made a case that the proposed site is more sheltered than at the bottom of the hill due to the wind buffering provided by the woodland. A letter has been submitted by the applicant's vet who supports the proposed site on this basis. The applicant has also submitted a letter from the Local Police Liaison Officer supporting the proposed site on the basis of farm security.

These aspects of the application provide some weight in favour of the proposed site, although it would be overstating the case to say that farming at the bottom of the hill is not possible as the location for most farmsteads in the locality have historically evolved to be in such positions. Overall, whilst the scheme has been improved, it is considered that the uniquely tranquil environment and special landscape character of this site would be harmed by the provision of a dwelling and associated farmstead. The associated development such as hardstanding, domestic activity, lighting etc would exacerbate this harm. Additionally the development of the original farmstead at the bottom of the hill can be achieved in an acceptable manner taking into account the nearby heritage assets and landscape character. Given the fall back available to the applicant to farm the land it is considered that the landscape harm would not be justified. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

#### **Ecology:**

The Councils ecologist original objected to the application on the basis of the potential sensitivity of the location from an ecological perspective. Concern was raised over the proximity to ecological networks, lack of evidence in the form of bat surveys as to the level of activity in the locality and associated potential impacts such as impacts on bats from artificial lighting.

The applicant has since carried out a bat survey which demonstrated that the site is not particularly sensitive in terms of the bat species that forage and commute in and around the site, and that the proposed development is therefore unlikely to cause significant disturbance to any local bat populations. Conditions can be imposed to achieve ecological enhancements such as landscaping and the provision of bat boxes. Additionally it would be considered necessary to condition details of external lighting in the event of planning permission being granted. Having regard to the above it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy EQ4 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

#### **Residential amenity:**

Having regard to the distance of the site from neighbouring properties it is considered that there would be no harm to the amenities of nearby occupiers as a result of the proposal in

relation to noise, odour and disturbance.

**Highway safety:**

The Highway Authority has commented that there is no objection to the proposed development. The rights of way department initially objected to the proposal as they thought the public right of way would be obstructed but on closer inspection they have withdrawn this objection.

The development would result in a section of the public right of way being surfaced. Given the relatively low level of traffic, good visibility along the right of way and ease for pedestrians and vehicles to pass one another, this aspect is considered to be acceptable. The rights of way department at the County Council would need to consider whether a temporary diversion is required during construction and would need to agree the finishing material of the vehicular access where it coincides with the public right of way. Having regard to the above it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

**Conclusion:**

Having carefully assessed all of the relevant issues it is considered that the landscape harm outweighs the benefits of the proposal. The Councils landscape officer has considered that the area around the existing farm building group to the north of the site can be redeveloped whilst achieving an acceptable impact on landscape character and heritage assets. The proposal therefore does not justify the resulting landscape harm and as such the proposal is contrary to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

**RECOMMENDATION**

Refuse permission

**SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

01. The proposal would be located in a prominent position on an isolated hillside location that is characterised by a strong sense of remoteness. The proposed dwelling and associated development would detract from the existing landscape character and would be contrary to the established pattern of existing development within the locality. Additionally there are other locations within the holding that can be developed without landscape harm resulting. As such there would be harm local landscape character that is not sufficiently outweighed by the merits of the proposal contrary to Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).
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