



ET Planning

Planning Statement

Client:

Mr Simon Beech

Long Meadow Farm

Edneys Hill, Wokingham, RG41 4DS

*Change of Use of Part of Barn (Agricultural) to
Storage Use (Use Class B8)*

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the part change of use of an agricultural barn to storage (Use Class B8) at Long Meadow Farm, Edneys Hill, Wokingham, RG41 4DS.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents:
 - 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - Site Block Plan
 - Floor Plan
 - Landscaping and Boundary Treatment Plan
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site comprises of a barn in agricultural use. The building is located to the south of Edneys Hill. The building is adjacent to the cluster of buildings at Edneys Hill Farm. The access to the farm is from the north off Edneys Hill, which runs between the B3349 and A321 to the south west of Wokingham.
- 2.2 The site is located in a flood zone 1 which carries the lowest risk of flooding. The site is not located within Settlement Boundaries and is in the countryside.
- 2.3 The site is within the Thames Basin Heath SPA 5km zone.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Application Ref 202003 - Full application for the proposed erection of an agricultural barn for the storage of tractors, machinery, hay and feed. Approved 28/09/2020.
- 3.2 Application Ref 211884 - Application for a certificate of existing lawful development for the installation of underground ground source heat loops and a Klargestor sunken wastewater treatment system. Approved 13/08/2021.
- 3.3 Application Ref: 211526 - Application for submission of details to comply with the following condition of planning consent 202003 dated 28.9.2020. Condition 4 Landscaping and Boundary Treatment details. Approved 26/05/2021.
- 3.4 Application Ref 212910 - Full application for the proposed erection of hardstanding and new access gate. Approved 04/11/2021.

- 3.5 Application Ref 220394 - Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 202003 to allow the addition of rooflights and 3 no. additional roller shutter doors to bays 2, 3 and 4. Approved 01/03/2022.
- 3.6 Application Ref 211539 - Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 202003 (28/03/2020) to allow the extension of the length of cladding sheets on the barn to change lower half of external wall and roof colour to Juniper Green to match upper half of external walls. Approved 28/05/2021.
- 3.7 Application Ref 221532 - Application for non-material amendment to planning consent 202003 for the reduction of roller shutter door widths, introduction of intermediate wall panels between doors on the east elevation and removal of a pedestrian door from the west elevation. Approved 31/05/2022.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The building has a lawful use as an agricultural barn which includes for storage of tractors, machinery, hay and feed.
- 4.2 The proposal seeks to change part of the barn (equating to two fifths of the existing floor space). As such, the proposal will create two separate planning units comprising of respective agricultural and B8 storage uses.
- 4.3 However, it is proposed that conditions would ensure the proposed B8 use is confined to the red line areas as per the submitted proposed plans and no storage occurs outside of this area.
- 4.4 The existing access to site will be used and remain unchanged. No external changes alterations are proposed to the barn. An internal wall is to be erected to separate the separate areas.

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1 **National Guidance:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application.
- 5.2 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way”.
- 5.3 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states (among other criteria): “*Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;*
 - b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses”*
- 5.4 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states: “*Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport. The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.*

- 5.5 **Principle of Development:** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.6 In this instance the Development Plan comprises:
- Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010) (hereafter referred to as the 'CS');
 - Managing Development Delivery (Adopted February 2014) (hereafter referred to as the 'MDD').
- 5.7 The NPPF is a material consideration of significant weighting in the determination of the application.
- 5.8 It is acknowledged that the LPA has recently closed its consultation of the Regulation 19 Local Plan and this would be given limited weighting in the consideration of the application.
- 5.9 The application site is outside of settlement limits and within the countryside. Policy CP11 of the CS states that with regard to commercial development, proposals in the countryside will not normally be permitted unless:
- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and*
 - 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;*
 - 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement"*

- 5.10 In this instance it should be noted that the business 'Beech Landscapes' (inc. as Garden Angels) has operated in the Borough for 35 years and has throughout required storage of vehicles and machinery/tools. The company is a small business and employs 7 members of staff with 4 Nissan cabstar vans.
- 5.11 Like all grounds maintenance businesses, commercial activities take place off site and there is a requirement for safe and secure storage as well as space to repair vehicles/machinery when they are damaged. As such, it is considered the use could accurately be described as a B8 use (as the workshop would be of a size and level of activity – and only related to what is being stored – that it would be ancillary to the primary B8 use).
- 5.12 The storage use for the business currently operates out of Glennifer Farm, Sandy Lane where the appellant's lease agreement is set to expire and where the applicant's business has been subject to multiple thefts of tools, vehicles and equipment. The business owing to its storage needs and grounds maintenance activities both within and outside of settlement boundaries (and current location within the countryside) clearly show the business (and its need) comprise a diverse and sustainable rural enterprise within the borough.
- 5.13 The proposed use would only utilise 2 of the existing 5 bays of the building and an internal wall is to be erected to these bays do not have any internal access to the other bays of the building (separating the agricultural and storage activities). The agricultural uses in the other parts of the building would be retained. It is not intended the hardstanding would be used for open air storage however, it will be required for manoeuvring and parking for the storage use. As such, a condition can be imposed to ensure no 'open air' B8 Storage use occurs, the storage uses can only occur within the proposed red line boundary.

- 5.14 The above would ensure the development would not lead to any encroachment or expansion of development away from existing development as it would operate within the existing barn and hardstanding. As such, it would also be contained within the building itself (without the need for any conversion works).
- 5.15 In summary, the proposed development would comply with CP11.1 – 3 and would be acceptable in principle.
- 5.16 Regardless of the above, it should be noted that (as has been highlighted in paragraph 5.3) paragraph 80 of the NPPF goes further than the limitation of CP11 purely seeking to ensure policies and decisions enable the sustainable growth of **all types** of businesses in rural areas particularly through the conversion of existing buildings and the diversification of agricultural businesses. The proposed development would no doubt achieve a development envisaged by paragraph 80.
- 5.17 This is particularly so as the type of business is also typical in such a premises within this location as evidenced by other existing businesses nearby. For example, the LPA have approved the following barn conversions for similar uses (under CP11):

<i>LPA Reference</i>	<i>Approved Use</i>
211637	Agricultural to Class E(g) and B8 Storage and Distribution
213660	Agricultural to recreational business and service use (climbing centre)

212179	Removal of Condition 2 for personal permission (previous change of use of Barn to B2 and B8)
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- 5.18 Notwithstanding compliance with CP11 and National Policy, it should be noted that Policy SS5 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan generally supports development in the Countryside (regardless of use or if it is a sustainable rural enterprise) where it re-uses an existing building. As such, the development would also comply with emerging policy SS5 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.
- 5.19 In summary, the proposal would comply with relevant Development Plan policies and the NPPF in principle.
- 5.20 **Character and Appearance of the Area, Landscaping and Trees:** Policy CP3 requires development to be appropriate to the character of the area and be of a high-quality design and have no detrimental impact to the landscape. Policy CC03 seeks to protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscaping features.
- 5.21 The proposed development would retain the existing soft landscaping on site and would be entirely contained within the existing building. No external alterations or increase in hard landscaping is proposed. As such, the visual and spatial impact of the development remains unchanged.
- 5.22 Notwithstanding the above, the proposal would not be visible from outside the site and thus would have no effect on public views or landscape character.
- 5.23 As such, the proposal complies with policy CP3 of the CS and CC03 of the MDD.

- 5.24 **Drainage and SuDS:** The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which carries the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. As such, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not required. The development is in line with Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan which ensures that it is not in an area at risk of flooding.
- 5.25 **Residential Amenity:** The separation distances to the residential property is such that there would be no adverse residential amenity impact of the use of the existing building with regard to noise and disturbance.
- 5.26 The barn is sited a sufficient distance away from the closest residential property and would not have any impacts regarding noise particularly as storage itself is not a noise generating use.
- 5.27 As the building is existing, there is no change regarding overlooking, overbearing and loss of light. This is considered to accord with Core Strategy Policy CP3.
- 5.28 **Transport and Parking:** Core Strategy Policy CP6 seeks to ensure suitable access is provided, and policy CC07 of the MDD Local Plan ensures that sufficient parking spaces are accommodated for the use proposed. The existing access meets highway standards and is deemed to accord with Policy CP6.
- 5.29 The change of use to introduce a B8 use into the unit would be confined to the internal area of two bays and vehicles would not be left on the hardstanding.
- 5.30 It should be noted that employees take and park vehicles home straight from work and the storage is not seeking a parking use which would attract additional day to day vehicle movements for employees to retrieve vehicles on a daily basis (drive straight to site). Two of

the four vehicles are always off site except for when equipment/tools are to be retrieved.

- 5.31 The increase in vehicle movements would be modest and would be in place of part of an existing use that already allows for the storage of vehicles (and machinery) in the same area just for a differing purpose. As such, any increase in vehicle movements would be small and likely unobjectionable.
- 5.32 The current site access is deemed suitable for the potential increase of traffic movements associated with the proposed use. Owing to only 2 vehicles (out of 4) being kept on site at one time for storage purposes. There should not a severe impact on the road network.
- 5.33 It is considered there is no unacceptable impact in terms of impact to the wider highway network or on highway safety grounds. any case, Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states '*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*'. As there is no severe impact this cannot be a reason for refusal and the proposal complies with relevant development plan policies.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land. There would be no harm to the wider landscape nor highway network whilst serving to support a local business.
- 6.2 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.



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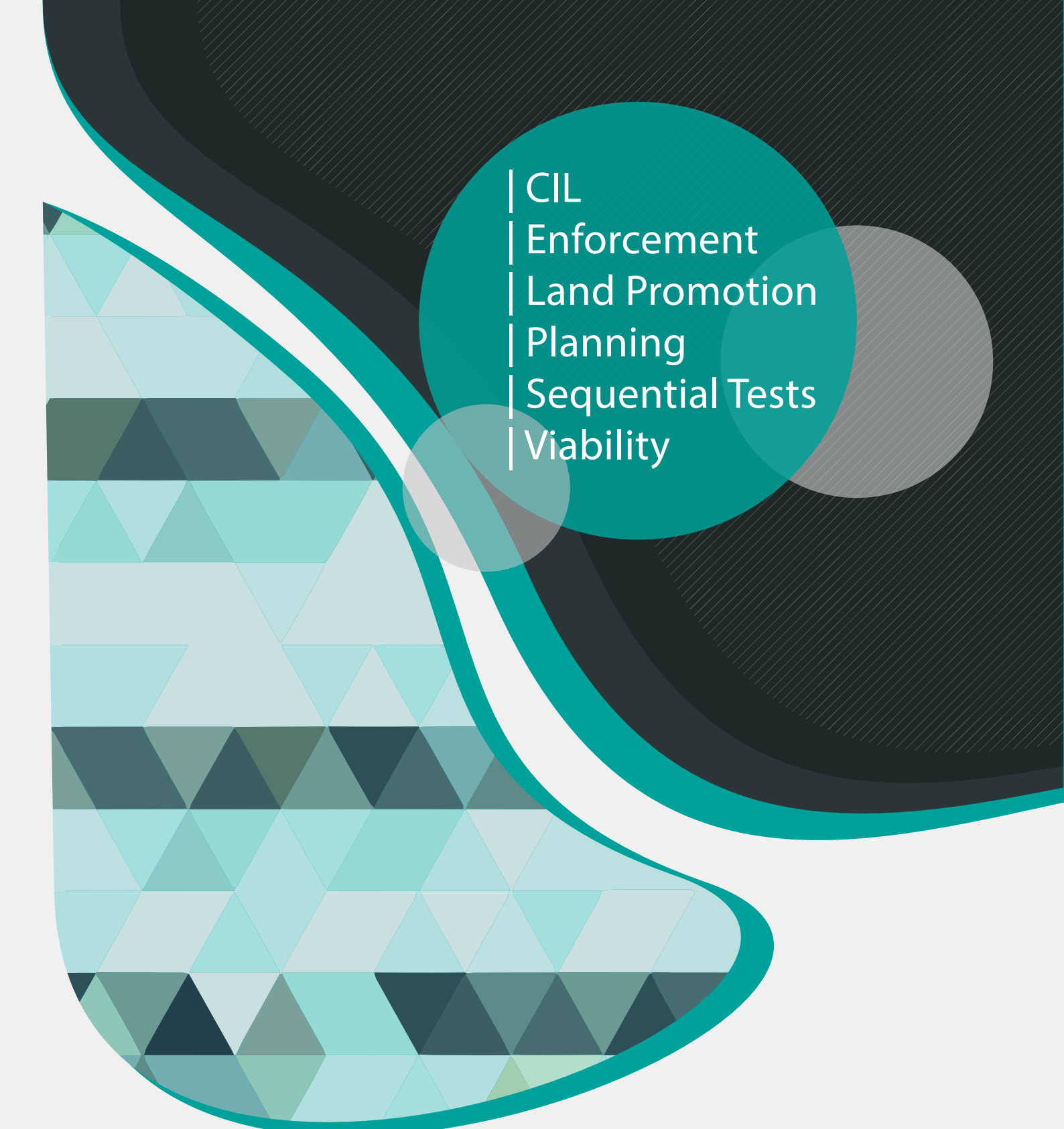


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