

Case Officer: Shona King **Ward(s):** Sibford

Applicant: Mrs E Rugman

Ward Member(s): Cllr George Reynolds

Proposal: Erection of stabling and manege, construction of an agricultural barn and the siting of a temporary rural worker's dwelling for three years

Committee Date: 18.02.2016 **Recommendation:** Refuse

1. Application Site and Locality

- 1.1 The application site is located to the west of the village of Epwell. It is accessed from Church Lane, which leads from Epwell towards the north, via a long track through an agricultural field. It is separated from the built up edge of Epwell to the south-east by paddocks currently used for grazing/keeping horses.
- 1.2 The application site comprises parts of two agricultural fields which are separated by mature hedging and a public right of way. Currently there is a timber agricultural barn used for housing cattle and an area of hardstanding, enclosed in part by a horseshoe shaped bund, on the part of the site accessed directly from the track.
- 1.3 The area is rural in character and lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site is elevated in relation to the land to the north and east, and is visible from public rights of way and the road; three public footpaths run very close to the site. The site is in an area that is of archaeological importance.

2. Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The proposal is to erect stabling, an agricultural barn, manége and a temporary rural worker's dwelling on the site. The temporary dwelling is required for three years.
- 2.2 The stabling is to be arranged in a U shape, or courtyard layout, with 12 stables, tack room, feed store, rug drying room, stores, heat room, stocks and wash box. An arched access to the paddocks to the west of the stables is also proposed. The stabling is to comprise approximately 480m².
- 2.3 The agricultural barn is to be used for hay storage and as a tractor shed.
- 2.4 The manége is to be approximately 60m x 40m and constructed with a sand and wire base with kickboards around the edge and fenced with post and rail fencing.
- 2.5 The temporary dwelling is to have 4 bedrooms, kitchen/dining room, living room, and boot room. It is to be constructed using horizontal timber boarding for the walls with a shallow pitched and felted roof.

3. Planning history

- 3.1 13/00349/F – Extension to existing cattle building - refused and dismissed at appeal in January 2014 due to the harm caused to the character and appearance of the area and the failure to preserve the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

4. Response to Publicity

- 4.1 The application has been advertised by way of site notice and neighbour letters. The final date for comment was the 31st December 2015. 7 representations have been received in respect of the application (4 in support and 3 objecting) and the comments raised are summarised as follows:

Supporting

- Demand for these animals
- Should be encouraging viable and sustainable rural businesses in AONB
- Bring business to the area
- Land particularly suitable for grazing ponies
- Good for the land
- Pony stud more visually attractive than many other uses
- Applicant very experienced with horses, professional and entrepreneurial
- Need to support British breeders
- Scale of development greater than a previous refused proposal

Objecting

- Contrary to policy
- Harmful to AONB
- No difference to the proposal and the previous refusal and dismissed appeal on the site
- Planning statement contains errors
- Increase in traffic movements
- Lane unsuitable for horse boxes
- Question who is to use dwelling

5. Response to Consultation

- 5.1 Parish/Town Council: Object to the application on the grounds that the house and stables are too imposing for the site, which is outside the village boundary and in the AONB. We do not think that the house is an essential part of the business operation when accommodation could form part of the stable block.

- 5.2 Cherwell District Council:

Conservation Officer: no comments received at the time of writing

Ecologist: *With regard to the above application there are no major ecological issues. The barn which I presume would require demolition is relatively unlikely to support protected species. The proposals entail the removal of some small sections of hedgerow however this is in part compensated for by the additional planting around the manège of native hedgerow and the planting of tree shelter belts which may well result in an overall gain for biodiversity. The planting of these areas should be secured by condition if permission is granted.*

My only further concern in this location would be excessive external lighting as these hedgerows form part of a wider landscape corridor connecting areas of woodland and so are likely to be important to wildlife such as bats. Light spill can deter them from using these areas therefore all exterior lighting should be minimal and directional avoiding light spill onto vegetation. Beyond this I have no further comments.

Landscape Services: This proposal is to develop an existing small barn into a collection of buildings to include a larger barn, large stable block, manege and 'temporary' dwelling.

The site has a number of PRow running nearby and is visible from Church lane. The PRow closest to the site runs across an open field giving very open views of the site. Currently a large amount of clutter is hidden by the informal bund around the barn.

The local landscape is characterised by small fields and an undulating landform with strong hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The area feels remote and isolated. Villages are strongly nucleated and do not spread into the wider countryside. The site is within the AONB and so the landscape value is high as is its sensitivity.

The quality of this LVIA is poor. There is far too much description and insufficient analysis. I am struggling to find analysis of the effects of the proposal on landscape character. There is only a claim that changes will be acceptable without any analysis.

Viewpoints 1 and 2 - The proposal is much larger in size than the existing barn and will be considerably more visible from these viewpoints.

The site is sited on the top of a low ridgeline and will be visible against the sky. I judge the effect to be medium. It is not good practice to use either/ or values, and Aspect should use GVLIA methodology not their own.

I do not agree that the proposal is acceptable due to the size of the proposal, the prominence of the development and the use of non-local materials. A mobile home is not an attractive feature anywhere.

Viewpoints 3,4,5 - The field which contains the proposal has a PRow running across it. There are no intervening hedgerows so the proposal will be very visible from here. The effect is moderate adverse. A rigid block of shelterbelt planting is not typical of the area which consists of irregular sinuous blocks of woodland. It would be detrimental and uncharacteristic to the landscape to try to hide the development in this way.

The existing barn is visible above the skyline in winter, but a larger development would exacerbate this effect.

I note that the village of Epwell is barely visible from these viewpoints and this development would create an appearance of a further collection of buildings in a landscape largely devoid of them.

Viewpoint 6 - The manege will be visible from VP6 as it is located in a corner of the field. An evergreen hedge round the manege is not appropriate in the countryside where all other hedges are for the most part deciduous. This will make it prominent rather than recessive.

Viewpoint 7 - The replacement barn is much larger than the existing, partial views of the stable block will also be visible from this VP. They should be using the methodology from GVLIA3 as stated in the introduction not their own methodology as stated here. There is no explanation of their methodology.

Viewpoint 8 I noted on site that topography rather than intervening hedgerows will give rise to glimpses of the proposals.

Viewpoint 9 The proposal will form a relatively small part of the view from this distance. It is likely to be visible in winter as a filtered view.

Viewpoint 10 A filtered view of the existing barn is available in winter. The built form is not characteristic of the wider view and development would turn one barn into a complex.

Viewpoint 11 Glimpsed view in winter. Some views of the roofscape and an increased perception of development. One building is on the site not buildings

The site is visually and physically separated from the Village of Epwell and as such would create another collection of buildings in a very rural area of strongly nucleated settlements. The temporary dwelling is unattractive and would doubtless lead to a large permanent one at some time in the future. The structures are out of character with the local areas ironstone villages. A new dwelling will need parking and will have associated garden paraphernalia which will further urbanise the site.

While the proposed development does not have major visual significance in the wider landscape, it forms a significant change to the localised landscape introducing built forms not typical of the area (large stable block and mobile home). The manège will also be an alien feature. Attempts to screen the development will introduce alien patterns and types of vegetation. I cannot support this application.

Anti-social Behaviour Manager: No objection to the application but will request a condition regarding disposal of manure/bedding

5.3 Oxfordshire County Council:

Highway Liaison Officer: Recommend refusal: *the highway serving the site in the vicinity of the access junction is narrow, tortuously aligned and of light construction, movements generated as a product of this proposal will result in a hazard and be of detriment to the safety and convenience of other road users.*

Archaeologist: *The site is located in an area of archaeological interest along the proposed route of the Roman Road from Finmere to Droitwich (Margary Road 56a). The line of this projected road was confirmed to the south east at Swalcliffe during an evaluation which recorded the southern roadside ditch and the metalled surface of the road. The line of the Roman road and a probable roadside settlement has been recorded from aerial photographs as part of Historic England's National Mapping Programme 200m north east of the proposed site. These cropmarks show the roadside ditches and corresponding low banks and a series of enclosures at the junction with the route of the Great Cotswold Ridgeway. Roadside settlement has also been recorded along the line of this road to the south east at Swalcliffe Lea.*

Little formal archaeological investigation has been undertaken in the area and so the nature of this road is not well understood. There is therefore the potential for this development to encounter archaeological deposits related to the Roman road as well as disturb any roadside settlement existing alongside it.

We would, therefore, recommend that, should planning permission be granted, the applicant should be responsible for ensuring the implementation of a staged programme of

archaeological investigation to be maintained during the period of construction. This can be ensured through the attachment of a suitable negative condition along the lines of:

1. Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2012).
2. Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1, and prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development (other than in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation), a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.
Reason – To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with the NPPF (2012).

If the applicant makes contact with us at the above address, we shall be pleased to outline the procedures involved, provide a brief upon which a costed specification can be based, and provide a list of archaeological contractors working in the area.

Rights of Way Officer: There are two public footpaths that cross the site, Epwell footpath 3 (203/3) and Epwell footpath 5 (303/5). The buildings and manéges themselves will not obstruct the footpaths. The Definitive Map showing the position of the footpaths can be found via the following link; www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/definitivemaponline

Studying the plans and aerial photography of the site it is clear that the 'cross field' eastern section of footpath 3 is not being used on its legal alignment. In the past there was a field boundary to the south of the route and this is shown on the old aerial photograph (dated 1945) which has been included in the Landscape and Visual Assessment document. The footpath would have run along the northern edge of this boundary. When the proposed planting is carried out it will be important to ensure that the legal historic route is accommodated and is not obstructed. A good width should be provided for the paths and the landowners will need to ensure that the vegetation is managed so that it does not encroach onto the routes. I would like further information on the width that is proposed for the paths to ensure it is adequate. There should be no new structures placed across the footpaths without prior agreement from this office.

If permission is granted the applicants will need to ensure that the public can continue to use the paths safely while the development is underway.

5.4 Other External Consultees:

Thames Water:

Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site

storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0800 009 3921. Reason - to ensure that the surface water discharge from the site shall not be detrimental to the existing sewerage system.

Water comments - On the basis of information provided, Thames Water would advise that with regard to water infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application.

Cotswold Conservation Board: No comments received to date

6 Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Guidance

6.1 Development Plan Policies:

The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 replaced a number of the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the Development Plan. Planning legislation requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District's statutory Development Plan are set out below:

Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1

SLE4: Improved transport and connections
ESD12: Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement

Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Saved Policies)

C8: Sporadic development in the countryside
C28: Layout design and external appearance of new development
AG2: Construction of farm buildings
AG5: Development involving horses
H18: New dwellings in the Countryside

6.2 Other Material Planning Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) - National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – This sets out regularly updated guidance from central Government to provide assistance in interpreting national planning policy and relevant legislation.

Cotswolds Conservation Board Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2013 – 2018

7 Appraisal

7.1 Officers' consider the following matters to be relevant to the determination of this application:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on the AONB and Visual amenities of the area;
- Scale, design and appearance;
- Impact on Rights of Way
- Highway safety

Principle of the development

7.2 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It advises that proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, applications should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

7.3 The site lies within the Cotswolds AONB. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that 'great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty'. Paragraph 116 states that "planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest".

7.4 Policy ESD12 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 states that 'high priority will be given to the protection and enhancement of the Cotswolds AONB and the Council will seek to protect the AONB and its setting from potentially damaging and inappropriate development'. Further, 'development proposals within the AONB will only be permitted if they are small scale, sustainably located and designed and would not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area'.

7.5 Whilst the issues arising from assessing the proposed development against these policies are discussed in more detail below, the proposal is for a major equestrian development in the AONB and therefore, in accordance with Paragraph 116 of the NPPF, exceptional circumstances need to be demonstrated to justify the principle of development.

7.6 An appraisal of the proposed equestrian business and the need for a dwelling on the site for a worker to facilitate the enterprise has been carried out and submitted in support of the application. A separate, independent appraisal has been carried out on behalf of the Council by Landscape Land and Property Ltd. The full reports can be viewed on the Council's website however the conclusions of the Landscape report are as follows:

- The existing enterprise is currently located in Drayton but the site has been sold by the applicants recently for development and a new location is required for the business.
- The applicant is to be employed full time in the business and is to be the occupant of the temporary dwelling.
- It is considered that the need for an on site presence is only justified once the infrastructure proposed is built and fully stocked. If the stock numbers proposed in the business plan submitted with the application are not met an essential need for the dwelling cannot be demonstrated.

- The location of the temporary dwelling is closely related to the stable yard and paddocks and will provide a good animal welfare and security role.
- 7.7 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF encourages economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. It states amongst other things that " 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; and
 - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses".
- 7.8 The conclusions of the appraisal indicate that the enterprise has the potential to be economically sustainable and as such the erection of stables and an equestrian storage barn would appear to deliver benefits in terms of contributing to the rural economy. However it is not clear what other sites, if any, have been considered outside the AONB and if these have been discounted for justifiable reasons. Furthermore it has not been demonstrated that the economic benefits of this proposal would be of such significance that they could be considered to amount to "special circumstances" that could outweigh any harm to the AONB. Therefore it is considered that special circumstances have not been demonstrated and so the proposal is unacceptable in principle in this location.
- 7.9 The application proposal also includes a temporary dwelling for a three year period in association with the new stud. The planning statement supporting the application states that the dwelling is required to allow the applicant to meet the exacting welfare requirements of their proposed business and to deal with security.
- 7.10 Saved Policy H18 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 deals with the construction of new dwellings beyond the built-up limits of settlements. Proposals will only be permitted for such development where it is essential for agriculture or other existing undertakings. Likewise Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states "to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities" It continues however that "local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work".
- 7.11 Whilst a temporary dwelling would allow time for an assessment of whether the business can establish as a viable ongoing concern, it would appear on the available evidence that there would be a permanent functional need for a dwelling on the site in connection with the proposed business. Therefore the proposed dwelling must be considered as part and parcel of the proposed equestrian business as a whole, which for the reasons given above, is considered unacceptable in principle in the AONB.

Impact on the AONB and visual amenities of the area

- 7.12 As stated above the site is within the Cotswolds AONB. The local landscape is characterised by small fields and an undulating landform with strong hedgerows and hedgerow trees and strongly nucleated settlements. The area feels remote and isolated.
- 7.13 In addition to Policy ESD12 of the Cherwell Local Plan, Policy ESD13 states that development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided. Proposals will not be permitted where, amongst other criteria, they would cause undue visual intrusion into the

countryside or cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography. Similarly Saved Policy C8 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that sporadic development in the open countryside will be resisted to preserve its open and rural character.

- 7.14 Saved Policy AG2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 allows the construction of farm buildings provided they are 'so sited that they do not intrude into the landscape'. Saved Policy AG5 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 states that proposals for horse related development will normally be permitted provided that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring properties and would comply with the other policies in the plan.
- 7.15 The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Assessment which has been prepared on behalf of the applicant to analyse the significance of any potential landscape and visual effects of the development. The conclusion of the assessment is that whilst the proposal will result in a degree of change within the immediate setting of the site it is not considered to be so great as to significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. It is also concluded that development incorporates materials which will reflect the local vernacular and include planting which will enhance the landscape setting, biodiversity and the local footpath network and the proposals can be integrated without significant harm to the character or visual amenities of the area.
- 7.16 The Council's Landscape officer has objected to the proposal, and officers consider that while the proposed development would not have a major visual impact in the wider landscape, it represents a significant adverse change to the localised landscape of the AONB by introducing a scale and form of built development that is not typical of the area (large stable block and temporary dwelling). The manège will also be an alien feature in the landscape, divorced from the stables/barn, in what is currently an open agricultural field characteristic of this part of the AONB.
- 7.17 The site is visually and physically separated from the Village of Epwell and as such would create another large collection of buildings in a very rural area of strongly nucleated settlements. The isolated position away from other buildings will reinforce the incongruous scale and form of the development that would clearly appear visually intrusive and incompatible with the scenic beauty and undeveloped quality of the landscape. A new dwelling will need parking and will have associated garden paraphernalia which will further urbanise the site. Attempts to screen the development will introduce alien patterns and types of vegetation.
- 7.18 The Inspector for the appeal in 2014 (application 13/00349/F) considered that the existing barn on the site is located in an 'elevated location relative to the remainder of the field and is visible from public rights of way and the road. Although partially viewed against the backdrop of the adjacent hedges and trees, from these locations the existing building is a prominent feature within the landscape. The visual impact of the building is accentuated by its utilitarian design and choice of materials'. He also considered that the extension to the existing barn 'would accentuate its prominence resulting in an unsympathetic intrusion into the character and appearance of the surrounding open countryside. The appeal scheme would fail to conserve landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. In reaching this judgement I have been mindful that planting could assist with assimilating the proposed extension into the landscape but any planting would take time to establish'.
- 7.19 Planting could similarly be used to mitigate the impact of the development, but would take considerable time to establish and given the scale, siting and form of the development it would be insufficient to reduce the harm to an acceptable level. Also the amount and form of planting indicated on the proposed site plans would in itself be harmful to the established character and appearance of the AONB. It is therefore considered that the proposed development

would fail to preserve the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and, as such, it would conflict with Policies ESD12 and ESD13 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, Policies C8, AG2 and AG5 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

Scale, design and appearance

- 7.20 Government guidance contained within the NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment as good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 7.21 Saved Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 seeks standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external finish materials, that are sympathetic to the character and context of the development.
- 7.22 The proposed buildings and manege are substantial in terms of their scale. Whilst the ridge heights are relatively low the footprint of the built form (including the manège) in this very sensitive location is considerable. The development is separated some 80m from the built up limits of Epwell and the development will appear as an isolated cluster of buildings and associated equestrian infrastructure.
- 7.23 The design of the barn is considered to be acceptable and is the type of agricultural building one would expect to see in an isolated rural location. The stable block however is of a much larger scale and is of an inappropriate form/design. In particular it would have a formal and imposing appearance with a symmetrical plan form and decorated archway that would appear more appropriate in the context of a large house or farmstead. A modest stone stable, of a smaller scale, with slate or plain tiled roof would sit better in the landscape and would better reflect the traditional buildings in the locality. This is supported by the Countryside Design Summary which states, at paragraph 4.2 (v) that "new farm buildings should reflect the rural and agricultural nature of the area in terms of scale and design. They should be sited with great care to avoid prominent or sensitive locations and be accompanied by new planting to integrate them as quickly as possible into their setting".
- 7.24 The manège is considered to be inappropriate in the proposed location. As stated above it will break into what is currently undeveloped countryside and whilst it will not be readily visible in the wider landscape it is considered that it will be harmful to the local landscape particularly in views from the footpath that runs along its eastern edge. It will appear incongruous and unconnected with the proposed barn and stable complex.
- 7.25 The proposed temporary dwelling is of a poor form/design with a shallow pitched roof contrary to the form of more traditional buildings in the area. Non-traditional materials are also proposed. Whilst it is only proposed for three years it is prominently sited and will have a harmful effect on the character and scenic quality of the area. The new dwelling will also need parking and whilst not shown on the layout plan it will in all likelihood have an associated garden which will further urbanise the site.
- 7.26 The development is also likely to introduce equestrian paraphernalia such as horse boxes, jumps, temporary fencing and the like which would also detract significantly from the unspoilt rural landscape and scenic quality of the area.

Rights of Way

- 7.27 Paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that 'Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local Authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails'.
- 7.28 The development will not result in any alteration to the route of the footpaths surrounding the application site. However the County Council Rights of Way Officer has commented that one of the footpaths is not shown on the legal alignment and this will need to be addressed.
- 7.29 The footpath network surrounding the application site is well used and it is considered that due to the scale of the new development and its proximity to the footpaths, along with the proposed hedge planting indicated on the proposed site plans to either side of the footpaths, it will adversely affect the amenity value of the paths and the enjoyment of their users. While the right of way will remain the current level of enjoyment that walkers would experience would be reduced through the expansion of the buildings at the site and the fencing/hedging either side of the currently very open footpaths.
- 7.30 The landowner/applicant could fence and plant hedges either side of the footpaths crossing the site and proposed paddocks without requiring planning permission, however, it is contended that approving the application would make this more likely. Therefore the proposal would fail to protect and enhance the public rights of way network.

Highway safety

- 7.31 Policy SLE4 of the Cherwell Local Plan states that "Development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported". The Highway Authority has raised concerns over the adequacy of the local highway network to accommodate the likely volume and types of traffic that would be generated by the development. In particular in the vicinity of the proposed access the highway is narrow, tortuously aligned and of light construction. It is considered that the movements generated as a product of the proposal will result in a hazard and be of detriment to the safety and convenience of other road users. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highway safety, and therefore the proposal is considered unacceptable in highway safety terms and contrary to Policy SLE4 of the Cherwell Local Plan.

Planning Balance

- 7.32 The NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development, those being economic, social and environmental which are considered below. These dimensions should not be considered in isolation, but should be considered jointly and simultaneously, taking local circumstances into account. In practice this means that a planning balance exercise should be undertaken to determine if, taken as a whole, the adverse impacts of the proposal identified above are outweighed by the benefits such that it could still be considered sustainable development.
- 7.33 Economic role – The NPPF states that the planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. The applicant's agent has stated that there will be an economic benefit provided by the enterprise with the employment of a part-time groom and other local rural businesses such as farm contractors, feed merchants, saddlers and vets and so it would contribute to the prosperity of the local rural economy. However there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the benefits would be more than local, and it is considered by officers

that the benefits to the local economy will not be especially significant due to the scale of the enterprise.

- 7.34 Social role – The social role to planning relating to sustainable development is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations. The proposed development will not give rise to any particular social benefits as the development of the site will provide one additional dwelling but this is required to service the business and not the wider community.
- 7.35 Environmental role – for development to be acceptable it must contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and built and historic environment. These issues have been covered in the sections above. The development is considered to result in considerable harm to the character of the landscape and will fail to preserve the AONB, and landscape of designated national importance.
- 7.36 In conclusion, when considering the economic, social and environmental impacts of the development as a whole, officers consider the limited benefits of the proposal are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse impacts such that planning permission should be refused for the reasons given at section 10 of this report, below.

8. Engagement

- 8.1 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, no problems or issues have arisen during the application. It is considered that the duty to be positive and proactive has been discharged through the timely and efficient determination of this application, and by the Council providing the opportunity for pre-application discussions to take place prior to the application being submitted.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 To conclude the proposed development is considered to have a detrimental impact on the unspoilt rural character of the area and visual amenities of the landscape due to the scale of the development and its prominent location. It is considered that it will be harmful to the environmental qualities of the AONB failing to preserve its landscape and scenic beauty. There are no special circumstances that would justify or outweigh this harm. Furthermore the proposal is considered to be unacceptable in highway safety terms as the roads serving the development are restricted and inadequate to accommodate the volume and types of traffic anticipated to be generated by the development.

10. Recommendation

Refusal, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development by reason of its scale, form and location is considered to be prominent, visually intrusive and unacceptably harmful to the open and rural character and environmental quality of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is afforded the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. There are no special circumstances that would outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of Saved Policies C8, AG2 and AG5 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policies ESD12 and ESD13 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012.
2. The local highway serving the site in the vicinity of the access junction is narrow, tortuously aligned and of light construction, and the volume and type of vehicular movements likely to be generated as a product of the proposed development will result in a hazard and be of detriment to the safety and convenience of other road users. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy SLE4 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012.

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