

**11. FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF A SLURRY STORE AT STONEY CLIFFE FARM, BUXTON ROAD, UPPER HULME. (NP/SM/1223/1473, LB)**

**APPLICANT: MR R BELFIELD**

**Summary**

1. The application seeks planning permission for a slurry store at Stoney Cliffe Farm, Upper Hulme.
2. The proposal would have an adverse visual impact upon the valued landscape character of the site and surrounding area, contrary to adopted policies GSP1, GSP3, L1, DMC3 and DME1.
3. There are no further policy or material considerations indicating that planning permission should be granted, and the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

**Site and Surroundings**

4. Stoney Cliffe Farm is a large farming enterprise consisting of 1400 pigs per annum, 125 suckler cows and 800 breeding ewes located in open countryside in the South West Peak 700 metres east of Upper Hulme and 900 metres north east of Blackshaw Moor. Blackshaw Moor reservoirs and the southern boundary of the National Park are located 250 metres to the south.
5. It is accessed by a track off the A53, which is shared with Hurdlow Farm, and is farmed in conjunction with Stoney Cliffe.
6. The farm comprises of a dwelling and traditional buildings south west of a large range of modern portal frame agricultural buildings. The agricultural buildings, all of similar scale and design are laid out in a block adjacent to one another. A manure store is located within the building furthest north. Sporadic trees and hedges are located around the farm.
7. The application site is approximately 120 metres to the north of the farm group. A public right of way (PROW) runs approximately 300 metres to the north in a south east direction towards 'The Mermaid'. An area of Natural Zone and Ancient Woodland is to the south and east of the farm which is also open access land.
8. The nearest neighbouring properties, not in ownership of the applicant are located at the beginning of the access track outside of the National Park.

**Proposal**

9. The proposal is for the erection of cylindrical slurry store and associated works.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:**

- 1 **The siting and appearance of the development in this open and isolated countryside location would have a significant visual impact and harm the landscape of the National Park contrary to Core Strategy policies GSP1, GSP3 and L1 and Development Management policies DMC3 and DME1.**

## **Key Issues**

- The principle of the proposed development.
- Siting, scale, design and appearance.
- Climate change mitigation.

## **Relevant history**

NP/SM/1113/1049: Restoration of fire damaged dwelling for use as an agricultural worker dwelling, granted conditionally.

NP/SM/0216/0172: Proposed two livestock buildings, granted subject to conditions.

NP/GDO/1016/1048: Portal frame muck cover, prior approval not required.

## **Consultations**

10. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council: No response to date.
11. Heathylee Parish Council: The Parish Council
12. Highways: *'The erection of slurry store does not impact on the highway network'*. No objection.
13. Environment Agency: *'After looking at the supporting documentation in relation to design, appearance and siting, the slurry store is of adequate size, as long as the store is emptied and maintained regularly or when applicable to prevent overflow and excess slurry on site. The capacity is calculated based on the 1400 pigs and 20-40 sucklers on site, given the capacity of the proposed slurry store, please ensure that there are no added animals that may add further slurry to the store as this may result in the store overflowing. In terms of location and planting scheme, this is adequate as the increase of native trees will improve the natural environment. From a pollution prevention perspective contingencies may need to be considered in the unlikely event of a slurry spill into the nearby watercourse. A ditch next to the ring fence and sheep netting may catch any excess slurry before it enters the watercourse should a pollution event take place. As the proposed slurry store will stop the continuous leeching effluent issue at the current store, we have no objection to this taking place'*.

## **Representations**

14. None received to date.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

15. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. There are no significant conflicts between policies in the Development Plan and the NPPF.
16. In particular Para: 182 states, that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
17. In the National Park, the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy and the new Development Management Policies (DMP). These Development Plan Policies provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application.

## **Development Plan Policies**

### **Core Strategy**

18. GSP1, requires that all development is consistent with the National Parks legal purpose and duty, to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Parks; Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles in line with GSP1.
19. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. Requires that particular attention is paid to the impact on the character and setting of buildings and that the design is in accord with the Authority's Design Guide and development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park. GSP3 also specifically states that attention will be given to (k) adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change, particularly in respect of carbon emissions, energy and water demand.
20. DS1 - *Development Strategy* - supports the development of renewable energy infrastructure in principle.
21. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics*. Seeks to ensure that all development conserves and enhances valued landscape character and sites, features and species of biodiversity importance.
22. CC1 - *Climate change mitigation and adaptation*. Sets out that development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources. Development must also achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions.

### **Development Management Policies**

23. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping*. Reiterates, that where developments are acceptable in principle, policy requires that design is to high standards and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape. The siting, mass, scale, height, design, building materials should all be appropriate to the context. Accessibility of the development should also be a key consideration.
24. DME1 – *Agricultural or forestry operational development*. Allows for new agricultural buildings provided that they are functionally required, are close to the main group of buildings wherever possible and in all cases relates well to existing buildings and landscape features, respects the design of existing buildings and building traditions, makes use of the least obtrusive location and does not require obtrusive access tracks, roads or services.
25. DMT3 – *Access and design criteria*. States amongst other things, that a safe access should be provided in a way that does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality and where possible enhances it.

### **Supplementary Planning Document**

26. The PDNPA's Supplementary Planning Guidance for agricultural developments sets out siting and design guidelines for such development. It gives detailed guidance on ways of successfully integrating large agricultural development in terms of the location, design and landscaping of such schemes.

27. The Authority's Supplementary Planning Document on Climate Change and Sustainable Building provides guidance on renewable energy installations and ways of minimizing visual impact on the landscape character and valued characteristics of the National Park. It also notes that the objective in a National Park is to find a solution that conserves and enhances the natural beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage, valued landscape character and other valued characteristics, and that to achieve this systems and buildings should be within or adjacent to existing built development to minimize visual and landscape impact – amongst other things.

## **Assessment**

### **Principle of the development**

28. Stoney Cliffe Farm is a large established working farm. At present 1400 pigs are reared over a six-month period in purpose-built sheds and are bedded on straw. Additionally, the suckler herd are also housed on straw bedding over winter. The bedding muck from both the pigs and cows is stored in a covered-on site storage area but slurry and effluent leeches out.
29. The submitted supporting statement advised that a catchment sensitive farming report has been undertaken to assess the current provisions for farmyard manure and slurry storage. The outcome concludes requirements for the improvement of slurry storage to reduce and stop effluent and run off from the existing manure store.
30. In response to the report the application proposes a gravity fed slurry system and store to capture any slurry run off from the existing manure storage and surface water runoff from the yard. This will prevent the current leaching of slurry effluent from the manure store and provide storage for the slurry throughout the year and meet the required regulations for the storage of slurry.
31. Given this information, and that the development proposed is not of a type that would meet any other practical need, it is accepted that the development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. The development would also result in benefits to the water environment in mitigating the impacts of nitrate run-off.
32. It is therefore acceptable in principle under the provisions of policy DME1, and the key issues to be considered are the design and landscape impacts of the proposal.

### **Siting, design and landscape Impact**

33. The proposed development would be sited approximately 100 metres west of the farm buildings and existing manure storage of Stoney Cliffe Farm, in open countryside.
34. The site itself is located within the northern corner of a steeply sloped field away from the existing buildings and at a lower level than the existing farm buildings, to allow a natural flow downhill of slurry as the proposed slurry store would have a gravity fed system to feed the slurry to the store via a pipe from the existing manure store. Details in the supporting documents also state that the siting would be the most suitable to allow for maximum use of the yard area without causing significant harm or damage to the existing farming operations on site.
35. At this location, the landscape type is classified by the Landscape Strategy as Slopes and Valleys with Woodland. The Strategy describes this as a pastoral landscape with a varied undulating topography of steep slopes, low ridges and incised valleys. Blocks of woodland are a characteristic feature of this landscape, together with patches of acid grassland and bracken on steeper slopes and higher grounds. It is also an area of traditional dispersed settlement. Views to lower ground are framed by woodlands and valley sides.

36. The application site typifies these attributes, particularly comprising of steep sloped field with sporadic areas of woodland and trees alongside isolated development. The field the site is located within is relatively large and bounded by some sporadic vegetation in an open landscape. Other than the nearby farm holding and other dispersed settlements the landscape is undeveloped.
37. As a result of these factors the site is open to wide ranging views from the nearby highway, A53 and within the wider landscape.
38. The proposed slurry store would be a substantial structure some 15.6 metres wide and 3.6 metres high. An area of bank would need to be removed to provide a flat site for the store within the corner of the field. The banking to the north will fall away below the ground level of the store due to the decreasing levels of the field and adjacent land. Due to a gravity fed system via a pipe from the existing manure store, the pipe would also have to be dug into and across the field following the gradient of the slope from the existing manure store to the proposed slurry store.
39. In this location the development would appear as a large, isolated and incongruous addition in this rural landscape, particularly given the sloping undeveloped nature of the field and its setting, and its isolation from the existing farm buildings. The development would undoubtedly therefore result in an adverse visual impact and harm to the rural landscape character of the area.
40. A submitted location plan indicated a planting scheme which would project around the north and south side of the slurry store. However, this appears to be an unnatural band of planting which will project into the field, contrary to the character of the landscape. The landscaping would not satisfactorily mitigate the visual or landscape impact of the development.
41. Alternative locations have been suggested by Officers, seeking a solution more closely related to the farm group. However, the agent advises that other location was deemed unsuitable due to the topography of the land, closeness to existing main electricity pylons and as the need for a gravity led system requires the development downhill a suitable distance away from the source of the existing manure store to allow the sufficient drainage of the effluent. The statement is broad however, and no further detail of discounted sites or other options has been provided.
42. Overall, it is accepted that there is a need for slurry storage for the holding to prevent run off and that this would result in benefits to the environment. However, this would not outweigh the harm to the landscape character of the locality that would arise from the proposal, contrary to policies GSP1, GSP3, L1, DMC3 and DME1. There is no compelling evidence to indicate that the proposed development is the only option for mitigating nitrate pollution at the site.

#### Amenity

43. Due to the intervening distance between the application site and nearest neighbouring properties, not part of the current farming enterprise, the proposal is not considered to have any unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties with regard to outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight.
44. Given the location of the proposed slurry store and agricultural nature of the surrounding land the development is unlikely to cause an odour nuisance, particularly as the slurry will all be contained internally from the existing store, via pipe for the gravity led system to the proposed store, in accordance with DMC3.

#### Highways

45. The local Highway Authority do not consider the proposals to have a material impact on the public highway. The development would have no impact on access to the site, nor would it result in an intensification of use. Regarding this, the proposal would be acceptable in highway terms, and accord with DMT3.

#### Climate change

46. The application proposes a gravity fed system of which submitted details advise the store is more environmentally friendly than other systems as there is no requirement to pump the slurry to the tower. The slurry pumping process can burn fossil fuels and release harmful gases into the environment and reduces odour.
47. The development is therefore in accordance with policy CC1.

#### Conclusion

48. The proposed development is considered necessary for the purposes of agriculture and the size and scale of the development is appropriate for the holdings needs.
49. However, the siting and design of the gravity fed system would have an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding landscape contrary to policies GSP1, GSP3, L1 DMC3 and DME1.
50. The development would result in benefits to the environment through mitigation of nitrate pollution to the water environment. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the development is the only means of securing this. In any case, the landscape impact identified would be significant and would outweigh these benefits. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

#### Human Rights

51. Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.
52. List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil

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