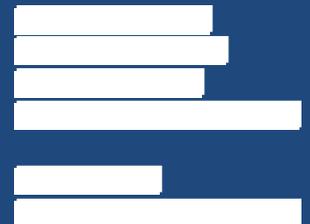


# PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL  
WORKERS DWELLING LAND AT  
OAK FARM, MAKER LANE, HOAR  
CROSS, STAFFORDSHIRE DE13 8QR



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This Planning Statement is prepared by AM Planning Consultants Limited on behalf of our client Packington Poultry (the `applicant`s), in support of an application for an agricultural worker's dwelling, which would be occupied by a Farm Manager.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. Mercer Farming Ltd was founded in 1922 operating over 12 farms throughout Staffordshire growing a wide range of arable crops, pigs and chickens. This subsequently expanded over a number of additional farms in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire.
- 2.2. Packington Free Range, was established in 2006 as a wholesale meat business.
- 2.3. Packington Poultry was established in 2007 as part of Mercer Farming Ltd and formed its own limited company in 2012, rearing free-range chickens, cockerels and turkeys on a year-round basis.
- 2.4. Packington Poultry has operated from the application site since 2016 and the applicant is directly involved in the total farming business i.e. Mercer Farming Ltd, Packington Free Range and Packington Poultry Limited.
- 2.5. Currently, there are three poultry sheds on the units and a fourth building was granted permission earlier this year under planning permission ref. no. P/2018/00840. The existing three sheds house a total of 37000 birds at any one time and the fourth shed will have the capacity to hold an additional 32,000 birds, almost doubling the level of birds reared on the site.
- 2.6. The Agricultural Justification Statement clarifies why an agricultural workers dwelling is required on the application site and should be read in conjunction with this document.
- 2.7. The design of the proposed dwelling will ensure that it can be used by a farm manager's family, in addition to providing the main farm office for the whole of Packington Poultry, break/lunch room and changing room for the workers on the poultry site.

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1. The application site was previously known as Cross Hayes Field and has been the subject of the following planning applications:
- a. P/2014/01422 Prior Notification for the erection of an agricultural building to house livestock (Permitted 26 November 2014);
  - b. P/2015/01464 Erection of an agricultural building to house poultry with two associated feed bins (Approved 11 March 2016);
  - c. P/2018/00840 Prior Notification for the erection of a steel framed and sheeted agricultural building (Permitted 31 July 2018)

### **4. APPLICATION SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS**

- 4.1. The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:
- Planning Statement
  - Agricultural Justification Statement prepared by Reading Agricultural Consultants (RAC)
  - Confidential Financial Accounts for 2015 -2017
  - Topographical Survey
  - Drawings:
    - Proposed Location, Elevations, Floor and Roof Plans Drawing No. 6
    - Proposed Site Plan Drawing No. 7

### **5. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 5.1. The proposed application site lies to the west of Maker Lane in a location which is classed as Grade 3 – “Moderate agricultural land” and comprises of “clay loam” middle to low fertile.
- 5.2. The land slopes up from the access by approximately 1m towards the application site, which is indicated in the image below by a blue arrow.



Image 1. Google image from Marker Lane towards the application site.

- 5.2. There is a large bund to the west of the application site, with hedgerow and tree planting which screens the poultry units, along with mature hedgerow and trees to the south west of the site.
- 5.3. To the north is the open field with dense woodland and residential properties off Marker Lane.
- 5.4. To the west is the field and hedgerow boundary which defines the edge of Marker Lane.
- 5.5. The location of the application site has been carefully considered to maintain bio-security for the large poultry unit, which is critical to ensure a high health status for the poultry, and ensure that the residential element of the unit is segregated from the biosecurity for the family.
- 5.6. Visitors to the farm would be required to park at the dwelling where suitable changing, washing & break/lunchroom facilities are to be incorporated into the design of the dwelling, along with a farm office.
- 5.7. The location of the proposed dwelling was also carefully selected to minimise the environmental factors such as odour, noise or disturbance from agricultural machinery working within the farm yard.
- 5.8. From the proposed dwelling and its orientation ensure that the occupier can monitor the access to the site to ensure improved security for the site, especially due to the increase in rural crime.

- 5.9. A further consideration has been to ensure that adequate separation from the working environment for the family living in the dwelling but at the same time to be in close proximity to the poultry units to meet the essential needs of the unit. The need to minimise the risk of incidents/accidents has been carefully reviewed to provide a safe environment for the future occupiers and their children.

## **6. THE PROPOSAL**

- 6.1. The proposed 5 bedroomed dwelling will be located in close proximity to the existing poultry units, and will be occupied by a farm manager and his family.
- 6.2. The dwelling also provides a farm office, lunch/break room, and a changing room and laundry for use by the 9 full-time and 10 part time staff employed by Packington Poultry Ltd, along with sufficient parking for staff and visitors.
- 6.3. There is a need to reside on the farm in order to fulfil his duties in relation to the management of the poultry business and to meet the requirement to provide essential care at short term notice that is required by the poultry or maintenance for the equipment, such as those referred to in the Agricultural Justification Statement.
- 6.4. The dwelling will be heated through connect to the existing gas supply to the poultry units.
- 6.5. Soakaways will deal with the surface water and a Klargestor system will deal with the foul drainage.
- 6.6. The boundaries will be defined by post and rail fencing with hedgerow and tree planting along the fence line.

## **7. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 7.1. In preparing this Planning Statement reference is made to the following national and local planning policies and guidance documents:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018)
  - The East Staffordshire adopted Local Plan 2012-2031
  - East Staffordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Feb 2008)

## **8. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 8.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) (NPPF) has replaced the first published NPPF and became immediately relevant when making planning decisions. The following paragraphs are considered relevant to the consideration of the application and the approach authorities should take in respect to decision taking.
- 8.2. Paragraph 11. advises that at the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposal that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and where there is no relevant development plan or the policies are out-of-date planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts in doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the framework are taken as a whole.
- 8.3. Paragraph 47 requires that planning application be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise within statutory timescale unless a longer period has been agreed.
- 8.4. Paragraph 79 states that planning policies and decision should avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless certain circumstances existing, one of which is that ***there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.***
- 8.5. The NPPF supports the building of a strong and complete economy and a prosperous rural economy in paragraphs 80-84 to meet needs of local businesses in rural areas.
- 8.6. Chapter 11 supports the effective use of land whether it is in an urban or rural location.
- 8.7. Chapter 12 sets out the importance of well-designed places, Specifically para. 124 encourages the creation of high-quality buildings which creates better places in which to live and work. Whilst para. 127 requires that decisions should ensure that development functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to the local character and history, are sympathetic to the local character and materials.
- 8.8. Paragraph 170 requires policies and decision to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscape, sites of biodiversity or geological value of soils, and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, whilst minimising the impacts on and providing net biodiversity gain without unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or

noise pollution or land instability. This is reiterated at paragraph 175 in relation to decision making.

8.9. In terms of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability, this proposal offers a number of significant improvements for the area:

- The proposal will enable to poultry unit to be provided with much needed essential residential presence to ensure the welfare of the poultry is not compromised and provide the security of the site, especially with the increase of rural crime.
- The proposal will enable the agricultural business to continue to expand in this location helping to contribute positively to the rural economy and employment.
- A farm office, changing room/laundry and break/lunch room will be provided on the site to ensure that the staff have an acceptable level of amenity and Health and Safety for this type of poultry business.
- A vastly improved level of bio-security will be secured for the future health of the poultry and meet the necessary requirements of health and safety requirement.
- The farm office secures homeworking for the occupier to reduce the carbon footprint of the business.
- The proximity to Abbots Bromley, Yoxall and Barton under Needwood will ensure that the residents enhance and contribute to maintain the vitality of the rural community and economy by supporting local facilities.

8.10. This proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and does not have any significant adverse impact which would demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission.

## **9. LOCAL PLAN POLICIES**

9.1. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 9.2. In October 2015 the Council adopted the Local Plan 2012-2031 and I will address the relevant policies below.
- 9.3. **PRINCIPLE 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** - Paragraph 8.9 above covers the issue of the proposal being sustainable.
- 9.4. The proposal meets the requirements of the NPPF taken as a whole and there is no adverse impact from the proposal, which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission.
- 9.5. This is reinforced by Planning Practice Guidance Ref. ID: Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 50-001-2016051950 which states:
- *It is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability of villages and smaller settlements. This is clearly set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, in the core planning principles, the section on supporting a prosperous rural economy and the section on housing.*
  - *A thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship. Rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities.*
  - *Assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or neighbourhood plan process. However, all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas – and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence. A neighbourhood plan can allocate additional sites to those in a Local Plan where this is supported by evidence to demonstrate need above that identified in the Local Plan and the plan proposal meets the basic conditions.*
  - *The National Planning Policy Framework also recognises that different sustainable transport policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.*
- 9.6. **STRATEGIC POLICY 1** - This proposal meets the requirements of this policy and has been address through reference to existing Local Plan Policies throughout this document.
- 9.7. **STRATEGIC POLICY 8** –This policy supports agricultural workers dwelling in locations outside settlement boundaries where they are essential to the support and viability of an existing lawful business and is supported by a relevant justification for a rural location. The application is accompanied by

an Agricultural Justification Statement by Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd (RAC) which confirms that there is an essential need for an agricultural worker dwelling on the site to support the poultry business in this location, especially as without good stockmanship the animal welfare can never be adequately protected without the appropriate emergency response time secured.

9.8. On this basis, the proposal should be judge against the following criteria here application:

- *The proposed development must not adversely affect the amenities enjoyed by existing land users, including, in the case of proposals for development close to an existing settlement, the occupiers of residential and other property within that settlement.*
- *Proposals do not introduce considerable urban form.*
- *Proximity to settlements where there are advantages of sustainable linkages, but this should not create unacceptable urban extensions or create the opportunity for unacceptable backfill between the development and the urban area*
- *The detailed siting of the proposed development and its associated environmental impact are compatible with the character of the surrounding area,*
- *The design of the buildings, structures and materials are visually well-related to the proposed site and its setting with careful choice of materials, landscaping, massing of buildings and attention to local architecture and roofscape design.*
- *Landscaping associated with the proposal takes into account both the immediate impact and distant views of the development.*
- *The proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the transport and highway network and provides adequate access for all necessary users*
- *The need to maintain land of high agricultural value for food production*

9.9. The proposal will not adversely affect the amenity of local residents, the siting of the proposed dwelling is compatible with the character of the rural surrounding area, and the design and setting of the dwelling with the use of the specified materials has been carefully considered the rural setting to ensure that it reflects a traditional country house style dwelling using local materials to ensure that the proposal assimilates into the countryside.

- 9.10. The dwelling has been angled to break the massing of the dwelling up and ensure that there is segregation between the residential element of the property and the agricultural business, which also minimises the risk of incidents/accidents to provide a safe environment for the future occupiers and their children.
- 9.11. The location of the application site has been carefully considered to maintain bio-security for the large poultry unit, which is critical to ensure a high health status for the poultry.
- 9.12. The location of the proposed dwelling was also carefully selected to minimise the environmental factors such as odour, noise or disturbance from agricultural machinery working within the farm yard. This location also secures that the occupiers can monitor the access to the site to ensure improved security for the site, especially due to the increase in rural crime.
- 9.13. Landscaping along the boundaries will be provided through the erection of a post and rail fencing with mixed native hedgerow planting with intermittent tree planting to reflect the rural location of the proposal.
- 9.14. The existing access off Maker Lane will be utilised which has good visibility in both directions. The proposal will secure homeworking for the future occupier which will also reduce the carbon footprint of the business.
- 9.15. The loss of the use of the Grade 3 agricultural land will remain in an agricultural use through the provision of an agricultural workers dwelling in connection with an expanding poultry business, which will increase the value of the food production of the business and more than compensate for the residential use of the site.
- 9.16. **STRATEGIC POLICY 14** – This policy is satisfied due to the current level of rural employment the poultry unit provides, and the ability to provide adequate protection of the birds.
- 9.17. The business has been operating in excess of three years and its future viability and expansion will be secured through this proposal to enable the agricultural business to expand further thereby increasing rural employment in the area.
- 9.18 **STRATEGIC POLICY 24** –The high-quality design of the dwelling contributes positively to the character of the rural area by respecting the rural character and enhancing the landscaping and biodiversity of the site. The site integrates into the existing poultry business providing the appropriate level of office space, changing room and break/lunch room facilities for the whole business.
- 9.19. The layout of the proposal provides adequate accommodation for modern day flexible living accommodation with sufficient private space in a location

which will not be adversely affected by noise, odour etc. from the poultry units.

- 9.20. Additional information in relation to the layout is set out in paragraphs 9.9 - 9.15. above. Therefore, this policy is satisfied.
- 9.21. **STRATEGIC POLICY 27** - The proposal satisfies this policy due to the fact that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 an area of low probability of flooding. The surface water will continue to be dealt with by utilising soakaways and the foul drainage will be connected to a treatment plant as shown on the accompanying plans.
- 9.22. **STRATEGIC POLICY 29** - The proposal will enhance the biodiversity of the site through the introduction of landscape planting in the form of hedgerow and tree planting to encourage and enhance the local wildlife.
- 9.23. **DETAILED POLICY 1** – The proposal relates well to the poultry units and business by providing an agricultural worker dwelling and car parking for both the dwelling and business, whilst assimilating into the rural character of the location of the site.
- 9.24. The landscape will provide softening and greenery to the site breaking up distant views of the site. The massing in terms of the shape, volume and arrangements of the dwelling is appropriate in the context of the development, especially with the backdrop of the large bund segregating the site from the poultry units.
- 9.25. The scale of the proposed dwelling is proportionate with the multi-generational future proofing of the dwelling i.e. young adults staying at home long to save for a deposit to enable them to get onto the housing market, frequently young adults moving back home with young children on a temporary basis, and care for elderly relatives, along with the combined business use of the dwelling.
- 9.26. Nationally the average age of first-time buyers in 2016 was 30 years old and many of these people remain at home or return home to enable them to save for a deposit to purchase their first home. This means that any agricultural worker will have to consider the quality and flexibility of accommodation being offered with their employment as a significantly important issue. Such dwellings need to reflect that fact that they may have to offer long-term accommodation to two or potential three generations in a single unit providing them with accommodation, which reflects 2 adults and 3 children or 5 adults and potentially grandchildren or grandparents.
- 9.27. The size of the dwelling is commensurate to the applicant's requirements in relation to the whole business and residential accommodation it will provide,

and it has been shown that this can be funded through the normal agricultural workers dwelling financing mechanism.

- 9.28. The proposed floor area of the dwelling totals 359 sq.m. comprising of 215sq.m. ground floor of which 89 sq.m. relates to the agricultural business and the first-floor measures 147 sq.m., (residential element measures 270sq.m.) which is comparable with other agricultural workers dwelling previously approved by the LPA e.g.



Anslow Eggs P/2017/00631 Basement without Training Room – 100.1 m<sup>2</sup>  
Ground Floor without Office and Monitoring Room – 122.5 m<sup>2</sup>  
First Floor - 124.3 m<sup>2</sup>. Totalling 346.8 m<sup>2</sup> floor area.



Froggy's Farm, Ashbrook Road, Abbots Bromley P/2013/00864 The ground floor measures 171.5 m<sup>2</sup> and the same for the first-floor totalling 343m<sup>2</sup>.



Deer Park, Maker Lane PA/22854/005 near to the application site.

- 9.29. Proposed materials and design are reflective of the materials used on residential properties within this rural location i.e. red brown facing bricks, Staffordshire Blue plain roof tiles, sliding sash timber windows with stone surrounds and traditional vernacular.
- 9.30. The orientation of the dwelling secures improved monitoring of the access to the poultry units to reduce the risk from crime.
- 9.31. **DETAILED POLICY 2** - This policy is addressed by the information throughout this document.
- 9.32. **DETAILED POLICY 3** – This policy is satisfied due to the fact that the proposal will not result in overlooking and loss of light. It does not cause an overbearing impact on its surroundings and allows for outdoor domestic activities without conflicting with the poultry business activities of the site.

## 10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1. The proposed agricultural worker dwelling satisfies the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF and will support an existing viable agricultural business to help to build a strong competitive economy, supporting a prosperous rural economy, meeting good design, the challenge of climate change and conserving the natural environment.
- 10.2. Packington Poultry will be able to increase the number of poultry units at this site and operate to whole business from dwelling, whilst ensuring that the health and welfare of the livestock which is an essential to need is not compromised. In turn this will increase the level of rural employment in the area.

10.3. The proposal would provide significant biodiversity gain and satisfies the overall requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), especially para. 79 and the adopted Local without resulting in any adverse impact, which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of granting planning permission and therefore planning permission should be granted.