Planning Committee: 06 November 2018 **Item Number:** 6

Application No: W / 18 / 0953

Registration Date: 04/06/18
Town/Parish Council: Wasperton **Expiry Date:** 30/07/18
Case Officer: Debbie Prince
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Holloway Farm, Wellesbourne Road, Wasperton, Warwick, CV35 8EA
Erection of a poly-tunnel for the production of hydroponically grown crops. FOR Cadogan & Co

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This application is being presented to Committee due to the number of comments in support that have been received.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to REFUSE planning permission on the grounds that the proposal will sterilise mineral resources identified as of particular importance.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposal involves the erection of a large multi-span poly-tunnel covering 2.3 hectares (23,194 sqm) for salad crop production. Each span would be 8.8 wide by 4.5m to the eaves and 6m to the apex. A hydroponic system will be installed internally and no lighting is necessary. The tunnel will be covered in high density, transparent, thermal film and set 4m from the existing field boundaries.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

Holloway Farm is a 214 hectare farm located to south of the village of Barford and to the east of the A429 Wellesbourne Road. The proposed polytunnels would be located adjacent to the A429, the existing polytunnels and the farmhouse which is Grade II Listed.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- BE1 - Layout and Design (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- BE3 - Amenity (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- NE4 - Landscape (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- NE2 - Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- DS5 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- TR1 - Access and Choice (Warwick District Local Plan - 2011-2029)
- NE3 - Biodiversity (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Policy M5 of the adopted Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire 1995
- NE5 - Protection of Natural Resources (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)
- HE1 - Protection of Statutory Heritage Assets (Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029)

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council: No objection.

Highways (WCC): No objection subject to a condition requiring the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan.

Development Group (WCC): Objection on the grounds of Minerals Sterilisation.

Landscape (WCC): Has no objection to the amended scheme.

Ecology (WCC): Has no objection subject to conditions covering tree protection and CEMP.

CWLEP: Supports the scheme as it aligns with national and local policies to develop agriculture and food production across the CWLEP area.

Public Response:

1 letter of objection has been received on the grounds of adverse impact on Forge Cottage.

7 letters support the scheme on the grounds that the scheme will provide locally grown produce, local employment and training facilities, a sustainable source of plants and herbs for the pharmaceutical industry, and on the grounds that the scheme will prevent inappropriate development.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The proposal is for an agricultural building. Therefore it is acceptable in principle in this rural location. The building is required to support the economic growth of the existing working farm. The farm currently produces 528 acres (214 hectares) of arable cropping. The proposed poly-tunnels are required to diversify into hydroponically grown salads crops for the UK market.

Impact on character and appearance of the open countryside and neighbouring Listed properties

The comments from the occupier of Forge Cottage (which is a Listed Building) are noted. However, the structures would be located more than 27m away from that property. Furthermore, this distance also spans the very busy A429 and the buildings would also be screened by landscaping. Therefore, it is considered that the setting of the Cottage would not be significantly harmed.

The other neighbour is the farmhouse itself, which is also a Listed Building. As the proposed buildings are farm-related and normally seen in this context, I do not consider that they would have an adverse impact.

For the above reasons it has been concluded that the proposals comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy HE1. In reaching this conclusion, regard has also been had to the requirements of Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This imposes a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Turning to the issue of landscape impact, as already mentioned above this type of building is a common sight in open countryside and would be further screened in a short while by the proposed landscaping scheme. There has been no objection from WCC Landscape and therefore it has been concluded that the landscape impact would be acceptable.

Highways

Although the applicant states that there will be no increase in vehicle movements, the Highway Authority would dispute this given the extension to the crop season. They are of the view that this would likely increase the number of vehicle movements over the year. However, they consider that the existing accesses on to the A429 are of a good standard and can accommodate large vehicle movements and the extra capacity necessary. Therefore they have no objection subject to a condition which requires the submission, approval and adherence to a Construction Management Plan.

Ecology

The risk to protected species and the habitat impacts are minimal and the scheme offers an opportunity for biodiversity gain. WCC Ecology, therefore, have no objection to the scheme subject to conditions covering tree protection and the submission and approval of a Construction and Environment Management Plan.

Minerals

The application site lies within the Minerals Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel which covers most of the Wasperton area. The site is also directly adjacent to a proposed site allocation for sand and gravel extraction in the emerging Warwickshire Minerals Plan (Site 4 Wasperton). Sand and gravel has been identified as a nationally and locally important mineral resource in Warwickshire.

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that, when determining planning applications, great weight should be given to the benefits of mineral extraction. Meanwhile, paragraph 206 states that "local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Minerals Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working". Furthermore, Policy NE5 of the Warwick District Local Plan states that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they (amongst other requirements) do not sterilise mineral resources identified as of particular importance unless it can be demonstrated

that it would not be practicable and environmentally feasible to extract the identified mineral resource prior to development taking place.

The Minerals Planning Authority (Warwickshire County Council) have objected to the application on minerals sterilisation grounds. They have requested that the applicant provides further information including a minerals survey in order to demonstrate that:

- the mineral resource in this site is no longer of any value or potential value;
- it would be inappropriate to extract mineral resources at this location; or
- if the survey identifies viable mineral resource that it will be extracted prior to the development taking place.

However, none of this information has been provided. Consequently, the County Council consider it very likely that the development will constrain future use of the site for mineral working. Therefore they advise that the development should not be permitted unless the matters raised above have been addressed and the County Council is satisfied that the merits of the development outweigh the need for safeguarding.

The County Council also believe the proposed development would prejudice the allocation of the adjacent Site 4 in the emerging Warwickshire Minerals Plan because it would introduce potentially sensitive development in very close proximity to the proposed allocated site which would affect the site's deliverability. They point out it could have implications for the mineral site boundary (it may have to be redrawn), the size of the mineral site (in tonnage terms), how it was worked (direction, rate etc.) and restored and the ability to mitigate any potential impacts of working the site.

The applicant has been requested to provide a minerals survey to address the issues raised by the County Council. However, nothing has been submitted in this regard. Therefore, bearing in mind the importance that the NPPF, the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire and the Local Plan attach to the benefits of mineral extraction, it has been concluded that the proposals would be unacceptable as they would constrain the potential future use of the application site and adjacent land for mineral working.

Conclusion

The NPPF attaches "great weight to the benefits of mineral extraction". As this proposal has the potential to limit the scope of such development it would be contrary to national and local planning policy including Policy M5 of the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire, Policy NE5 of the Local Plan and paragraph 206 of the NPPF. This would outweigh any possible benefits of the scheme.

REFUSAL REASONS

1 The NPPF attaches "great weight to the benefits of mineral extraction". As this proposal has the potential to limit the scope of such development it would be contrary to national and local planning policy including Policy M5 of the Minerals Local Plan for Warwickshire, Policy NE5 of the Local Plan and paragraph 206 of the NPPF.