

Application No: 12/3294N

Location: Wardle Bridge Farm, NANTWICH ROAD, WARDLE, CW5 6BE

Proposal: Development of New Agricultural Machinery Dealership Comprising of Showroom, Workshop, Parts Counter, Ancillary Retail Sales and Office Building; External New and Used Vehicle Display Areas; Car Parking and Associated Landscaping, Following Demolition of Existing Buildings and Structures on Site.

Applicant: Agricultural Machinery (Nantwich) Ltd

Expiry Date: 31-Dec-2012

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

- **Approve subject to conditions**

MAIN ISSUES

- **Principle of the conversion,**
- **The impact on the character and appearance of the buildings,**
- **Residential amenity**
- **Highway safety.**

1. REFERRAL

The application has been referred to southern planning committee because it is a major development, by virtue of the floor area.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application relates to a former farmstead of approximately 1.274ha in area, comprising a number of modern buildings for agricultural use, concrete storage clamps and general hardstandings. The site is bounded to the north by the railway line, to the east and south by Wardle Bridge Farm and to the west by Calverley Hall Lane. The site currently enjoys a single access from Calverley Hall Lane located towards the south west corner of the site.

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a building for use as an agricultural machinery sales and repair depot comprising showroom, repair

workshop, offices, and visitor and staff parking, sales parking and marshalling yard, wash down area and landscaping. The footprint of the new building is 917 square metres with the first floor being a total of 515 square metres. The height from the ground to the ridge of the building is 8m with an eaves height of 6.6m.

3. PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

There is no relevant planning history relating to this site.

4. PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan Policy

NE.2 (Open Countryside)

BE.1 (Amenity)

BE.2 (Design Standards)

BE.3 (Access and Parking)

TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)

5. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

The Canal and River Trust

- No comments to make.

United Utilities

- No objection to the proposed development

Environmental Health

- The hours of noise generative* demolition / construction works taking place during the development (and associated deliveries to the site) shall be restricted to: Monday – Friday 08:00 to 18:00 hrs; Saturday 09:00 to 14:00 hrs; Sundays and Public Holidays Nil
- **"Noise Generative" is defined as any works of a construction / demolition nature (including ancillary works such as deliveries) which are likely to generate noise beyond the boundary of the site.
- Prior to its installation details of the location, height, design, and luminance of any proposed lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall ensure the lighting is designed to minimise the potential loss of amenity caused by

light spillage onto adjoining properties. The lighting shall thereafter be installed and operated in accordance with the approved details.

- Due to the potential of noise nuisance to nearby residents, all repair and servicing of vehicles should be undertaken within the proposed workshop with the doors closed.
- The Contaminated Land team has no objection to the above application subject to the following comments with regard to contaminated land:
 - The application area has a history of agricultural use and therefore the land may be contaminated.
 - As such, and in accordance with the NPPF, this section recommends that the following conditions, be attached should planning permission be granted:
 - Should there be any fuel tanks present on site, if they are to be removed as part of the redevelopment any localised contamination should be remediated and the fuel tank disposed of appropriately.
 - Should any adverse ground conditions be encountered during excavation works, all work in that area should cease and this section be contacted for advice.
 - The applicant is advised that they have a duty to adhere to the regulations of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the current Building Control Regulations with regards to contaminated land. If any unforeseen contamination is encountered during the development, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should be informed immediately. Any investigation / remedial / protective works carried out in relation to this application shall be carried out to agreed timescales and approved by the LPA in writing. The responsibility to ensure the safe development of land affected by contamination rests primarily with the developer.

Highways

- It is proposed to relocate the existing business from a site in Millstone Lane and Beambridge, Nantwich to a site at Calveley Hall Lane, Wardle. The access to the site is taken from Calveley Hall lane that has a priority junction with the A51 Nantwich Road.
- The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement to support the application that has surveyed the existing traffic generation from the existing sites and then estimated the level of traffic generation to the new proposed site. The traffic levels indicated are relatively low with the highest number of trips being 20 two way in any hour.

- The car parking provision within the site is 30 spaces with 4 disabled spaces.
- The current use of the site is a dairy farm business and this use would have produced a small amount of trips on the road network. As the relocation of the business will not result in a net material increase in traffic over the existing traffic generation, it is considered that Calveley Hall Lane and more importantly the junction with A51 can accommodate the development traffic.
- The visibility available at the junction at the A51 is good and the as the site is a relatively short distance along Calveley Hall lane there are no issues regarding the width of access to the site.
- Although a Travel Plan has been mentioned this site will be a car based development in this location and there is no requirement for a condition for Travel Plan to be provided.
- In summary, the proposed site does not raise any traffic generation issues and the road network can accommodate the development, no highway objections are raised.

6. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL:

With reference to the planning application 12/3294N, the biggest concern of Calveley Parish Council relating to this is amount of traffic on the roads coming off the A51 into Calveley, and in particular the road past the school.

The Parish Council consider that a weight limit on the railway bridge on Calveley Hall Lane would help to lessen the amount of traffic, particularly heavy traffic, that would use these roads. Also a "no traffic" sign should be installed on the road past the school to prevent this road becoming a danger to the children using the school.

7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

No other letters of representation have been received.

8. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

The main issues in the consideration of this application are the acceptability, in principle of the development, as well as the amenity, ecology, landscape, design and highways, implications.

Principle of Development

The site is located within the Open Countryside where Policy E6 of the local plan states employment development will be restricted to appropriate small industries, commercial business enterprises, including small scale business developments and the development of small scale workshop units within or adjacent to existing farm buildings or other existing employment areas, (in accordance with policies BE.1 - BE.5).

It is considered that the business is “appropriate” to a rural area and the site is “within or adjacent to existing farm buildings”. However, given that the floorspace is over 1000sq.m, it could be argued that it is not “small scale”. Notwithstanding this point, there are, in this case, a number of material considerations which must also be taken into account.

Two existing buildings, of similar footprint are to be removed. Therefore there will be little increase in the bulk of built development on the site. The site is situated in a depression, is screened on one side by a bridge embankment and by existing farm buildings on the other. It will be viewed against the backdrop of the existing buildings, and there are ample opportunities for additional screen planting to the site perimeter. The site is mostly covered by existing hardstanding, and is beginning to look somewhat depilated. Therefore some visual improvement would result. The building itself would be a portal framed structure clad in green sheet material which would blend in with its surroundings and would be similar in appearance to a farm building.

There is also a precedent for the development of such facilities within open countryside areas, including the RVW Pugh operation near Holmes Chapel which was granted planning permission in 2008 and subsequently extended in 2010.

Recent government guidance, in particular the Planning for Growth agenda, and the National Planning Policy Framework, all state that Local Planning Authorities should be supportive proposals involving economic development, except where these compromise key sustainability principles.

The NPPF states that, the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. *“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves do not mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world.”* There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles including, an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy,

as well as an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The document states that for decision taking this means, inter alia, approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

According to paragraph 17, within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. According to the 12 principles planning should, inter alia, proactively drive and support sustainable economic development. The NPPF makes it clear that *“the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.”*

According to paragraphs 19 to 21, *“the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. Investment in business should not be overburdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations.”*

Another important material consideration is the Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth (23 March 2011) by The Minister of State for Decentralisation (Greg Clark). Inter alia, it states that, *“the Government’s top priority in reforming the planning system is to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs. Government’s clear expectation is that the answer to development and growth should wherever possible be ‘yes’, except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy.*

Furthermore, it states that when deciding whether to grant planning permission, local planning authorities should support enterprise and facilitate economic development. Local Authorities should therefore, inter alia, consider fully the importance of national planning policies aimed at fostering economic growth and employment, given the need to ensure a return to robust growth after the recent recession; take into account the need to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for key sectors; consider the range of likely economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; including long term or indirect benefits and ensure that they do not impose unnecessary burdens on development.

According to the statement, *“in determining planning applications, local planning authorities are obliged to have regard to all relevant considerations.*

They should ensure that they give appropriate weight to the need to support economic recovery.”

According to the applicant's submissions:

“Agricultural Machinery (Nantwich) Ltd (“AgMac”) was originally formed in 1951 by the Hughes family and has operated from Nantwich to the present time. AgMac joined Cornthwaite Agricultural in March 2009 and became the main John Deere dealer for Cheshire; John Deere is a leading manufacturer of farm equipment and offers a vast range of tractors, farming equipment and grounds maintenance equipment. AgMac sells new John Deere machinery and equipment from balers and sprayers to tractors, combines and self propelled forage harvesters as well as offering servicing and parts. The business also sells used agricultural machinery and exports machinery across the world.

The business is currently located at two sites; Millstone Lane and Beambridge in Nantwich. Millstone Lane is the principal site and is used for agricultural machinery sales, stores, maintenance and servicing of agricultural machinery and management whilst Beambridge is used solely for storage and preparation of agricultural machinery. Over the past few years it has become increasingly apparent that the existing sites are no longer suited to a modern agricultural machinery dealership; the sites are an inadequate size to accommodate the servicing and sales areas required, the car parking is unsuitable, the main site has no display areas and poor access for commercial vehicles.

The Planning Statement goes on to say the fact that being located on two sites:

“makes the business inefficient as machinery is manoeuvred between the Millstone site and the Beambridge storage site taking up valuable staff hours. At Millstone, the servicing area itself is inadequate for modern day agricultural machinery and there is no area to display new and used machinery. Customer and employee car parking is inadequate, with no access for HGVs or large commercial vehicles and the access roads of Beam St and Millstone Lane are unsuited to HGV and commercial traffic. The use of two sites creates management and access issues as well as additional vehicle trips.”

The Statement also explains that:

Moreover there is little benefit to the business or its customers for the dealership to be located within the urban area and in particular the town centre of Nantwich. Indeed its location within the town centre, given the total lack of space to expand and the problems associated with moving large machinery within a town centre have generated the

real need to relocate the business. This need to relocate has become increasingly acute as the lease on the current premises is due to expire within the next 12 months and unless an alternative site can be found and new facilities created, the business will need to consider temporary relocation, which will be costly and potentially harmful to the future success of the business.

The applicant goes on to explain the benefits to the business of relocation and how this ties in with future expansion plans:

Over the past few years, AgMac have been actively seeking an alternative site (or premises) to which they can relocate the business to ensure that they remain competitive and are able to offer the full range of services expected of one of the premier John Deere dealerships within the UK. For the business the preference has always been to secure a site which can be developed from the ground up to provide a bespoke agricultural machinery dealership. That said various sites and existing buildings have been considered and for one reason or another have not come to fruition. The current proposal at Wardle Bridge Farm therefore represents the culmination of several year's work on the part of the Directors of the business and is considered to be an ideal opportunity in a most appropriate location for the continued future of the business. Wardle is located within the hinterland of Nantwich and to the north west of the town in the optimum location for the major client base of the business. Moreover Wardle Bridge Farm provides a large redundant former farm with extensive buildings and associated development, which can be partially redeveloped in a manner which can bring about considerable regeneration benefits as well as associated landscape and visual benefits and involving a use which is very closely allied with the agricultural community.....

The Agricultural Machinery business is looking to expand by 10%-15% over the next 5 to 7 years.Relocating to a purpose built site will allow the business to address the limits of its previous sites and expand within its existing employee levels with a potential to expand its employment base in the future. The relocation will support the sustainable growth of this agricultural machinery business. The proposed development makes use of a vacant, previously developed site which will create fewer traffic movements than the original use as a dairy farm. The business is currently located within the urban area of Nantwich therefore the business' relocation to the site at Wardle Bridge Farm will allow the business to :-

- (a) be closer to much of its rural client base;*
- (b) benefit from proximity to the A51 which is more suited to access for agricultural vehicles than town centre roads;*
- (c) offer the opportunity to expand in the future within the site without harm to adjacent land uses.*

With regard to the question of sustainability, it is considered that the site is sustainably located close to the client base and other facilities used by the agricultural community such as the North West Farmers feed merchant, the equestrian hospital and the countryside store, so there are opportunities for linked trips. Furthermore, the applicant has identified the following additional sustainability benefits:

- *Agricultural vehicles visit the current sites of Millstone and Beambridge within Nantwich town centre for servicing and repairs. Town centre roads are inappropriate for the use by agricultural machinery, which results in congestion and pollution within the more heavily populated parts of the town;*
- *The use of the two separate sites of Millstone and Beambridge makes the business less efficient by using up employee time transferring vehicles between the sites, increasing traffic movements considerably and increasing pollution and congestion within the town centre;*
- *Access to the current sites cannot support large commercial vehicles or HGVs, resulting in harm to amenity resulting from problems associated with HGV deliveries and increased town centre pollution;*
- *The proposed development will involve the construction of a new, purpose-built, multipurpose dealership building which will be considerably more energy efficient than the two existing buildings which the business current occupies. As a result the carbon footprint and energy demands of the business will be reduced considerably following the relocation. Moreover every effort will be made by the business to reduce further their energy demand and to achieve as high a BREEAM rating as is possible consistent with the nature and type of business involved.*

It is also necessary to give some consideration to the potential retail impact of the business. The business in question does sell a number of other items as well as agricultural machinery such as tools, outdoor clothing etc. However, there is a precedent in the form of the nearby “countryside” store for this type of retailing in the vicinity.

Policy S.10 of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan states that outside the town centres of Crewe And Nantwich major retail developments will be permitted only if a number of criteria are met. The plan states that major proposals for the purposes of this policy will be regarded as those with a gross floorspace of over 2500 sq.m. The total proposed floor area of this development, including the workshops, offices and showroom equates to only 1432sq.m. Therefore the part of the building used for general retailing will be considerably below this threshold.

Similarly, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan.

The applicant has argued that:

The business is effectively a specialist retail use, but one selling a type of vehicles, machinery, equipment and associated items which cannot be found on a typical high street. Customers visiting the dealership are doing so because they have a specific need to visit and not for 'window shopping' or browsing. Typically the process of selling John Deere and associated agricultural machinery will involve a combination of sales representatives visiting the client's premises / farm and visits by the client / farmer to the dealership.

An agricultural machinery dealership would, for the reasons highlighted previously, be wholly unsuited to a town centre location and hence the development of such a use within a rural location will generate no retail impact nor have any adverse impact on the retail function of the town centres in the Borough."

Whilst it is acknowledged that the agricultural machinery sales do not lend themselves to the town centre, the elements of general retail sales, such as clothing, are a town centre use. However, as the applicant has pointed out:

"In the case of retail sales of other ancillary items, not directly related to the machinery, such as protective clothing, tools, equipment are other John Deere branded goods, these aspects of the business are extremely limited and generate a very modest income to the business relative to its core activities. Such sales are however required to ensure that the dealer franchise can be maintained. In planning terms the sale of such goods would be entirely incidental to the primary use of the site as an agricultural machinery dealership."

On the basis of the floor area, and the ancillary nature of the general retail sales, it is considered that the retail element of the proposal is not in conflict with the local plan. Furthermore, the NPPF states that *"this sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development"* and local planning authorities should only require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold (if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500 sq m).

It is therefore agreed that the proposal would not conflict with relevant national and local policy which seeks to protect town centres from loss of vitality, due to the specialist nature of the use not being suited to a town centre location. Nevertheless, an appropriately worded condition should be imposed to ensure that retail sales of small items remained ancillary to the main machinery dealership and that the range of goods sold is appropriately restricted.

In the light of the points mentioned above, despite the scale of the proposal, it would be difficult to argue that there would be any harm in sustainability terms resulting from the proposals. Furthermore, the lack of harm, the thrust of government policy at the present time and the economic growth agenda, are important material considerations to off-set the “small scale” policy issue referred to above and that consequently, this is a proposal that the Council should be supporting.

Amenity

The nearest neighbouring residential property, is the farmhouse at the adjacent Wardle Bridge Farm. This dwelling is located, over 100m from the site of the proposed building and associated parking / servicing areas and is screened by the existing large farm buildings. The only other nearby dwellings are Wardle Bridge Cottages and Bumble Bee Bank Cottages, which are located approximately 160m and 150m away from the site respectively, on the opposite side of the railway line to the north. In view of the distances involved, it is not considered that any adverse impacts on amenity would occur as a result of loss of light or privacy or the operation of the business. However, Environmental Health Officers have recommended that conditions be attached relating to external lighting and construction hours, which are considered to be reasonably necessary.

Ecology

Article 12 (1) of the EC Habitats Directive requires Member states to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of certain animal species prohibiting the deterioration or destruction of breeding sites and resting places. Art. 16 of the Directive provides that if there is no satisfactory alternative and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species at a favourable conservation status in their natural range, then Member States may derogate *"in the interests of public health and public safety or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social and economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment"* among other reasons.

The Directive is then implemented in England and Wales The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. ("the Regulations"). The Regulations set up a licensing regime dealing with the requirements for derogation under Art. 16 and this function is carried out by Natural England.

The Regulations provide that the Local Planning Authority must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of their functions.

It should be noted that, since a European Protected Species has been recorded on site and is likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, the planning authority must have regard to the requirements for derogation referred

to in Article 16 and the fact that Natural England will have a role in ensuring that the requirements for derogation set out in the Directive are met.

If it appears to the planning authority that circumstances exist which make it very likely that the requirements for derogation will not be met, then the planning authority will need to consider whether, taking the development plan and all other material considerations into account, planning permission should be refused. Conversely, if it seems from the information that the requirements are likely to be met, then there would be no impediment to planning permission in this regard. If it is unclear whether the requirements will be met or not, a balanced view taking into account the particular circumstances of the application should be taken and the guidance in the NPPF. In line with guidance in the NPPF, appropriate mitigation and enhancement should be secured if planning permission is granted.

The Council's ecologist has examined the application and commented that with the possible exception of breeding birds, he does not anticipate there being any significant ecological constraints on the proposed development. The site does however have potential to support breeding birds including the more widespread Biodiversity Action Plan species therefore if planning consent is granted he recommends that conditions are attached requiring a detailed survey to be undertaken to check for breeding birds prior to any works being undertaken between 1st March and 31st August. In addition the applicant should submit detailed proposals for the incorporation of features into the scheme suitable for use by breeding birds including house sparrow.

Trees and Landscape

The Council's Landscape Officer has examined the proposal and commented that the site is located in open countryside and is part of a farm complex. It adjoins Calveley Hall Lane to the west, a railway to the north and farm buildings to the south and east. The site is generally level with an embankment adjoining Calveley Hall Lane. It is currently occupied by steel framed buildings, silage clamps and areas of hard standing. The embankment is vegetated with a mixture of rough grass and scrub and there is a hedge along part of the road boundary. The development would be viewed in the context of an agricultural complex and consequently no significant landscape impacts are raised. There are no existing trees and hedges within the site that would be adversely affected. Therefore, subject to landscape and boundary treatment conditions, there are no significant landscape concerns regarding the proposals.

Design

With regard to site layout, the proposal would utilise the exiting access point at the south west corner of the site. The building would be located centrally, with the principal elevation facing south west behind a forecourt providing parking and some external machinery display. A service yard and external store, as well as a belt of proposed landscaping would be provided to the north east,

between the rear of the building and the railway line which runs along the site boundary. This is considered to be an acceptable and logical arrangement.

In terms of elevational design, the proposed building is a simple, rectilinear, portal framed structure, with a shallow pitched roof, finished in green steel cladding. Large roller shutter doors would be provided in the side and rear elevations to enable machinery to access the workshops and showrooms inside the building. Consequently, the overall appearance of the building will be similar to the modern agricultural buildings within the existing farm site and elsewhere within the open countryside. The colour of the materials is such that it will not appear prominent and will blend into the surrounding rural landscape.

The building does include a substantial glazed element to the front elevation which wraps around the corner of the building, which provides light and an open aspect to the showroom and first floor offices. This is considered to be acceptable as it will face towards the existing farm building complex to the south and will not therefore appear incongruous when viewed from the open countryside to the north and west. It will also address the site entrance, enhance the legibility of the building, provide daylight for sustainability purposes and add architectural interest.

Highways

The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement in support of the application. Through this Transport Statement, it is clearly identified that the proposed development would generate very minor additional levels of traffic, which can be readily accommodated within the existing layout of Calveley Hall Lane and its junction with the A51. Also, that, movements of articulated and rigid low loaders, of the minimal identified generated level by the development, can also be accommodated within the existing junction layout on a similar basis to the existing/previous movement of similar vehicle types. Therefore the Transport Statement does not identify or recommend any amendments to the existing layout of Calveley Hall Lane, or the A51 at their junction.

The Strategic Highways Manager has examined this report and commented raised no objection subject to conditions requiring a Travel Plan to be submitted, approved and implemented. Conditions requiring the access and parking arrangements shown on the approved drawings to be constructed prior to the first use of the site are also considered to be appropriate. It is therefore concluded that there is no conflict with Policy BE3 (Access and Parking)

10. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the site is located within the Open Countryside where Policy E6 of the local plan states employment development will be restricted to appropriate small industries, commercial business enterprises, including small scale business developments and the development of small scale workshop

units within or adjacent to existing farm buildings or other existing employment areas, (in accordance with policies BE.1 - BE.5).

It is considered that the business is “appropriate” to a rural area and the site is “within or adjacent to existing farm buildings”. However, given that the floorspace is over 1000sq.m, it could be argued that it is not “small scale”. Notwithstanding this point, there are, in this case, a number of material considerations which must also be taken into account.

Two existing buildings, of similar footprint are to be removed and the site is well screened from the surrounding open countryside. There is also a precedent for the development of such facilities within open countryside areas and recent government guidance, in particular the Planning for Growth agenda, and the National Planning Policy Framework, all state that Local Planning Authorities should be supportive proposals involving economic development, except where these compromise key sustainability principles. The applicant has demonstrated why the existing two business premises in Nantwich are unsuitable and how the proposed site would benefit the business and allow it to expand. The site is sustainably located close to the client base and other facilities used by the agricultural community such as the North West Farmers feed merchant, the equestrian hospital and the countryside store, so there are opportunities for linked trips.

It is also necessary to give some consideration to the potential retail impact of the business. The business in question does sell a number of other items as well as agricultural machinery such as tools, outdoor clothing etc. However, there is a precedent in the form of the nearby “countryside” store for this type of retailing in the vicinity. Furthermore, it is considered that the agricultural machinery sales do not constitute a town centre use, and the general retail sales account for only a small percentage of the overall floor space of the building, which is itself below the threshold for a retail impact assessment under both Local Plan policy and the NPPF. Furthermore, the NPPF states that *“this sequential approach should not be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development”*.

Therefore subject to an appropriately worded condition should be imposed to ensure that retail sales of small items remained ancillary to the main machinery dealership and that the range of goods sold is appropriately restricted, it is considered that the proposal would not have any adverse effect on the vitality and viability of nearby town centres.

In the light of the points mentioned above, despite the scale of the proposal, it is considered that the lack of harm in sustainability terms, the thrust of government policy at the present time and the economic growth agenda, are important material considerations to off-set the “small scale” policy issue referred to above and that consequently, this is a proposal that the Council should be supporting.

In view of the distance to neighbouring properties, subject to appropriate conditions, no amenity issues are raised. There are no anticipated ecology, landscape or highways issues. The building itself would be a portal framed structure clad in green sheet material which would blend in with its surroundings and would be similar in appearance to a farm building.

Therefore having regard to the provisions of the adopted Local Plan policies, the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to conditions:-

Conditions

- 1 Standard**
- 2 Reference to plans.**
- 3 Materials**
- 4 Construction of parking and access**
- 5 Submission / approval and implementation of travel plan**
- 6 Submission / approval of landscaping**
- 7 Implementation of landscaping**
- 8 Construction Hours limited to Monday – Friday 08:00 to 18:00 hrs; Saturday 09:00 to 14:00 hrs; Sundays and Public Holidays Nil**
- 9 Submission / approval and implementation of external lighting**
- 10 Building to be used for the display, sale, storage and repair of agricultural machinery with ancillary offices / retail sales only**
- 11 The unit shall not be used for retailing any goods other than those genuinely associated with a an agricultural machinery dealership, and shall not be used for the retailing of any of the following goods:**
 - **Fashion clothing and footwear (other than country, equestrian and leisure clothing and footwear normally retailed within a country store);**
 - **Fashion accessories, including jewellery, cosmetics, toiletries and pharmaceutical products; books, newspapers and magazines (other than specialist publications or animal health products normally retailed within a country store);**
 - **Electrical goods (other than those which would normally be retailed within a country store);**
 - **Kitchenware or goods associated with cookery**

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION:



(c) Crown copyright and database rights 2012. Ordnance Survey
100049045, 100049046.



