

AGENDA ITEM NO 9/3 (d)

Parish:	Heacham	
Proposal:	Conversion of 1No. existing building and erection of 6No. replacement buildings (following demolition of existing derelict buildings) for use as holiday accommodation	
Location:	Church Farm Church Farm Road Heacham Norfolk PE31 7JB	
Applicant:	Mel-Able Farming Ltd	
Case No:	22/01540/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs N Osler	Date for Determination: 29 November 2022 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 10 March 2023

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Cllr Parish and Referred by the Assistant Director

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Case Summary

This application is a resubmission of a previously refused application (21/00943/F) for the development of a complex of 1 and 2-bed holiday accommodation by the conversion / repairing of 1No. two-storey detached building and the construction of 6No. single-storey, semi and terrace, replacement buildings.

The site lies outside of the development boundary within countryside and the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site forms part of a farm complex.

The application was refused by Committee on 4 April 2022 for the following two reasons:

1. *The proposed development, by reason of the already wide provision for tourist accommodation within the locality and the impact on beautiful views, fails to preserve or enhance the AONB and is therefore contrary to paragraphs 174 and 176 of the NPPF, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM11 of the SADMPP 2016.*
2. *The proposed development, by virtue of proximity of the holiday accommodation to the existing farm buildings, would fail to provide a safe and high-quality layout. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Paragraphs 97 & 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Plan (2016).*

To address the reasons for refusal a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Health and Safety Report and Tourism – Economic Benefit Assessment accompany this application.

The remainder of the report remains largely unaltered from that which was seen by Committee in April 2022.

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Therefore, for ease, additional commentary / assessment is emboldened in the following report.

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Form and Character and Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Highway Safety
Residential Amenity
Safety of Users of the Proposed Development
Ecology
Crime and Disorder
Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application seeks the conversion and repair of 1No. two-storey, detached building and the construction of 6No. single storey, semi and terrace, replacement buildings, for use as 1 and 2-bed units of holiday accommodation.

The site lies outside of the development boundary for Heacham (countryside) within the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB.)

The site lies within the 2km buffer zone of a SSSI and is ranked as 'Medium' in terms of groundwater risk.

New materials will comprise brick, carrstone, natural timber cladding, pantiles and powder coated grey aluminium (the latter for the window and doorframes.) Existing materials will be reused where possible.

Foul drainage is to be via septic tank with surface water drainage via soakaways.

The land is agricultural and is therefore not classed as previously developed land in planning terms.

The application form suggests that the proposal would result in the creation of 2No. full-time equivalent jobs (e.g. cleaning, maintenance and gardening.)

Of the 7No. resultant holiday lets, 5 would be 2-bed units and 2 would be 1-bed units. Each unit would have its own private patio, garden area, 1No. car park space and secure bike storage. Soft landscaping will be used throughout the rest of site.

Extra parking is proposed to the south of the new units.

Church Farm can currently be accessed by two entrance points, from the northwest via Church Farm Road and from the South via the B1454. However, the existing highway access via the B1454 will provide access to both the existing and continued agricultural operations on Mel-Able Farm as well as the proposed development of holiday lets. To cater to both types of traffic, the existing private driveway to the B1454 will be upgraded with passing places to reduce any potential conflict between agricultural vehicles and

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holidaymakers. **Additionally, an access spur, approved under application 22/01169/AG, when constructed, would ensure farm vehicles do not come near to approaching the holiday accommodation.**

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Business Plan, Structural Survey, Protected Species Survey Risk, **Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Health and Safety Report and Tourism – Economic Benefit Assessment.**

SUPPORTING CASE

This is a resubmission of the previous application, which was refused in April 2022 on the basis that Heacham already has enough tourist accommodation, the site would not be safe due to its proximity to the farm and the potential impact on the AONB.

The revised application fully addresses and resolves these concerns.

Our proposal provides a very different type of holiday accommodation in contrast to the typical coastal Heacham caravan park. It provides barn-style rural accommodation in a farm-stay setting and provides access to both the countryside and the coast. An *Economic Benefits Report* has been prepared and outlines that our proposal has the potential to create between 4-17 new jobs. It also calculates that the estimated contribution of the development to the local economy would be in the region of £768k. The proposal also has links to wider tourism by relieving pressure on the sensitive coastal environment.

The revised application includes new safety measures, including a new 6ft close-board fence set in concrete posts to create a hard boundary between the holiday let complex and the farm, and a new farm access spur will ensure that farm vehicles do not come near to approaching the holiday let part of the property. The access route also has two potential passing places along the drive to ensure that vehicles can pass safely and that any conflict is minimised.

A *Health and Safety Assessment* was conducted on the site, which indicates the Council's safety concerns are extremely unlikely and are mitigated as much as possible by the fence and access spur.

A *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* has concluded that there will only be slight or neutral effects on landscape character at the site and in the local landscape setting. The zone of visual influence will be relatively small. There are few potential visual receptors and effects on views are again assessed to be slight or neutral. No heritage receptors appear to be affected.

Church Farm is discreetly located in the landscape and the development is small in scale when considered in its farmyard and landscape context. The proposed scheme offers the potential to create high-quality, energy-efficient holiday accommodation with minimal impact on the wider landscape or AONB.

The development will support farm diversification and sustainability, improve and enhance the local visitor economy and, by bringing traditional buildings back into use, will reinforce and enhance local character.

This proposal will assist with sustaining Mel-able Farming Ltd. by providing additional supplemental income to the farm operation allowing it to diversify its income stream

by making efficient use of under-utilised buildings on the farm and will support the local tourist economy.

The existing barns are an eyesore and are dilapidated. The proposal for holiday accommodation reflects the footprint and ridge heights of the existing farm buildings. The proposal keeps the buildings subordinate to the surrounding farm buildings and does not seek to overdevelop or alter the existing layout of the site. Rather than detract from the AONB, the redevelopment of the barns into a viable tourism operation will conserve and enhance the landscape as well as bring about local economic benefits for generations to come.

The proposal will help to relieve pressure on local housing to meet both residential and tourist needs.

Overall, the development proposal will bring about a number of social, economic and environmental benefits through the redevelopment of these dilapidated and unsightly barns into a diversified farm operation offering tourist accommodation that will benefit the wider local economy, conserve the landscape and reduce pressure on local housing for holiday purposes.

PLANNING HISTORY

22/01169/AG: Prior Approval NOT REQUIRED: 02.08.22 - Agricultural Prior Notification: Part of farm track to be repositioned for safer access to the Church Farmyard

21/00943/F: Committee Refusal: 08/04/22 - Conversion of 1No. existing building and erection of 6No. replacement buildings (following demolition of existing derelict buildings) for use as Holiday Accommodation.

12/02081/F: Application Permitted: 18/02/13 - Proposed agricultural general-purpose building to store farm implements etc.

07/01931/F: Application Permitted: 13/11/07 - Proposed agricultural general-purpose building to store grain.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT. Heacham Parish Council still object even with the Amendments.

- Overdevelopment of area outside the village and in an area of natural beauty (AONB)
- The application is against the Heacham Neighbourhood Plan policy 4; Principal Residency requirement
- Against Policy 6: Residential Parking, two-bedroom dwellings required a minimum of two parking spaces (Policy DM17 of BCKLWN SADMP)
- Heacham Neighbourhood Plan Policy 9 item 7, Holiday Accommodation. Does not demonstrate benefits to the local area even though the agent's additional information tries to prove it.

According to the RAC it is 1.27 miles from Church Farm to Tesco in Lynn Road and still over a mile to LIDL on the A149. The nearest pub is a little further, over 1.5 miles.

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As for Historic Buildings, yes, we have a few, and only the church is open to the public in Heacham.

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION. The improved southern entrance would have adequate width and visibility to cater for the likely increases (21 daily vehicle movements) associated with the development.

Should your Authority be minded to the grant of consent, I would seek to append the conditions relating to vehicular access (B1454 Heacham Road only) and parking provision.

Norfolk Coast Partnership: NO OBJECTION. We had concerns over the location of this development which was previously refused partly on the grounds of the impact to the AONB.

Having read the accompanying LVA and looking at the photomontages the development itself will only have a neutral to slight impact. However, there will be an increase of movement and traffic on site and potentially visual disturbance depending on landscaping and signage etc. Therefore, this needs some consideration.

NPPF 176 states that great weight should be given to 'conserving and enhancing the AONB which have the 'highest status of protection in relation to these issues'. Enhancement due to the location being in a high-quality area of the AONB and outside of the development boundary is even more crucial.

Enhancement/Mitigation has been mentioned in the Protected Species Survey, and we would welcome the enhancements suggested through a condition.

Soft landscaping has also been suggested to help soften the development into the landscape and provide ecological benefit. Certainly, some native hedging would be beneficial. In this instance hedges are preferable so as not to cause a visual block in the landscape which may impact long views. Again, we would want to see a condition that native planting is included particularly in the north and south of the site. It's important that the site remains rural and doesn't become too suburban with hard boundary treatments, gates etc. This would make the development more obvious in the landscape. This is mentioned in our Landscape Character Assessment:

'Due to the open and expansive landscape here the introduction of suburban features, including gardens, fencing, lighting and entrance driveways, which can cumulatively alter the rural character of the landscape should be avoided'.

The glazing is relatively modest although there will be some increase of localised light pollution when the buildings are in use. External lighting would need to be conditioned so as to protect our dark skies, a special feature of the AONB.

The LVA has demonstrated some compliance with CSO6, CS07 and DM11. However, the site, which is currently redundant, will be in more use. Therefore, there will be an element of disturbance in this landscape. It's important to stress that the NCP supports farm diversification and the needs of the local economy. We recognise that buildings will be brought back into use. However, this should not be at the expense of the designation which in itself is an asset.

The Local Authority needs to consider as part of their Duty of Regard that the rising number of holiday lets in the AONB, outside of the Development Boundary, will cause cumulative damage to the designation and therefore will degrade the asset that is bringing people to live, work and visit the area.

If the Local Authority is minded to approve this application, we would ask that the conditions suggested above are included to mitigate impacts to the AONB.

Environmental Health & Housing – Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION. The application is for the demolition of the current structures and construction of 6 replacement buildings to create 7 holiday lets.

The applicant has provided a screening assessment stating no known contamination.

We have reviewed our files and the site has been developed for the duration of our records with most of the current structures seen in historic maps dated 1891-1912. There is record of a petroleum site to the west of the site that was changed to DERV in 1984. The surrounding landscape is largely agricultural with some residential properties.

The information submitted does not indicate the presence of significant land contamination. However, the extensive former agricultural use and proximity to a former petroleum site means that it's possible that some unexpected contamination could be present. Therefore, I recommend a condition relating to unexpected contamination.

Historic Environment Service: NO OBJECTION. There are no known archaeological implications.

Natural England: NO OBJECTION. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

European sites: Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and has no objection to the proposed development. **To meet the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, we advise you to record your decision that a likely significant effect can be ruled out.**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites and has no objection to the proposed development.

CSNN: NO OBJECTIONS. To protect residential amenity of any non-associated dwellings I would recommend conditions relating to construction hours, party sizes (as per the Business Plan), drainage and informatives relating to asbestos removal and noise / dust.

Please condition external lighting as requested by the NCP Officer.

REPRESENTATIONS

NONE received at time of writing report.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

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CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS10 - The Economy

CS11 – Transport

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM11 – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

DM19 - Green Infrastructure/Habitats Monitoring & Mitigation

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Policy 5: Design Principles

Policy 9: Holiday Accommodation

Policy 11: Green Infrastructure

Policy 13: Dark Skies

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations in the determination of this application are:

Principle of Development

Form and Character and Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Highway Safety

Residential Amenity

Safety of Users of the Proposed Development

Ecology

Crime and Disorder

Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

The application falls under the 'banner' of both farm diversification and rural tourism. Both of which are supported at national and local level. Other relevant policy and guidance primarily revolves around protecting the natural environment (AONB and countryside), although other issues such as highway safety and residential amenity are obviously key material considerations too.

The NPPF covers the rural economy at paragraphs 84 and 85:

84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*
- b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses*
- c) Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside and*
- d) The retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

85. 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.

Development Management Policy DM2 allows development within the countryside where it complies with Core Strategy Policies CS06 and CS10, and Development Management Policy DM11 the latter of which relates specifically to Holiday Accommodation.

Core Strategy Policy CS06 states: *The strategy will be supportive of farm diversification schemes and conversion of existing buildings for business purposes in accordance with Policy CS10 providing any proposal:*

- Meets sustainable development objectives and helps to sustain the agricultural enterprise*
- Is consistent in its scale with its rural location*
- Is beneficial to local economic and social needs*
- Does not adversely affect the building and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity.*

Core Strategy Policy CS10, where it relates to tourism, states: *The Council will promote opportunities to improve and enhance the visitor economy:*

- Supporting tourism opportunities throughout the borough*
- Promoting the expansion of the tourism (including leisure and culture) offer in Hunstanton to create a year-round economy*

- *Smaller scale tourism opportunities will also be supported in rural areas to sustain the local economy, providing these are in sustainable locations and are not detrimental to our valuable natural environment.*

The Council will permit the development of new tourism accommodation in rural areas subject to the following criteria being met:

- *It should be located in or adjacent to our villages and towns*
- *It should be of a high standard of design in line with national guidance*
- *Will not be detrimental to the landscape*
- *Mechanisms will be in place to permanently retain the tourism related use.*

The application falls under the 'banner' of both farm diversification and rural tourism and is considered to meet the criterion listed above.

Development Management Policy DM11 states: *Proposals for new holiday accommodation sites or units or extension or intensification to existing holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted unless:*

- *The proposal is supported by a business plan demonstrating how the site will be managed and how it will support tourism or tourist related uses in the area*
- *The proposal demonstrates a high standard of design in terms of layout, screening and landscaping ensuring minimal adverse impact on visual amenity and the historical and natural environmental qualities of the surrounding landscape and surroundings*
- *The site can be safely accessed*
- *It is in accordance with national policies on flood risk*
- *The site is not within the Coastal Hazard Zone indicated on the Policies Map, or within areas identified as tidal defence breach Hazard Zone in the Borough Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Agency's mapping.*

Small scale proposals for holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not negatively impact on the landscape setting and scenic beauty of the AONB or on the landscape setting of the AONB if outside the designated area. Proposals for uses adversely affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or European Sites will be refused permission.

Policy DM11 also requires certain restrictive conditions relating to holiday use.

In relation to the points raised above the LPA responds as follows:

1. A suitable business plan, that suggests how the site will be managed, will provide two part-time equivalent posts and will support tourism, accompanied the application
2. The layout has taken careful consideration of the impact of the development with the main areas of outside space and parking in a central position surrounded by the proposed replacement buildings. Landscaping will be suitably conditioned if permission is granted.
3. The local highway authority raises no objection subject to all traffic using the site (both agricultural and tourism) accessing the site from the B1454
- 4 and 5. The site does not lie in an area at risk of flooding or within the Coastal Hazard Zone.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with Policy DM11 of the SADMP.

The Heacham Neighbourhood Plan (HENP) is also now adopted and therefore forms part of the Development Plan and must be given full weight in the planning balance.

Heacham Neighbourhood Plan Policies relevant to this application are: Policies: 5 (Design Principles), 6 (Residential Parking), 9 (Holiday Accommodation) and 13 (Dark Skies.)

Taking each in turn:

Policy 5: Design Principles

'Development proposals should deliver high quality design. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

1. *Preserves or enhances the village of Heacham, be sensitive to its surroundings, and demonstrate that it minimises adverse impacts on neighbouring residences*
2. *Recognise and reinforce the character of the local area in relation to height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design, and materials of neighbouring buildings*
3. *Homes and streets are designed to be tenure-blind*
4. *Streets are designed to provide sufficient resident and visitor parking that is well integrated and does not dominate the street. Street design should also encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces*
5. *Incorporate measures which increase energy efficiency and which reduce energy and resource loss, e.g. installation of solar panels, use of grey water, use of alternatives to plastic*
6. *Provide sufficient external space for:*
 - *Refuse and recycling storage*
 - *Bicycle parking*
 - *Child and disabled facilities where appropriate*
 - *The integration of meter boxes, lighting, flues and ventilation ducts, gutters and pipes, satellite dishes, aerials and telephone lines*
7. *New dwellings should have gardens commensurate with the intended occupancy*
8. *Ensure that car parking provision is large enough to fit a modern family sized car (for example a VW Golf or Ford Focus) and allow the driver to get out of the car easily, and is positioned and designed to have minimal impact on the streetscene*
9. *Where appropriate, respect and protect designated and non-designated local heritage assets and their settings*
10. *There is no unacceptable adverse impact (visual or otherwise) on the area's landscape, and proposals for development will be expected to demonstrate how they have minimised landscape impacts on the open countryside and coastline*
11. *Incorporate adequate landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of the development and to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the existing village context. Where possible,*

sites are screened through the use of landform, native trees and locally appropriate planting

12. *For major residential developments applicants should produce a report to demonstrate that their scheme accords with national design standards (BFL 12 or equivalent)*
13. *Where practicable, provide adaptable homes through the lifetime homes standard in order to cater for a changing demographic*
14. *Where practicable, make better connections to other areas of the parish, including access to local services and public open spaces*
15. *Retain mature or important trees (NPPF 2019 Section 175 applies) 37*
16. *Ensure new boundary treatments reflect the distinct local character and incorporate semi-mature street planting and hedges to boundaries with open countryside*
17. *Access to the site is provided/improved to highway authority standards*
18. *Where appropriate, proposals make a positive contribution towards open spaces, whether respecting the amenity, recreational and wider environmental value of existing spaces or, especially for developments of more than 8 dwellings, provide additional public open space to meet the needs of new residents.*

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

1. Covered later in this report; there are no neighbouring residencies
2. The parameters of the replacement buildings are very similar to those they replace and are of an appropriate height, scale, etc. Materials will be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. The current site benefits from three wind turbine and solar panels on the main barn. It has been confirmed that the proposed units will be connected to these
6. Appropriate for the type of development sought
7. Appropriate for the type of development sought
8. Appropriate for the type of development sought
9. N/A
10. Covered later in this report
11. Can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
12. N/A
13. N/A
14. Not proportionate given the scale and type of development sought
15. N/A; no trees will be affected by the proposed development
16. Can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
17. It is
18. Not appropriate given the scale and type of development sought.

Notwithstanding issues that are covered later in this report, it is considered that the proposed development is in general compliance with Policy 5 of the HNP.

Policy 6: Residential Car Parking

Off-street car parking should be provided for each new dwelling based on two car parking spaces for both one and two-bed units.

Parking provision, 1 adjacent to each unit and an additional space to serve each unit to the south of the complex, accords with this required.

The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policy 5 of the HNP.

Policy 9: Holiday Accommodation

In order to maintain and improve Heacham's attraction as a quiet uncommercialised holiday centre, applications for further holiday accommodation beyond existing defined holiday areas, will only be supported where the proposals:

- 1. Maintain the distinction between the contrasting holiday centres of Heacham and Hunstanton and do not diminish the physical separation between these centres; and*
- 2. Do not have any unacceptable impact on local infrastructure, including green infrastructure; and*
- 3. Minimise any visual and physical impact on the village by including, where appropriate, a landscaping plan incorporating the use of landform, native trees and locally appropriate planting ; and*
- 4. Are not directly adjacent to any residential areas; and*
- 5. Do not need to be accessed through the village centre of Heacham; and*
- 6. Incorporates high quality accommodation for which adequate parking and servicing arrangements are provided and*
- 7. Can demonstrate a link to wider tourism or land use initiatives that provide demonstrable benefits to the local area.*

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

1. The site does not diminish the physical separation between these centres
2. Heacham is a Key Rural Service Centre with many services and facilities. It is not considered that the scale of the proposed development would have an unacceptable impact on local infrastructure
3. A detailed landscaping plan could be suitably conditioned if permission is granted
4. The development is not directly adjacent to any residential areas
5. The site does not have to be accessed through the village centre
6. The proposed units are a scale, mass, design and utilise appropriate materials, and appropriate parking is proposed
7. The development would provide additional tourism accommodation and provide new employment opportunities.

A Tourism – Economic Benefit Report (EBR) was submitted with the application to demonstrate that the development would have a demonstrable benefit to the local area. The EBR acknowledges that there is no set method given in the HENP to do this

so looks specifically at likely economic benefits. The approach to doing this is stated to be consistent with the Economic Development Resource Centre, University of Greenwich Report on the Economic Impact of the Rural and Coastal Self-Catering Sector in England as well as Visit Norfolk data.

The key points from the EBR are that the development has the potential to create between 4-17 FTE jobs through direct and indirect employment and an estimated contribution to the local economy in the region of £768k.

These figures are reached by inputting local data into acknowledged methodologies.

The report suggests the following five demonstrable benefits to the local area would arise from the proposed development:

1. The proposed development would assist with the development and diversification of an existing agricultural operation and land-based business. The direct spend on accommodation at the development would have economic benefits for the existing local business, existing employment and the local supply chains engaged by the existing business.
2. The economic development will stimulate direct spending from tourism, this spend will spill-over to other areas of the economy making further contributions. The operation of the business will take several measures to encourage 'spend' is made locally to encourage further local benefit.

In this regard the Business Plan has been updated to engage local supply chains and encourage spend within the local area. This can be summarised as:

- All aspects of management (i.e. maintenance tradesmen, gardeners, window cleaners etc.) will be outsourced to local companies
 - Local cleaning and laundry companies will be used (applicant intend to use Stay pressed and clean laundry service with the village of Heacham
 - Local tourist attractions, services and shops will be promoted by in-depth information booklet provided in the properties (including locations, contact details, opening hours, locations, etc.). There will be leaflets and flyers available to guests within the properties too
 - Seeking to work with local businesses to provide discount and promotion schemes to help direct spend
 - Properties will include luxury welcome hampers which will be stocked with local Norfolk produce.
3. The proposed development has the potential to create between 4-17 FTE jobs because of the direct industry spend. There would be more jobs elsewhere in the economy as a result of the total economic contribution of the proposed development.
 4. The proposed development will support policy agendas. It will provide a year-round modernised accommodation type which is attractive to domestic tourists. This supports local agendas to achieve strong year-round business and national discourse to embed domestic travel as a sustained customer behaviour by offering an attract domestic stay offer. In accordance with Policy 9 of the HENP, the proposal has a link to wider tourism through according with wider policy agenda.

5. **Direct and total economic contributions made from the proposed development are consistent with intended management strategies for the AONB. The proposal is in a rural area and will assist with relieving pressure on the coast. The submitted LVA demonstrates minimal impact on the wider landscape or AONB. The economic contribution made by the development will help sustain and enhance natural and built physical environments. Not least by the sensitive development of the current site and its condition.**

The applicant has provided a substantial assessment to demonstrate a link to wider tourism or land use initiatives that provide demonstrable benefits to the local area.

It is therefore considered that the development would offer a demonstrable benefit to the local area as required by HENP Policy 9.

Policy 13: Dark Skies

External lighting associated with development proposals should be sensitively designed to safeguard the dark skies environment of the neighbourhood area and minimise the extent of any light pollution. In particular:

- *External lighting should be designed to minimise the risk of light spillage beyond the development site boundary; and*
- *Light-emitting diode down lighting, including lights at lower levels, should be used wherever practicable and be in keeping with the existing LED lighting stock.*

Lighting can be suitably conditioned if permission is granted to ensure compliance with Policy 13 of the HNP.

Policy 17: Settlement Breaks

Development proposals outside the development boundaries of Heacham (and as shown in Inset G47 of the SADMP) will only be supported where they:

- *Do not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape setting and distinct identity of Heacham*
- *Do not detract from the visual separation of Heacham from Hunstanton*
- *Do not detract from the views or settings of the Norfolk Coast AONB*
- *New development must not result in the coalescence of Heacham with Hunstanton to the north.*

In relation to the policy criteria above the LPA comments as follows:

- Impact on the landscape (and AONB in particular) is covered in more detail later in this report
- The development would not detract from the visual separation between the settlements.

In summary, it is considered that the principle of development is to be supported and that the development accords with the overarching policy criterion outlined above. However, the site lies within an AONB and therefore careful consideration needs to be given to the impact of the development on this nationally designated area.

Form and Character and Impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing 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 these issues...The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Paragraph 177 continues by stating: When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development* other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy
- b) The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

* The NPPF states that 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

Your officers do not consider that the development is major development for the purposes of the NPPF. However, there is still a need for all development to either conserve or enhance the AONB.

The proposal will replace a series of dilapidated barns which unfortunately are not capable of conversion due to their poor state of repair. This is confirmed in the structural survey report that accompanied the application.

The footprint of the new development closely follows the existing and thus reducing the impact on the character of the surrounding area and landscape. The applicant considers that the design represents a modern interpretation of the traditional vernacular and uses a local materials palette of carrstone and red brick elevations and clay pantile roofing to further reflect the character of the area.

The layout ensures that the outside areas, including parking, are in a central position surrounded by the buildings. This not only places these areas in the most direct sunlight, it also shields them from public view.

The proposed replacement buildings are single-storey, the same as those they replace, and follow the same footprint as the buildings they are to replace. Additionally, it is the intention to use as many of the existing materials as possible. However, in this regard it is inherently difficult to do this when there is such little material of quality left. Notwithstanding this, a materials schedule can be conditioned if considered necessary.

Whilst it is considered that the replacement buildings are a scale, mass, design and appearance that relate adequately to the site and the surrounding farm complex and would not in their own right be of detriment to the AONB, the use of the buildings (holiday let rather than agricultural buildings) will have an impact on this protected locality.

This will be principally by activity associated with the use. There will be greater vehicular activity, general activity and light pollution. The latter is considered to be acceptable given the reduction in glazing elements and external lighting can be suitably conditioned.

In relation to the former issue, activity, Members will need to consider whether this would result in conservation of the AONB and if the benefits to the existing agricultural enterprise and wider economy outweigh the harm these activities will have on the character of the AONB.

Your officers believe, on balance, given the only long view of the site is from the B1454 to the south, that the development would conserve the AONB and that any harm is outweighed by the benefits.

However, impact on the AONB comprised part of the first reason for refusal of the previous application:

The proposed development, by reason of the already wide provision for tourist accommodation within the locality and the impact on beautiful views, fails to preserve or enhance the AONB and is therefore contrary to paragraphs 174 and 176 of the NPPF, Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM11 of the SADMPP 2016.

Since this time a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken and submitted with this application.

The LVA concentrated on six views to assess the potential visual effect on specific receptors in the local setting.

View 1: Looking north from the B1454

Receptor: Relevant to road users.

Distance: C.770m from the proposed development.

Comments: A partial and fairly distant view of the renovated buildings may be possible for a section of road around 500m long. Road users are likely to be concentrating on the road and not sensitive to changes to landscape of this type. The expected magnitude of change is low or negligible; the level of visual effects slight or neutral.

View 2: Looking northeast from BOAT14 (access to Heacham recycling centre)

Receptor: Relevant to road users.

Distance: C.1450m from the proposed development.

Comments: The view illustrated that in the wider setting, even the largest buildings at Church Farm are difficult to see and the proposed renovation will generally be unseen. The magnitude of change is considered to be nil; the level of visual effect from the development will be neutral.

View 3: Looking southeast from Ringstead Road

Receptor: Relevant to road users.

Distance: c.800m from the proposed development.

Comments: The upper parts of the larger structures at Church Farm are visible from this position, but the proposed renovation will not be (views south from Ringstead

Road are mainly blocked by roadside hedges.) The magnitude of change is considered to be nil; the level of visual effect will be neutral.

View 4: Looking southwest from a gateway on Ringstead Road

Receptor: Relevant to road users.

Distance: Approximately 800m from the proposed development.

Comments: The top of the wind turbines at Church Farm are just visible, but no other structures are, and the proposed development will be hidden. The magnitude of change will be nil; the level of visual effects neutral.

View 5: Looking north from Eaton Drove (Heacham RB 16)

Receptor: Relevant to PROW users.

Distance: Approximately 1800m from the proposed development.

Comments: The farm will be distantly visible but changes to the outbuildings will be difficult to discern. The magnitude of change will be negligible; the level of visual effects neutral.

View 6: Looking north from the farm entrance

Receptor: Relevant to road users.

Distance: Approximately 700m from the proposed development.

Comments: The renovated buildings will be visible but will not create a significant alteration to the current view. The magnitude of change is considered to be low; the level of visual effect will be slight or neutral.

The LVA concludes that 'There will only be slight or neutral effects to landscape character at the site and in the local landscape setting. The zone of visual influence will be relatively small. There are few potential visual receptors and effects to views are again assessed to be slight or neutral. No heritage receptors appear to be affected. Church Farm appears to be discreetly located in the landscape and the development is small in scale when considered in its farmyard and landscape context.'

The Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) have reviewed the LVA and consider its conclusions acceptable. Unlike the previous application, the NCP no longer object to the proposed development on the grounds and consider impact can be suitably conditioned by appropriate landscaping and lighting.

Given the findings of the LVA and that neither Natural England (the statutory consultee) nor NCP raise any objection to the proposed development on the AONB it would difficult to draw a different conclusion.

Your officers therefore consider that the proposed development complies with the NPPF and Development Plan Policies CS01, CS08, CS12 and DM15.

Highway Safety

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has confirmed that the access of the site to the B1454 to the south is adequate in terms of width and visibility to cater for the proposed development as well as the existing agricultural activity.

The LHA request a condition ensuring all traffic using the site (existing and proposed) do so via this access which is preferable to utilising an existing access to the west of the site that enters the main highway network (the A149) via Chapel Farm Road and Ringstead Road through residential areas.

The proposal therefore complies with the NPPF and Development Plan Policy CS11.

Residential Amenity

There are no non-associated residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the site and given the holiday nature of the accommodation the inter-development relationships are considered acceptable.

Safety of Users of the Proposed Development

Members considered that the proximity of the holiday accommodation to the existing farm complex and buildings was not acceptable and this concern was manifested in the second reason for refusal:

The proposed development, by virtue of proximity of the holiday accommodation to the existing farm buildings, would fail to provide a safe and high-quality layout. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Paragraphs 97 & 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS08 of the Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Plan (2016).

A Health and Safety Assessment (HAS) was commissioned and carried out by LMS Health and Safety Training and Consultancy.

The HAS states that:

- the existing agricultural access will be forked off prior to the accommodation, redirecting any farm traffic away from the area, this will be developed as part of a safety strategy to reduce vehicle movements and allow the public a safer access and egress point to the accommodation, directional signage will also be in place
- a six-foot fence will be placed in between the grain dryer, silos and the accommodation to prevent unauthorised access. This will also retract the noise that is admitted from the grain dryer away from the accommodation. The grain dryer and silos are only used in an emergency and have only been used once in the past 10 years
- The access platforms to the silos will be lined with a plated covering to prevent climbing of the structure and the ladder access will be locked off and secured
- Safety signage will be installed as an extra precaution
- The diesel tank automatically feeds the grain dryer, this is a bunded tank, at height, and will be located behind the 6ft fence that is being erected
- The liquid fertiliser fibreglass tank next to the silos, will be relocated away from the site this will eliminate the risk as will the water tank and chemical store that is used to fill the sprayer be relocated
- The metal tank currently at the front of the derelict buildings, which is used to store scrap metal, will be completely removed from site, eliminating the risk.

Your officers consider that appropriate measures, that could be suitably conditioned if permission is granted, have been taken to address the health and safety concerns previously raised.

Ecology

A Protected Species Survey (PSS) accompanied the application.

The PSS concluded:

Amphibians and Reptiles: The project will not impact on any suitable habitat for these species.

Bats: The field surveys and desk study conclude bats are unlikely to be present within the barns. No further surveys are required, but lighting should be suitably conditioned.

The development is not considered to have a significant impact upon community or foraging bats and there will be no severing of connectivity.

Birds: There were birds roosting within Unit 1 and barn owl pellets were also objection within this building. No further surveys are required. However, any works to Unit 1 should take place outside of the bird nesting period, or if that is not possible, confirmation will be required from a qualified ecologist that nesting birds are absent.

An alternative Barn Owl roosting / nesting box shall be provided within 200 metres of the development site at least 30 days before any development works commence, in a position to be approved by condition.

Enhancements:

- Four bat access tiles to be installed onto the southern aspect of the roof of the new units 2 and 3. Alternatively two ridge access points can be created by using spacer to create a gap 20mm x 50mm in the mortar under the tiles
- A bat box to be installed on the side elevations of Units 1 and 3. A wall mounted bat box would be suitable
- Two bird boxes to be installed; one on the eastern gable of Unit 7 and one on the western gable of Unit 2.
- Post works landscaping could also incorporate bat friendly planting to enhance foraging opportunities on site.

It is therefore concluded, subject to conditions, that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on ecology / protected species.

Crime and Disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from the proposed development.

Other Material Considerations

The Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy fee of £185.93 per unit, as required by Policy DM19, accompanied the application. Natural England has confirmed that the LPA can conclude that the development would not have a likely significant

effect on protected sites, and therefore no additional consideration / assessments are required in this regard.

CONCLUSION

Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and any other material considerations. The application falls under the 'banner' of both farm diversification and rural tourism. Both of which are supported at national and local level, subject to other relevant planning policy and guidance and for the reasons outlined in the report above it is considered that the development is in general accordance with these enabling policies.

The site lies within an AONB. However, an LVA has satisfied the Norfolk Coast Partnership (who previously objected to the proposed development) that the development would not object to the proposed development on the grounds of its impact on this nationally designated area.

It is considered that the scale, mass, design and appearance of the proposed replacement buildings are acceptable in their farm complex setting. However, it is acknowledged that there would be some impact from the proposed use (holiday accommodation.) Notwithstanding this, it is considered, on balance, that this impact would not be significant and would not result in material harm to the AONB. Furthermore, the proposal comes with benefits both to the existing agricultural enterprise and also to the tourism offer **as well as demonstrating a demonstrable benefit to the local area.**

The proposed development would not result in any highway safety or neighbour amenity issues, **and previous safety concerns for visitors could be addressed by a diversion of the access track and compliance with measures outlined in the Health and Safety Report that accompanied the application.**

It is therefore recommended that this application be approved subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - 17.4018.265 PLO1 Rev.L
 - 17.4018.265 PLO2 Rev.L
 - 17.4018.265 PLO3 Rev.L
 - 17.4018.265 PLO4 Rev.L
 - 17.4018.265 PLO5 RevL
 - HIGHWAYS PLAN.
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 Condition: No development shall commence until full details of the foul and surface water drainage arrangements for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall be constructed as approved before any part of the development hereby permitted is brought into use. Your attention is drawn to Informative 2 of this decision notice in relation to this condition.

3 Reason: To ensure that there is a satisfactory means of drainage in accordance with the NPPF.

This needs to be a pre-commencement condition as drainage is a fundamental issue that needs to be planned for and agreed at the start of the development.

4 Condition: Means of vehicular access to and egress from the development hereby permitted shall be derived from and to the B1454 Heacham Road only

4 Reason: In the interests of highway safety and traffic movement in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.

5 Condition: Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the proposed on-site car parking, turning areas, passing places and access spur as shown on the HIGHWAYS PLAN shall be laid out, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.

5 Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking and manoeuvring areas and passing places in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.

6 Condition: Prior to any demolition a schedule of the materials to be salvaged for reuse in the redevelopment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

6 Reason: To ensure that materials that are capable of re-use are retained in accordance with the principles of the NPPF. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the fundamental details linked to the conservation of materials which need to be planned for at the earliest stage in the development.

7 Condition: No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until samples of all materials (not covered under condition 6 of this permission) to be used for the external surfaces of the building(s), including roof materials, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

7 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

8 Condition: No development shall take place on any external surface of the development hereby permitted until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building(s) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 8 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 9 Condition: Prior to any works above ground floor finish floor level of the development hereby approved, full details of both hard and soft landscape works shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include finished levels or contours, hard surface materials, refuse or other storage units, street furniture, structures and other minor artefacts. Soft landscape works shall include planting plans, written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment) schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers and densities where appropriate.
- 9 Reason: To ensure that the development is properly landscaped in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 10 Condition: Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted or within the first planting season all hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved under Condition 9 of this permission. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- 10 Reason: To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.
- 11 Condition: Prior to the installation of any external lighting relating to the development hereby permitted a detailed outdoor lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the type of lights, the orientation / angle of the luminaries, the spacing and height of the lighting columns, the extent / levels of illumination over the site and on adjacent land and the measures to contain light within the curtilage of the site. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with approved scheme and thereafter maintained and retained as agreed. Your attention is drawn to Informative 3 of this decision in relation to the lighting within the AONB.
- 11 Reason: In the interests of minimising light pollution and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 12 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall only be occupied for holiday purposes and shall be made available for rent or as commercial holiday lets.
- 12 Reason: The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 13 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall only be used for short-stay holiday accommodation (no more than 28 days per single let) and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence.

- 13 Reason: The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 14 Condition: The owners / operators of the development hereby permitted shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings/occupation and shall make this available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.
- 14 Reason: The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit permanent residential development. This permission is granted because accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF.
- 15 Condition: The holiday let hereby permitted shall at all times be held, owned and operated in association with Church Farm, Church Farm Road, Heacham and shall not be sold off separately.
- 15 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the building is not used for unrelated purposes that would be incompatible with the provisions of the NPPF and Policy DM11 of the SADMPP 2016.
- 16 Condition: 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 current best practice, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
- Following completion of measures in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
- 16 Reason: 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.
- 17 Condition: Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the parking area to the south shall be screened with a boundary the details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The boundary treatment shall thereafter be maintained and retained in perpetuity.
- 17 Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the locality in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.
- 18 Condition: Construction or development work on site, along with collections and deliveries of waste products, material and equipment, shall only be carried out between the hours of 0800 and 1800 weekdays, and 0900-1300 on Saturdays, with no work allowed on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays.
- 18 Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.

- 19 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the Health and Safety Report that accompanied the application (produced by LMS Health and Safety Training and Consultancy dated 21st November 2022)
- 19 Reason: To ensure satisfactory operation of the site in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.
- 20 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be operated in full accordance with the Business Plan that accompanied the application.
- 20 Reason: To ensure satisfactory operation of the site in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.
- 21 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be constructed and maintained in full accordance with the mitigation and enhancements contained within the Protected Species Survey that accompanied the application (Ref: 2127-GE-JH, produced by Glaven Ecology, dated August 2022)
- 21 Reason: In the interests of conserving and enhancing the natural environment in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.