

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Full Planning Committee - 30/06/2015</b>	<b>Item No: 5.6</b>
<b>Report Originator</b>	<b>Andrew Smith Senior Development Officer</b>	<b>Application No: KET/2015/0253</b>
<b>Wards Affected</b>	<b>Slade</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Millwinds, Harrington,</b>	
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Full Application: Farrier residential training facility and equine hospital</b>	
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Dr John Reilly</b>	

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To describe the above proposals
- To identify and report on the issues arising from it
- To state a recommendation on the application

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER RECOMMENDS that this application be APPROVED subject to the following Condition(s):-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans referenced as follows: KET/2015/0253/4; KET/2015/0253/5; KET/2015/0253/6; KET/2015/0253/7; KET/2015/0253/8; KET/2015/0253/9; KET/2015/0253/11; KET/2015/0253/12; Sheet 1; Sheet 2; Sheet 3; Sheet 4; Sheet 5; Sheet 6; Sheet 7; Sheet 8; Sheet 9.

REASON: In the interest of securing an appropriate form of development in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

3. No development shall commence on site until details of the types and colours of all external facing and roofing materials to be used, together with samples, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: Details of materials are necessary prior to the commencement of development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

4. No development shall take place on site until a scheme for boundary treatment (including to the menage hereby approved) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the approved scheme has been fully implemented in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity and protecting the privacy of the neighbouring property in the interests of amenity in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

5. The occupation of the 'vet's bungalow' as depicted on the approved site layout KET/2015/0253/4) shall be limited to a person solely or mainly employed or last employed in the business occupying the land edged red on the approved drawings, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants.

REASON: The site is in an area where new dwellings are not normally permitted in accordance with Policy 1 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

6. The occupation of any residential element of the scheme contained within the 'farrier accommodation' or the 'equine clinic' as depicted on the approved site layout KET/2015/0253/4) shall be limited to persons either enrolled on a residential training course held at the application site or employed at the time of their occupation in the business occupying the land edged red on the approved drawings.

REASON: The site is in an area where new dwellings are not normally permitted in accordance with Policy 1 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

7. No development shall commence on site until details of the materials to be used for hard and paved surfacing have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved surfacing shall be completed before the adjoining buildings are first occupied.

REASON: Details of materials are necessary prior to the commencement of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

8. Prior to the commencement of development a detailed design of the surface water drainage scheme for the site based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and the hydro-geological context of the development should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development.

REASON: To reduce the risk of flooding both on and off the site by ensuring a satisfactory means of surface water attenuation and discharge from the site in compliance with Policy 13 (q) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Prior to the commencement of development a detailed scheme for the ownership and long-term maintenance for every element of the surface water drainage system proposed on the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the approved scheme shall be carried out in full at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the appropriate future maintenance of drainage systems associated with the development.

10. Prior to first occupation of the development a scheme of landscaping which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building, unless these works are carried out earlier. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

REASON: To improve the appearance of the site in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

11. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied, or the use commence, whichever is the sooner until the existing access from the site to Kelmarsh Road has been permanently closed in accordance with the details shown on approved plan KET/2015/0253/11 (received 23rd April 2015).

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

12. Due to the previous potentially contaminative use of the site and the underlying geology present throughout Northamptonshire at which the levels of some naturally occurring contaminants frequently exceed the levels at which the risk to human health would be considered acceptable for residential land use; it is expected that there may be unacceptable risks to future occupiers of the site without the following investigation being carried out.

Development on land affected by contamination:

Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation must not commence until parts a to d have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination to the extent specified by the Local Planning Authority in writing until condition d has been complied with in relation to that contamination.

#### A. Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

(i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;

(ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:

- human health,
- property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
- adjoining land,
- groundwaters and surface waters,
- ecological systems,
- archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

(iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11 (or any model procedures revoking and replacing those model procedures with or without modification)'.

#### B. Submission of Remediation Scheme

A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

#### C. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

#### D. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition a, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition b, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition c.

REASON: A contamination survey prior to commencement is necessary to ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy 11 of the NPPF and 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

13. No development shall commence on site until details of a scheme for the storage of refuse and waste (including manure storage details) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the first occupation of the development the approved scheme shall be fully implemented and shall be retained as approved thereafter.

REASON: Refuse details are necessary prior to the commencement of development in the interests of general amenity and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

14. Development shall be implemented in full compliance with the schedule of security measures outlined in an email from Nick Marshall (Wallhead Building Design) dated 29th April 2015 and shall be retained as approved at all times thereafter.

REASON: To reduce the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour occurring in compliance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

15. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the sustainable construction and energy efficiency techniques detailed in the Sustainability Assessment (KET/2015/0253/10) received on 7th April 2015.

REASON: In the interests of energy efficiency and sustainable construction in accordance with Policy 14 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

16. Prior to the first occupation of the development visibility splays of 2 metres by 2 metres shall be provided at each side of the junction of the vehicular access into the site with the shared private drive (which runs north-south), and these splays shall thereafter be permanently kept free of all obstacles to visibility over 0.9 metres in height above carriageway level.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

17. No gates, barrier or means of enclosure shall be erected across a vehicular access within 5.5m of the public highway.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

## **Officers Report for KET/2015/0253**

This application is reported for Committee decision because there are unresolved, material objections to the proposal and the proposal is a contentious application which, in the opinion of the Head of Development Services, is a matter for the decision of the Committee.

### **3.0 Information**

#### **Relevant Planning History**

The site has significant planning history. During World War 2 the site was used as part of a military base connected with the nearby Harrington Airfield. Subsequently the land has been part of an agricultural use and with the benefit of a series of temporary permissions for agriculture related uses such as use of buildings for the sale and repair of tractors and farm diggers, incorporating some light fabrication work (KE/85/0403) and agricultural buildings and agricultural machinery repair depot (KE/1991/0400).

Approval was granted for a temporary agricultural dwelling house under reference KET/1988/0415, which was renewed under KET/1991/0399. However, applications without any agricultural attachment or seeking permanent permission for residential use have consistently been refused.

EN178 – Enforcement and stop notices were served following the failure to discontinue the temporary caravan use permitted under KE/1991/0399. This EN was withdrawn following the issue of EN96/167.

KE/92/0683 – Change of use to traveller/ caravan site (10 pitches). Refused 01.12.1992. Appeal dismissed 19.07.1993

KE/96/0550 & EN96/167 – Change of use to private caravan site for 5 Gypsy families. Refused and appeal dismissed 18.07.1997. The inspector concluded that the development had an urban character and caused very significant harm to the rural character of the area. In addition, the site was considered remote in location from local services and facilities resulting in reliance on the private car which is contrary to the aim of reducing the need for travel. The period for compliance with the enforcement notice was extended to 9 months.

KE/98/0090 – Change of use to private Gypsy caravan site for 4 caravans plus screen building. Refusal 31.03.1998

04/04/2000 – Planning Inspectorate's decision re-determined. Appeal dismissed. The caravans are visually intrusive, particularly from Kelmarsh Road and residential use is harmfully out of character with the open countryside. A distance of 5km from local services was considered to be well beyond what is considered to be a reasonable distance.

## **Site Description**

Officer's site inspection was carried out on 15/04/2015

The site is roughly rectangular in shape and measures 1.8Ha in area. It is bound by Kelmarsh Road to its northern boundary and by a private track to its western boundary that runs from Kelmarsh and provides access to both the application site and to premises (Warth Lodge) that are sited to the south west. Agricultural land surrounds the site, including the buildings and farmhouse of Wheatfield Lodge Farm sited on the opposing side of Kelmarsh Road at the eastern edge of the site.

The site itself exhibits significant areas of hardstanding, which is thought to date back to the site's wartime airfield use and has not recently been maintained and is in a poor state of repair. There are also existing buildings on site that have predominantly been used for agricultural purposes in recent times. The largest of which is sited to the southern side of the site (Building A) and is constructed from various blockwork and metal cladding. The other significant structure is sited close to Kelmarsh Road (Building B) and is of blockwork construction with an unfinished roof. A prefabricated garage structure and small brick built structure are also in existence to the southern side of the site (to be retained as feed stores as part of the proposals).

## **Proposed Development**

It is proposed that an equine clinic be provided on the site as well as residential training facilities (predominantly for farriers, but also for student vets and ancillary professionals). The equine clinic would specialise in the care and rehabilitation of horses with hoof and leg problems and would be situated within Building A. The proposed floor plan layout identifies an operating theatre, a heated recovery room, loose box areas for horses, preparation and waiting areas in addition to 2no. studio flats for veterinary nursing staff. It is envisaged that no more than four horses would be under care at any one time.

The farrier training facilities / accommodation would be provided within Building B. The proposed floor plan indicates the creation of 4no. studio flats in addition to a lecture and sitting area (incorporating kitchen and dining facilities). It is proposed that this facility be used in relation to twelve 1-week residential farrier training courses over the summer period.

The existing built form on site would be supplemented by the construction of a bungalow for a vet and his family to live on the site permanently. This would exhibit dual-pitched roof features and measure 5.1m in ridge height and 2.5m in eaves height. It would contain an integral single garage as well as 2no. bedrooms, a living area and kitchen / dining room. This would be sited between the equine clinic and farrier accommodation and would be afforded its own private garden curtilage of approximately 800 sq. m.

It is proposed that existing concrete hard standings be broken up and returned to grazing land to allow for the formation of four distinct paddock areas, which would be used in conjunction with the clinic for the rehabilitation of horses. Furthermore, a menage area of 20 x 40m would be provided centrally within

the site. These works would be done in conjunction with the retention of existing tree belts and woodland contained within the site (to the northern boundary of the site).

### **Any Constraints Affecting The Site**

C Road

## **4.0 Consultation and Customer Impact**

**Harrington Parish Council:** Strong objection. The scheme is in non-compliance with the Core Spatial Strategy, which seeks to focus development towards urban areas to ensure that the character of rural areas is maintained and reinforced. The site is located in open countryside and is not sustainably located. A functional need for the development should be established. Living accommodation should only be built once the commercial enterprise has been established. No detailed business plan has been established to demonstrate the viability of what is proposed. Equine veterinary services are already well catered for in the locality. The Parish Council is led to believe that only £450,000 has been set aside for the project. The new build residential element would not be of exceptional quality nor innovative design. The development would be to the detriment of the outlook available from Wheatfield Lodge Farm. The scheme would visually intrude into the Clay Plateau Character Area as identified by the Northamptonshire Environmental Character Strategy. The buildings on site are agricultural and may not be capable of conversion; a structural report to demonstrate that this is possible should be submitted. The site has drainage issues, being of impervious grey clay; the adjacent Kelmarsh Road floods due to runoff from high rainfall.

**KBC Environmental Health:** No objection to the application subject to conditions being applied to ensure that the nature and extent of contamination is properly assessed.

**Highway Authority:** No objection. The northern sub-standard access will not be used to access the site – the private road to the west offers much better visibility. A number of standard conditions are requested as regards the specification of the access.

**NCC Lead Local Flood Authority:** The requirements set out in paragraph 30 of the flood risk and coastal change chapter of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) have been satisfied. No objection on flood risk grounds subject to the implementation of planning conditions to secure the detailed design of a surface water drainage scheme for the site and a detailed scheme for the ownership and maintenance of every element of the surface water drainage system that is proposed.

**Northants Police:** No formal objection subject to the list of security measures provided by the applicant being implemented as part of the development so as to reduce the likelihood of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

**Environment Agency:** No objections. It is commented that the proposals



include a new package treatment plant for the disposal of foul water. An Environment Permit is not required because the submitted Foul Drainage Assessment confirms that the proposed discharge will be less than 2 cubic metres per day. The application indicates that horse manure will be dealt with on site; there are rules that should be adhered to as the site is in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Storage of chemicals, disinfectants and veterinary medicines must be considered in line with best practice.

**Neighbours:** Notification letters were sent out to close proximity occupiers and a site notice was erected at the site. 3no. objections from confirmed addresses have been received in addition to 1no. objection from an unconfirmed address and can be summarised as follows:

Kelton House, High Street, Harrington; Thorp Underwood House, Thorpe Underwood; Wheatfield Lodge Farm, Kelmash Road, Harrington.

- Unsuitable development of the site has been consistently refused in the past
- The site is designated Greenfield and there are no grounds for permitting a change of use in the open countryside.
- The development, if permitted, could set a precedent for alternative development on the site.
- The residential accommodation is not integral to the business; ample B&B accommodation is available in Harrington.
- No business case or financial justification has been submitted, there is already sufficient equine veterinary provision and farrier training facilities available locally.
- The site has no provision for drainage; previous applicants have failed to demonstrate satisfactory methods for disposal of sewage and surface water. Equine waste shall exacerbate this issue.
- The access roads are not designed for a substantial increase in traffic.

## **5.0 Planning Policy**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

Policy 3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Policy 6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Policy 7. Requiring good design

Policy 11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### **Development Plan Policies**

#### **North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy**

Policy 1 (Strengthening the network of settlements),

Policy 8 (Delivering economic prosperity),

Policy 9 (Distribution & location of development),

Policy 11 (Distribution of jobs),

Policy 13 (General sustainable development principles)

Policy 14 (Energy efficiency and sustainable construction)

#### **Local Plan**

Policy 7. Environment: Protection of the Open Countryside

## **6.0 Financial/Resource Implications**

None

## **7.0 Planning Considerations**

The key issues for consideration in this application are:-

1. Principle of Development
2. Design & Visual Appearance
3. Residential Amenity
4. Flood Risk & Drainage
5. Access & Highways
6. Other Matters

### 1. Principle of Development

Policy 9 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy requires that development will be distributed to strengthen the network of settlements and development in the open countryside outside the Sustainable Urban Extensions will be strictly controlled. This policy compliments saved Policy 7 of the Local Plan for Kettering which restricts development in the open countryside. The site is located in an isolated location within the open countryside.

The site is located on high ground within an area of open countryside. There is evidence of hard surfaced areas on the land which appear to relate to its wartime use. There has been some development of buildings on the land, seemingly erected for agricultural purposes. Non-agricultural uses have been by way of limited period planning permissions. The use of the land remains as agricultural.

Notwithstanding the strict controls that are applied to open countryside development, the National Planning Policy Framework promotes a strong rural economy and supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings.

The proposed use as an equine hospital and farrier training facility, although not agricultural in planning terms, would be agriculture-related. The applicant has therefore sought to formulate a justification for the proposed use at this site on the premise that it be intended to serve a local need for such facilities. Upon request, the applicant has provided the names of 18no. separate principle equine establishments (not including private paddocks) situated within a 10 mile radius of the site. The applicant – whilst noting the sensitivity of providing specific details of existing clients – has stated that they currently have 4no. major active clients located within the same 10 mile radius.

In the interests of providing further evidence that there is demand for the new

equine facility in the local area and that it would serve a local need, the applicant has also provided information of other equine veterinary practices that are locally accessible. On the basis of the applicant's searches, only 5no. comparable practices were found in the local region. It is recognised that the applicant's searches may not represent an exhaustive account of the equine veterinary practices that are available locally, but it is clear that there is not a comparable facility positioned in the immediate vicinity of the site (i.e. within Harrington or the surrounding villages) and that there is a notable potential client base available (including existing clients according to the information provided).

The farrier training facility that is proposed would be inherently linked to the veterinary centre. It would provide 4no. studio flats in addition to a communal lecture / living area. As stated within the submitted Design and Access Statement, the residential accommodation would also be made available to student vets and ancillary professionals when unoccupied. The courses would be primarily aimed at qualified farriers wishing to expand their knowledge and to demonstrate continued professional development. In light of the relatively modest size of the proposed farrier facility (approximately 125 sq. m.) and its inherent links to the veterinary centre, it is felt that this proposed building conversion would support the sustainable growth of a rural enterprise.

It is noted that the scheme includes residential elements – a vets bungalow as well as 2no. studio flats for veterinary nursing staff and 4no. studio flats for training farriers. Clearly this accommodation would not provide for isolated homes in the open countryside – it would all be directly associated with the commercial elements of the proposal. The applicant has explained that the care of horses on the site would be intensive and relating to hoof and leg problems that require constant monitoring in the interests of maintaining animal welfare. Furthermore, the studio flats would be located within existing disused buildings and would therefore help lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting in compliance with Policy 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A suitably worded planning condition should be applied to any consent to ensure that any residential elements could only be occupied in association with commercial operations on-site. They would not therefore be able to be occupied as independent residential units and would not set any kind of precedent for any form of freestanding residential use at the site.

In summary, it is felt that the scheme as a whole would support a strong rural economy and would constitute sustainable development within the open countryside because of its inherent links to the rural economy. It is felt that adequate information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed use can cater for local rural need. Furthermore, any consent could be appropriately conditioned to ensure that all residential elements can only cater for persons employed or trained at the site. The principle of development is compliant with the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies 3 & 6.

## 2. Design & Visual Impact

Policy 13 (h) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy requires that developments be of a high standard of design, architecture and landscaping and enhance the character of its surroundings. In light of the open countryside setting of the site, it is considered that any further industrialisation or urbanisation of the site would fail to meet the requirements of Policy 13 (h) of the Core Spatial Strategy. Accordingly, the scheme seeks to concentrate upon the conversion and refurbishment of the existing built form on site, rather than upon further construction works.

The conversion works that are proposed would provide for a visual uplift of the site given the current dilapidated state of the existing built form on site. Buildings A & B would maintain a simplistic agricultural appearance – a mixture of high-level timber cladding and low-level brickwork would be utilised whilst profiled cladding would be applied to roof areas. Newly proposed openings would be incorporated at ground floor level, although these would be limited in both size and number and would not make for unduly complicated or incongruous elevations. The footprint and roof form of the existing buildings would be retained as existing. Any consent should be subject to a planning condition securing a full suite of external-facing materials.

The new build element of the scheme consists of the construction of a single bungalow to provide accommodation for a vet and his or her family. The bungalow would be sited relatively centrally within the site and in close proximity to the existing buildings on the site. When viewing the site from Kelmars Road it would be sited immediately behind the proposed farrier accommodation. On this basis it is felt that the bungalow would add to an accumulation of built form on the site as opposed to representing an excursion into the open countryside. Furthermore, it would be uncomplicatedly designed at modest proportions with a dual-pitched roof design. It would be brick built with a pan-tile roof and be articulated by a canopied front entrance feature, a front-facing (west-facing) bay window, a chimney stack and corncicing to its gable ends. It is considered that the bungalow would appropriately assimilate with the existing built form on site and be acceptable in design terms.

Policy 13 (o) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy requires that developments conserve and enhance the landscape character of the environment making reference to the Environmental Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure Strategy. Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that developments should contribute and enhance the natural local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.

The wider landscape character of the area has been identified by the Northamptonshire Environmental Character Strategy as falling within the Clay Plateau Character Area. This is an area of simple landscape, particularly across the more elevated plateau areas, with a land use dominated by agricultural production within medium and large scale fields. Long distance and panoramic views across open areas of plateau reinforced the sense of elevation and separation from urban areas. There is limited woodland and tree cover comprising broadleaved woodlands and mature trees. The

Landscape Strategy for the Clay Plateau is to conserve the simple, unified and orderly character, conserve local variation and conserve and enhance expansive, panoramic views across elevated, open areas of plateau landscaping.

In the context of the Clay Plateau Character Area, it is not considered that the scheme (which focuses upon the conversion and refurbishment of existing buildings whilst retaining existing mature landscaping to the boundaries of the site) would intensify the use of the site to such a degree that it erodes the identified simple rural character of the area and effects views across the open countryside.

It is also felt that a planning condition should be added to any consent to secure full details of the boundary treatments to be installed. This is particularly important in this case because of the number of different paddock areas that are proposed as well as the menage to the centre of the site. Such a condition would be in the interests of ensuring that the uncluttered and open character of the wider area is retained through the selection of boundary treatment that is not unduly visually prominent in the interests of ensuring compliance with Policy 13 (o) of the Core Spatial Strategy.

### 3. Residential Amenity

Policy 13 (l) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy requires that development will not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider area by noise, vibration, smell, light or other pollution or loss of light. There are nearby residential properties situated in close proximity to the site, namely Wheatfield Lodge Farm to the north and Warth Lodge to the south west. However, given the form of development proposed, it is not considered that any significant adverse impacts would result to occupants of these nearby dwellings. The Council's Environmental Health Department has submitted no objection to the application subject to a planning condition being applied to ensure that the site is properly assessed in respect to potential contamination and remediated (if required).

### 4. Flood Risk & Drainage

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted in support of the application. The development site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of fluvial flooding), but the site exceeds 1Ha in area thus necessitating the submission of a FRA. Within the FRA it is clarified that land within the site shall be stripped of concrete hardstanding and returned to agricultural paddock land – there will therefore be no increase in the impermeable hardstanding surface area as a result of the development. The surface water runoff from the development shall be decreased.

Surface water flooding occurs when the infiltration capacity of land or the drainage capacity of a local sewer network is exceeded and thus results in excess rainwater flowing overland. The submitted FRA includes an assessment of the likelihood of surface water flooding at the site and refers to the Environment Agency's Surface Water Flood Map where a 'very low' risk of surface water flooding is identified on and around the site.

The site is not currently served by any surface water management or drainage system. The development therefore offers an opportunity to implement Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicant's preliminary drainage scheme involves draining each of the buildings to a soakaway that will discharge into a reed bed biodiversity pond (to be sited centrally within the site). In accordance with a request received from the Lead Local Flood Authority (NCC) – who have no objection to the scheme – planning conditions should be applied to any consent to secure the detailed design of the surface water drainage scheme and details of its future ownership and maintenance in the interests of reducing the risk of flooding on and off the site in accordance with Policy 13 (q) of the Core Spatial Strategy.

In respect to foul drainage at the site, the applicant has submitted a 'Foul drainage assessment form' that clarifies that foul water shall be discharged to a soakaway within the site with an estimated flow of 1.32 cubic metres per day. The Environment Agency have offered no objection to the scheme and have commented that an Environmental Permit would not be required to dispose of the sewage effluent based on a discharge of less than 2 cubic metres per day.

#### 5. Access & Highways

The application is supported by a note on transport matters, which clarifies the anticipated traffic generations and traffic impact. The site would not generate significant volumes of traffic given that staff and trainees would all live on-site. The veterinary facility would be expected to generate around 8no. trips per week with horse trailers associated with horse owners visiting the practice. There would also be the movements associated with staff and training farriers living at or based at the site (1no. dwelling, 2no. bed sits within the veterinary centre, 4no. studio flats within the farrier training centre). There would be very low levels of daily commuter traffic generated, which the Kelmarsh Road would be able to accommodate. The impact upon the local highway network would be insignificant.

The Local Highway Authority has submitted no objections to the scheme. It is noted that the access point to the western side of the site offers far better visibility when compared to an existing access situated directly onto Kelmarsh Road on the northern boundary of the site. The western access measures approximately 10m in width and already serves HGV movements associated with Warth Lodge. The submitted plans indicate that the northern access shall be made redundant and that an appropriate licence shall be obtained from the County Council to break up and remove the existing access berm and infill with seeded topsoil to reinstate the grass verge.

The scheme, in compliance with Policy 13 (d) of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, would provide satisfactory means of access and provide for ample parking (14no. spaces defined upon the submitted site layout), manoeuvring and servicing opportunities.

#### 6. Other Matters

It has been questioned via the consultation process whether the scheme is viable given the level of investment that shall be required to convert the existing buildings on site. Harrington Parish Council has requested the submission of a detailed Business Plan. In response the applicant has provided details of development funding, which includes £275,000 to buy the site, £450,000 to convert existing buildings and £180,000 to fit out the equine clinic. A total investment (including contingency) of £995,500 is anticipated, which the applicant has stated is available to him. It is considered that in this instance it would be overly onerous and unnecessary in a planning context to request a detailed Business Plan for the proposed use.

It is also considered that it would be onerous in this instance to request a structural report to demonstrate that the existing agricultural buildings are capable of conversion. The conversion works would be provided at ground floor level only whilst the existing and proposed plans indicate relatively minimal works being required to the external shells of Buildings A & B (e.g. elevational uplifts through re-cladding).

### **Conclusion**

The proposed development would promote a strong rural economy through the appropriate conversion of existing disused and dilapidated buildings in the open countryside and catering for a local rural need, and would safeguard residential amenity and would not prejudice highway safety in compliance with Policies 1, 8, 9, 11, 13 & 14 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Background Papers**

Title of Document:

Date:

Contact Officer:

Andrew Smith, Senior Development Officer on 01536  
534316

#### **Previous Reports/Minutes**

Ref:

Date: