

	Trunkwell Farm, Beech Hill Road, Beech Hill, Reading Application No. 10/02090/FULD
Title of Report:	Replacement of existing barn with barn-style dwelling and conversion of existing traditional brick and timber cart house to provide ancillary accommodation. Demolition of remaining barns and outbuildings.
Report to be considered by:	District Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 th January 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

Purpose of Report: For the District Planning Committee to determine the application in question.

Recommended Action: The Eastern Area Planning Committee of the 1st of December 2010 recommended that the application be approved.

Reason for decision to be taken: Referred to District Committee by Members due to concerns regarding the strategic impact on the implementation of development plan policies should the application be approved.

Key background documentation: Eastern Area Planning Committee agenda dated the 1st of December 2010, with update sheet, and agreed minutes. Application file 10/02090/FULD.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Theme:

- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Themes and Outcomes by:
Preventing unsustainable and inappropriate use of a Greenfield site.

Portfolio Member Details	
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	

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Implications

Policy: Implications for the Development Plan particularly in relation to Policy ENV.20 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 (WBDLP) in terms of promoting sustainable development and limiting development in the countryside to locations close to existing community facilities and public transport.

Financial: Nil

Personnel: Nil

Legal/Procurement: Nil

Property: Nil

Risk Management: Nil

Equalities Impact Assessment: Nil

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 The application before the Committee is outlined in Appendix 1 which includes the Officer's report, plus update, on the proposed development considered at the Eastern Area Planning Committee on 1st December 2010.

1.2 The application is for the erection of a new dwelling in the countryside outside any identified settlement boundaries. The application is being primarily considered under Policy ENV.20 of the WBDLP which relates to the redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside although other relevant policies and government guidance are referred to in the attached committee report. The principal criteria which must be met in this policy is that the proposal should be in a sustainable location well related to existing settlements and which are accessible by means other than the private car. It should be noted that the proposal relates to an agricultural site and therefore is not classified a brownfield site. The proposal is in a relatively isolated location about half a mile from the hamlet of Beech Hill which does not have an identified settlement boundary on the WBDLP proposals map and has no shops or schools. The site is not well related to any public transport links.

1.3 The building to be redeveloped is a modern steel framed barn together with a number of other barns in the vicinity. One building, a former cartshed, is to be retained. In addition to the unsustainable nature of the proposal it is considered that the taller domestic building with its large areas of glazing would be prominent in the landscape and have a greater impact on the countryside than the existing barns. The building would be clearly visible from the nearby public right of way (footpath BeechHill 4/1), and from further afield particularly from the north and west as there are extensive views from the site in those directions.

1.4 A previous permission (which was considered by the District Planning Committee in September 2007) was for the conversion of a traditional barn at the site for a live work unit. This was considered under Policy ENV.19 relating to the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside. However, half of this barn has now collapsed and the other half is derelict (This permission has also lapsed). Policy ENV.20 states that redevelopment is not acceptable in cases where the existing buildings are in an advanced state of dereliction as this would be intrusive to a rural area.

1.5 Trunkwell farm is typical of many clusters of farm buildings in the countryside. The fact that the buildings are no longer in agricultural use and are deteriorating is not sufficient reason to allow the construction of a new dwelling in order to remove the 'untidy' agricultural buildings. Planning guidance does not encourage granting planning permission to allow the 'tidying up' of sites as this could act as an incentive to landowners to allow buildings to become derelict and unsightly. Whilst the existing agricultural buildings are not particularly attractive their visual impact on the wider area is low key and in keeping with the rural area. In contrast the proposed new dwelling and its residential curtilage would have a greater and uncharacteristic suburbanising visual impact on the surrounding area.

2. Conclusion

2.1 The application is contrary to the Council's Policies on redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside and to its overall strategy of sustainable development and development on brownfield sites in preference to greenfield sites and the similar aims contained in current government guidance in PPS1 and PPS7.

2.2 It is also considered that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of the countryside.

2.3 As a result, the Officer recommendation at the Eastern Area Planning Committee on 1st December 2010 was for the refusal of the application.

2.4 At the above meeting the members resolved to approve the application subject to the completion of a section106 agreement within two months and subject to conditions. They also resolved that the application should be referenced up to the District Planning Committee on 25th January for determination due to its strategic implications with regard to the implementation of development plan policies.

2.5 The Officer recommendation from the Head of Planning and Countryside remains one of refusal.

3. Recommendation

That the Head of Planning and Countryside be authorised to REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The application sites lies outside any identified settlement boundaries on the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 and within a rural location in the countryside. The application site is in an isolated location, not well related to settlements and is not readily accessible by means other than the private car which would be needed to reach the nearest services and facilities. As such the proposal is considered to be in an unsustainable location and the proposed replacement of farm buildings would be contrary to national guidance within PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, Core Policy OVS.1 and Policy ENV.20 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan which seek to ensure that development is in sustainable locations which are well related to existing settlements and accessible by means other than the private car.
2. The proposal is for the replacement of a number of rural barns with a new dwelling house in a rural location. It is considered that this would have a greater impact than the existing buildings in terms of its prominent siting in this rural location where it would be visually harmful to the surrounding countryside. In addition the design of the proposed building with extensive use of glazing is likely to increase the impact of the proposal and result in a greater loss of visual amenity in this rural location. This is contrary to the guidance in PPS7 and Policy ENV.20, and OVS.2 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 Saved Policies 2007 which seek to ensure that proposals show a high standard of design which is appropriate to the rural location and would not be visually harmful to the surrounding countryside.
3. The development fails to provide an appropriate scheme of works or on and off-site mitigation measures to accommodate the impact of the development on local infrastructure, services, or amenities or provide an appropriate mitigation measure

such as a planning obligation. The proposal is therefore contrary to government advice on mitigating the impact of development, Policy OVS3 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 Saved Policies 2007 as well as the West Berkshire District Council's adopted SPG4/04 'Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development'.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Agenda Report – Eastern Area Planning Committee of the 1st December 2010.

Appendix 2 - Update paper.

Appendix 3 - Minutes of the Eastern Area Committee of the 1st December 2010.

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Parish Council.

Officers Consulted: Gary Rayner, Development Control Manager.
Paul Hendry, Countryside Manager, plus Stewart Souden.

Trade Union: Nil