



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

PLANNING STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY A PLANNING APPLICATION FOR

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING FARM BUILDING

CHANGE OF USE OF SURROUNDING AGRICULTURAL LAND.

INSTALLATION OF MODULAR ACCOMODATION AND TRAINING

FACILITIES TO PROVIDE AN OPERATOR SKILLS HUB FOR TRAINING

OPERATIVES IN RELATION TO THE USE OF PLANT MACHINERY FOR A

TEMPORARY PERIOD OF 7 YEARS.

RED FURLONG FARM, POUNDON

FOR FLANNERY PLANT HIRE

AUGUST 2021

OUR REF: PF/10557

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is prepared on behalf of Mr P Flannery, in support of a full planning application for the installation of modular buildings in order to create a training facility for those learning to use plant machinery. Further details on the extent of the proposals are contained in section 2 below.

1.2 The purpose of this Planning, Design and Access Statement, as an overarching document, is to explain the planning background of the proposals for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the surrounding community, and to consider the national, and local planning policy framework within which the application will be assessed.

1.3 This Planning Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the following illustrative plans and reports. As the applicant was not the sole owner of the land 21 days before the date of the application planning certificate B has also been completed.

- Covering letter prepared by Framptons
- Completed Planning Application Form and Certificate B
- Noise Assessment prepared by Inaccoustic
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Griffin Ecology
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Simpson Associates Consulting Engineers LLP
- Proposed block plan (drawing no. 5612.02) prepared by Nick Price
- Location Plan (drawing no. 5612.01) prepared by Nick Price
- Caravan and Parking Amenity Block (drawing no.5612.03) prepared by Nick Price
- Easy Plan Sleeper Floor Plan. Drawing no. AJC 16-8053-00
- Double Stack Sleeper Plan prepared by Easy Cabin Sleeper Elevations. Scale. 1:50
Drawing no 16-8055-00

- External Sleeper Plan. Scale. 1:50. Drawing no. AJC 16-8054-00

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks consent to provide a training facility for those learning to use plant machinery. The provision of the modular accommodation, caravan parking area and amenity block for the parking of caravans all form part of the associated development for the training centre.
- 2.2 There is currently a shortage of trained workers who are able to use the plant machinery required to deliver the infrastructure projects coming forward within Buckinghamshire. These infrastructure projects include the HS2 Rail Link that will connect London with Birmingham, the East West Rail link that will connect Oxford with Cambridge and other infrastructure projects coming forward across Buckinghamshire such as new housing development.
- 2.3 The infrastructure projects coming forward requires a substantial range of skilled personnel in the operation of both plant and sophisticated machinery including GPS operated machinery and machinery used to detect the routes of conduits and services.
- 2.4 Without the required skilled workers risks the timely delivery of these infrastructure projects which are in the national interest in order to improve transport connections. The proposals forming the basis of this application are in response to the need for skilled workers to deliver this national infrastructure.
- 2.5 Planning permission is sought for the temporary use of the land edged red for this purpose – for a period of 7 years. After this period the site will return to existing form and use.

- 2.6 The proposals include the demolition of an existing barn and the change of use of agricultural land to be used as part of the training facility. A new modular accommodation block will provide around 40 rooms for those attending the course. On the western side of the site will be an area of open land where those attending the course can park their caravan. An amenity block containing washing up and toilet facilities will be provided within the caravan area which will house toilets and washing up facilities.
- 2.7 Around 74 on-site parking bays will be provided for both the students and teachers. Of these, 2 of the bays will be dedicated disabled bays.
- 2.8 A new modular block will be placed in the eastern part of the site and will include the offices, reception, canteen and training rooms. Within the training rooms will be the plant machinery simulators where those new to the course will practice learning to use the machinery.
- 2.9 The facilities and layout mean that once those attending the course are on-site, they can be self-sufficient in terms of catering and accommodation. There is therefore little reason to leave except for recreational/family reasons thereby reducing the number of daily traffic movements.
- 2.10 The existing public right of way, that runs along the site's northern boundary, will be retained and enclosed on the northern side by 2m high security fencing. This will allow users to continue using the public right of way whilst also providing an element of security. Secure gates will be placed at intervals within the fencing in order to allow the plant machinery to pass from one part of the site to the other. A banksman arrangement would be operated when large machinery crosses the public right of way. This crossing point would be surfaced in a loose stone finish or similar in order to reduce the wear and tear of plant machinery crossing the public right of way.

- 2.11 The proposed location for the training centre is well positioned being close to the proposed route of the HS2 rail link and East West Rail. It is also within 5 miles of the Infrastructure Maintenance Depot that is proposed at Calvert. This maintenance depot will be used both during and after construction and will act as a base for planning and managing all infrastructure maintenance work.
- 2.12 EKFB CITB have trained over 500 candidates to date. This has been delivered in partnership with local training partners across the Bucks/Warwick region. The applicant is looking to replicate this with the Flannery centre – www.ekfb.com/training.
- 2.13 EKFB Civil Engineering and HS2 have made a commitment that 4% of the workforce on the project will be apprentices. This will be supported by supply chain partners such as Flannery.
- 2.14 To ensure the 4% commitment is made, EKFB have developed a local skills plan to support upskilling, local employment and the support of local businesses/communities. This is sought through working with supply chain partners to support the delivery with job opportunities, work placements and apprenticeships.
- 2.15 Currently (April 2021) EKFB requires approximately 1,500 plant operators to support earthworks (over 300 Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) drivers at peak) and structures plant requirements. With further figures suggesting that at peak, EKFB will need between 4,000 to 5,000 workers to support the delivery of the HS2 central section.
- 2.16 All operators are trained to pass the Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS), in effect a certificate of competence for operation of specialist plant. The test of competence includes a theory test, similar to the requirement for a driving licence. Operatives are firstly trained on 'plant'

simulators – see enclosed schedule of photographs – and then are required to undertake practical experience with the large machines, excavating, moving soils and regrading soils.

2.17 Similar proposals have recently been approved at Dunton Wharf, north east of Birmingham in the Green Belt, by North Warwickshire Borough Council. In approving this application (LPA Ref; PAP/2020/0405) the case officer identified there was a shortage of skilled workers to undertake the significant infrastructure projects coming forward along with the need to have a site that is strategically well placed in terms of providing direct access to the construction sites.

2.18 It is of course acknowledged that this site is located within the open countryside. Nevertheless, that part of the site proposed for temporary built development and the stationing of caravans has an established lawful use for commercial development.

2.19 A planning condition may be imposed to secure the removal of all plant, machinery and structures at the end of the temporary period, and the restoration of the 'practical operational area' to agriculture.

2.20 I am advised that the establishment of a skills centre in Buckinghamshire has been discussed in principle by the LEP and the Government because of its significance to the delivery of HS2 in the provision of skilled operatives. Flannery and their partners in this development are in contact with Buckinghamshire College Group to promote pathways into careers with plant operation and civil engineering. The underlying intention is to upskill a workforce who can, with certificates of competency, be readily employed within massive civil engineering projects such as HS2.

2.21 Details are contained below of the number of apprentices anticipated during a year, and the number of operatives who will achieve upskilling certificates of competency.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Plant Operator Apprentices	20	30	30	30	110
GPS	100	250	250	250	850
Adv. CPCS ¹	45	60	60	60	205
Eco-Operators	100	200	200	200	700
Compliance Plus ²	200	300	300	300	1100
Total	465	840	840	840	2925

¹ These are trained operators to promote sustainable measures such as reducing fuel consumption.

² This is a certification of competence for 'entry' on to HS2.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3.1 Red Furlong Farm is situated ½ mile from the village of Poundon and 6 miles from Bicester. The application site relates to an existing farm complex comprised of a detached 3-bedroom dwelling dating from the 1970’s, comprehensive commercial storage with two buildings with B1 planning permission totalling approx. 12,650 sq ft, temporary Steel portal Hay Store Building 2,612 sq ft and agricultural land.

3.2 According to Aylesbury Vale proposals map, the site in question falls within the open countryside and is not affected by any other planning designations.

3.3 A public right of way (reference no. TWY/9/1) crosses the site north east – south west and connects Poundon with the nearby village of Twyford.



Figure 1. Map showing the public rights of way map crossing the site.

3.4 The Flood Risk Map for Planning showed the site to fall within flood risk zone 1. It is therefore considered to have a low probability of flooding.

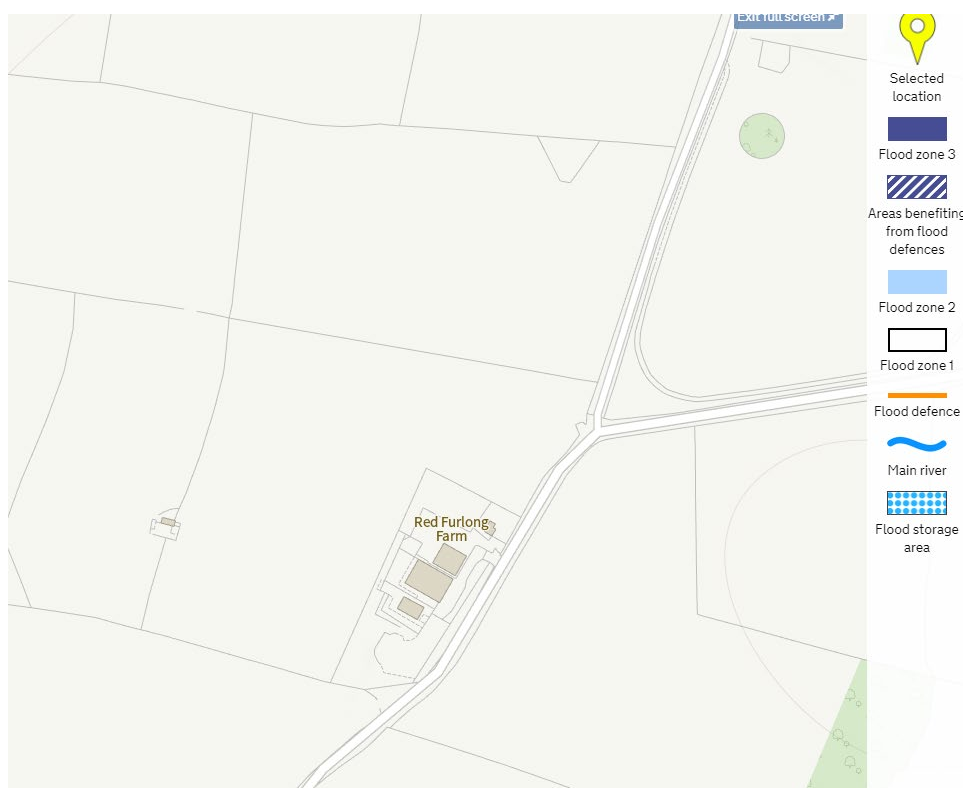
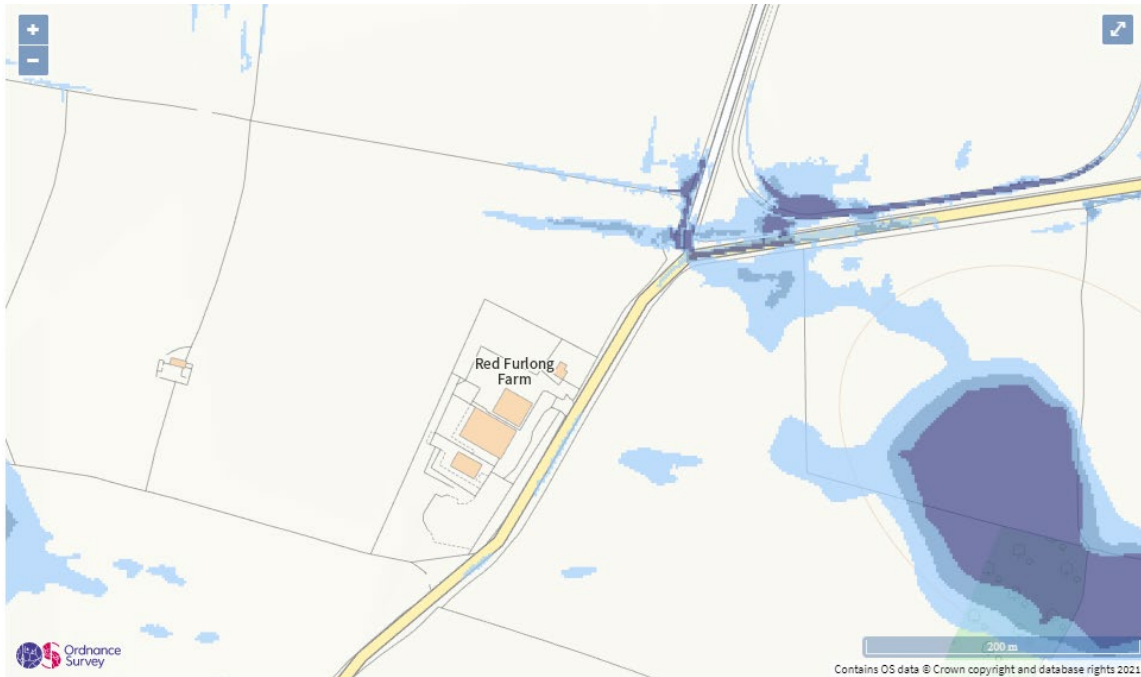


Figure 2. Flood Risk Map for planning shows the site to be within flood risk zone 1. Source:

<https://flood-map->

[forplanning.service.gov.uk/summary?easting=464735&northing=225443](https://flood-map-forplanning.service.gov.uk/summary?easting=464735&northing=225443)

3.5 The north east corner of the site is considered of low/medium risk of surface water flooding.



Extent of flooding from surface water

Figure 3. Flood Risk Map for planning showing how surface water flooding affects the site in question.

3.6 Further details on how surface water arising from the development will be managed is contained in the flood risk assessment accompanying this application.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 00/01055/APP - Relocation, demolition and erection of agricultural buildings – Approved June 2000.
- 4.2 04/02690/AOP - Change of use of barns from agricultural to class B1 – Approved November 2004.
- 4.3 07/13026/DIS1 – Discharge of condition of application 04/02690/AOB - Approved March 2008.
- 4.4 11/02690/ACL - Certificate of lawfulness for proposed extension for B1 use – Approved March 2012.
- 4.5 12/02350/AOP – Outline Planning Permission for the demolition of existing Commercial Building and Erection of No.6 dwellings – Refused January 2013.
- 4.6 15/03944/APP – Two storey side extension with balcony to rear – Approved 14 January 2016
- 4.7 Resubmission of previously approved application (LPA Ref; 15/03944/APP) for a Two storey side extension with balcony to the rear. Approved 27 February 2019.
- 4.8 21/01601/COMM - Request for pre-application advice from Buckinghamshire Council.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 The starting point for the determination of planning applications is, as always, the provisions of the development plan. Section 38(6) states:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

5.2 The decision-taking process is plan-led, not plan-determined. Planning policies are not written as statute and are not to be applied slavishly with unswerving prescription. In consequence, it is essential to understand the underlying planning objective of planning policies. The compliance, or tension, with relevant planning policies is then to be weighed alongside other 'material considerations.'

5.3 The proposed development needs to be considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as amended and the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (2004) and the emerging Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (2031-2033).

5.4 In the consideration of the merits of an individual proposal against the provisions of the development plan, it is not unusual for planning policies to 'pull' in different directions. Some policies may support the granting of planning permission, while the development may be in tension with the provisions of other policies. In these circumstances, a planning judgement has to be reached as to where the overall public interest lies.

5.5 The planning policies from the existing and emerging local plan which are considered relevant include:

5.5.1 Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2004

- GP.17 Retention in use of existing employment sites
- GP.24 (Vehicular Parking)
- GP.35 Design of new development proposals.
- GP.38 Landscaping of new development proposals
- GP.45 Secure by design considerations
- GP.59 Preservation of archaeological remains
- GP.84 Safeguarding of existing open space
- RA.2 Loss of open gaps and consolidation of settlements.
- RA.29 Proposals for new employment uses in the countryside.

5.5.2 The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033

- S1 Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale
- S2 Spatial strategy for growth
- S5 Infrastructure
- D3 Proposals for non-allocated sites at strategic settlements, larger villages and medium villages
- D6 Provision of employment land
- E2 Other employment sites
- T2 Supporting and Protecting Transport Schemes
- T3 Supporting local transport schemes
- T6 Vehicle Parking
- T7 Footpaths and cycle routes
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- NE4 Landscape character and locally important landscape
- NE8 Best and most versatile agricultural land
- C4 Protection of public rights of way

5.5.3 Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021 ('The Framework')

5.6 The Framework comprises up-to-date planning policy and its policy provisions are to be given substantial weight in the planning balance. Of particular relevance to this proposal are the following policies:

- Section: 2. Achieving Sustainable Development.
- Section: 6. Building a strong, competitive economy.
- Section: 9. Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Section: 12. Achieving well designed places.
- Section: 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- Section: 11. Making effective use of land.

Other Considerations

5.7 The National Infrastructure Assessment was published by the National Infrastructure Commission 2018 recognises that delivery of high-quality infrastructure depends on the availability of the right skills, the approach to construction and project management and the depth of the supply base.

5.8 The government published the National Infrastructure Study in November 2020. It sets out how the government's plans to deliver an improvement in the quality of the UK Infrastructure. The

study emphasises the need for bringing about a step change in the capability and leadership through increasing investment in major project expertise and delivery skills and improving the skills base across the country to ensure every area can deliver the infrastructure that it needs.

5.9 The Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) (2019) seeks to ensure that Buckinghamshire continues to play a significant and increased role in the economy of the future. In order to achieve this the Industrial Strategy seeks to bring employers and skills together in order to understand the current and future skills required and planning provision to meeting them. As part of this the LIS explains that Buckinghamshire will develop new employer led models to address growing skills needed by providing a clear pathway from school into work for all. This will focus on reaching those less well connected but also stimulate demand to meet skill shortage in high priority sectors. The LIS recognises that greater involvement from the private sector is required in order to deliver this.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Section 1 paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that “planning law requires that application for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- 6.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Part D requires applications to be approved where the policies which are most important for determining planning applications are out of date unless the policies in this framework provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 6.3 The policies in the adopted local plan most relevant to the principle of development for this application include: RA2, RA.3 and RA29.
- 6.4 The main aim of policy RA.2 is to maintain the individual identity of villages and avoid extensions that might lead to coalescence. It does not however contain specific wording that prevents development such as that forming the basis of this application within the rural area.
- 6.5 Policy RA3 seeks to resist proposals that extend the residential and other development curtilages beyond the built-up area of settlements that cause adverse harm to the character and appearance of the rural area.

- 6.6 Policy RA.29 states that except where otherwise allowed for in the local plan, outside the build-up areas of settlement and identified employment areas, the Council will resist proposals for new employment buildings and for the expansion of established employment sites into the countywide.
- 6.7 Paragraph 3.18 of the adopted local plan sets out the strategy for development in rural areas. It seeks to concentrate development at the largest settlements that have the greatest amount and range of employment and services.
- 6.8 Policy S3 of the draft VALP seeks to avoid new development within the countryside especially where it would compromise the character of the countryside between settlements and result in a negative impact on the identities of neighbouring settlements or communities leading to coalescence.
- 6.9 Paragraph 2.4 of the VALP recognises the need for growth to be accompanied by the delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities in the right places and at the right time, to bring maximum benefits to new and existing communities. This includes improving transport and education.
- 6.10 Paragraph 2.6 of the VALP sets out the strategic objectives of the plan. These include the need to secure the timely and well-located provision of infrastructure, services and facilities needed to sustain and enhance existing and new communities including education, training and access to community facilities.
- 6.11 Since the current local plan was adopted the level of growth coming forward across the district has increased with a combination of major new infrastructure projects and an increase in house building.

6.12 Phase 2 of the East West Rail project that will run party through Aylesbury Vale was only given the go-ahead by the government in February 2020. Similarly, the HS2 project was only given the go-ahead in February 2020. Both of these projects proceed the preparation and adoption of the 2004 Aylesbury Vale Local Plan.

6.13 Although the draft local plan makes reference to the above schemes, these projects were given the go-ahead after the draft local plan has been submitted for examination (November 2017). Given this there cannot be an expectation for policies within the adopted or draft local plan to account for the need for specific proposals such as these.

6.14 Paragraph 82 of the NPPF requires planning policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

6.15 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing building and well-designed new buildings.

- The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural business.

6.16 The application site is within the curtilage of the existing barns that have consent for lawful commercial use. Much of the area that surrounds these barns where the modular blocks will be placed comprises hard standing. The proposal will not therefore result in the loss of open undeveloped countryside. The land at the rear will result in a change of use. However, this will mostly be contained to material movement within the site.

- 6.17 This application is in response to the shortage of skilled workers that are required to deliver the major infrastructure projects coming forward across the district. It will provide a training facility that will provide a structured educational pathway for those attending with employment opportunities available at the end of the course. This complies with the wider goals and objectives of the VALP and the government in order to boost skills and training in order to accelerate the delivery of major infrastructure as identified in the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and the National Infrastructure Study.
- 6.18 The shortage of skilled workers, the infrastructure projects coming forward across the district and the need to find a site that meets the training justify allowing the development within the rural area. The temporary timeframe of the facility and modular buildings means that once there is no longer a need for the training facility the site can revert back to its existing B1/ agricultural use without long term harm to the surroundings.
- 6.19 The proposed facility needs be near to the infrastructure projects, have space to accommodate the training building rooms, accommodation blocks and open area to allow trainees to practice using the machinery outdoors. This results in a more effective way of executing the training which relies heavily on the practical element.
- 6.20 It is acknowledged that the proposed development is in tension with policy RA3 and paragraph 3.18 of the adopted plan. Full decision-making weight cannot however be applied to these policies as they were written and adopted before it was known that HS2, East West Rail and other infrastructure projects would be coming forward. As the draft VALP has not been adopted full decision-making weight cannot be applied to these policies either.

6.21 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. The need and shortage of skilled plant workers is a material consideration in favour of this application. Further details on the appropriateness of the site in transport, landscape, noise, flooding and ecological terms is contained below none of which are considered to represent a material planning consideration against this application.

6.22 The site is outside of the settlement boundary of the Poundon and the modular buildings will be contained to within the area surrounding the existing barns it will not therefore result in issues over coalescence.

6.23 The level of harm caused is not expected to be substantial and would mostly be contained to the use of the land at the rear of the site for the more practical elements of the training course. The Planning Practice Guidance on Green Belt acknowledges that when assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the green belt the duration of the development and its remendability including taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent state of openness should be taken into account. Although the site in question is outside of the green belt a similar consideration should be taken to land that contains a lower level of protection such as that forming the basis of this application. At the end of the seven-year period the land will revert back to its original use of agriculture and can be reinstated accordingly.

6.24 The suitability for the proposed development to be located on a designated employment site has been assessed as part of this application further details on which are contained below. The need for a site that has both space for modular buildings and outdoor space where those learning to use machinery can practice meant it was not possible to find an alternative site met these needs and which was close to the proposed infrastructure projects. It would be unreasonable to expect

there would be an appropriate site within a designated employment area given the uniqueness requirements of the site and the fact local plans cannot be expected to consider all development's needs. Further there is no requirement for an applicant to assess every piece of land within its catchment area. A similar view was taken by an Inspector in approving a development on the edge of Bicester (Appeal reference no. APP/C3105/W/20/3259189).

6.25 On this basis although the application does not fully accord with the local plan the material considerations including the shortage of skilled workers, the need for a training facility near the infrastructure projects and lack of suitable alternative's all represent material considerations in favour of the proposed development. Combined they will help ensure the infrastructure coming forward within the district will be delivered thus according with the wider strategic objectives contained in paragraph 2.6 of the VALP and the governments National Infrastructure Study. On this basis the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Sustainable Development

6.26 Policy S1 (Sustainable Development for Aylesbury Vale) requires all development to comply with the principles of sustainable development set out in the NPPF. Policy S1 goes onto states that in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to "delivering strategic infrastructure and other community needs to both new and existing communities" and "providing access to facilities including healthcare, education, employment, retail and community facilities".

6.27 Section 2 of the NPPF sets out the three overarching objectives for how sustainable development should be achieved. These include economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 6.28 The economic objective identifies the need to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 6.29 Similarly, paragraph 84 requires planning policies and decisions to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.
- 6.30 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF is clear that planning policies and decisions should plan an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 6.31 In accordance with policy S1 there is a need to both deliver strategic infrastructure and provide access to education facilities. The alternative site assessment work undertaken has shown that there is currently insufficient land for the proposed use that is close to the infrastructure works taking place. The current shortage of skilled workers who can operate the machinery required on these construction sites risks the timely delivery of these infrastructure projects.
- 6.32 The proposed development would help resolve some of these issues whilst also contributing towards the wider sustainable development goals. On this basis the proposed development is considered to accord with section 2 and paragraph 9 of the NPPF along with policy S1 of the draft local plan.

Employment

- 6.33 Policy GP.17 of the adopted location plan seeks to retain existing employment sites and uses.

Policy E1 of the draft VALP allows the use of key employment sites for employment purposes other than B1, B2 and B8 uses if it can be proven that such development will prejudice the efficient and effective use of the remainder to the employment area.

6.34 Due to the nature of the proposals it neither falls within the category of employment or educational use and is therefore considered a sui-generis use.

6.35 One of the outcomes from the pre-application meeting held on 17 June 2021 was that officers wanted alternative locations on designated employment sites to be considered.

6.36 A desk top search was undertaken to better understand the availability of premises that could accommodate the proposed development on designated employment sites within Aylesbury Vale.

6.37 Contact was also made with the Buckinghamshire Council Economic Development Officer (Steve Adkins) in case he was aware of suitable premises that could accommodate the proposals. He could not recommend any suitable premises but suggested we talk with agents who are operating within the designated employment areas.

6.38 Contact was made with the following agents on Tuesday 06 July to better understand the availability of potential sites.

- Savills.
- Chandler Garvey
- Brown and Co.

6.39 A Rightmove search was also undertake between Tuesday 06 July and Friday 09th July. One potential suitable premise was identified from this search on the Westcott Avenue Business Park.

Contact had already been made with the owner of the business park prior to the Rightmove search been undertaken.

6.40 The owner confirmed in email correspondence dated 17 June 2021 that the business park didn't feel the proposed use would be appropriate on the business park as it was focussing on occupiers from Rocket Motor Testing, technology and innovation related technology. As such this site is not considered a potential alternative location for the proposed use.

6.41 No other sites on the designated employment sites were found during the search that would be suitable to accommodate the proposed development.

6.42 The entire site area extends to 8.53 HA. The area of land which the buildings will be placed on extends to approximately 1.63 HA. This would comprise around just 20% of the site area. The remaining 80% would comprise open land used for the practice use of plant machinery. Locating this form of development on a designated employment site would not therefore be an effective use employment land. A site with open land and that can accommodate modular buildings is therefore considered a more appropriate location for this sort of development.

6.43 The proposed development is expected to generate around 10 -12 full time employment positions. This has been based on the Homes England Employment Density Calculator dated 2015. These new employment opportunities will benefit the surrounding area through increased spending and the support of local services.

Design

6.44 GP.35 requires the design of new development proposals to respect and complement.

- a) The physical characteristics of the site and the surroundings
- b) The building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality
- c) The historic scale and context of the setting
- d) The natural qualities and features of the area
- e) The effect on important public views and skylines.

6.45 GP38 requires new development schemes to include landscaping proposals designed to help buildings fit in with and complement their surroundings, and conserve existing natural and other features of value as far as possible.

6.46 GP.45 states “The design and layout of all planning proposals should incorporate measures to assist crime prevention and help reduce risks to personal safety”.

6.47 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decision to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area.

6.48 The modular accommodation blocks will ensure those attending the training can live on-site thereby reducing the need to travel within the surrounding area. The buildings are appropriate in appearance, scale and massing when compared with the existing B1 units on site. They will not therefore be out of keeping within the surrounding area or have a detrimental impact in design terms on the surrounding countryside. On this basis the proposals are considered to comply with policy GP35, GP38 and GP 45 of the adopted local plan and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Ecology

- 6.49 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF sets out the principles for the determination of planning applications. It states that planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from the development arises and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated for.
- 6.50 A preliminary ecological appraisal has been undertaken by Griffin Ecology and accompanies the application. The two existing ponds on site are potential suitable Great Crested Newt breeding habitats. These features will be retained and protected as part of the proposed development. The loss of the terrestrial habitat within the site is unavoidable but can be mitigated through the district licencing application should planning consent be approved.
- 6.51 The ecological appraisal concluded that as the site has no statutory or non-statutory designations for nature conservation within its boundary or adjacent to them and no such designated sites are expected to be affected by the proposals. On this basis the proposed development is considered to accord with paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

Noise

- 6.52 Paragraph 185 of the NPPF requires new development to
- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
- 6.53 Draft policy NE5 (Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape) requires development to considered the role and the landscape character area including not generating an unacceptable

level and/or frequency of noise in areas relatively undisturbed by noise and valued for their recreational or amenity value.

6.54 A noise assessment has been prepared by Inacoustic and accompanies the submission of this application. It concluded that the noise generated from the development would result in a low impact on receptors within the surrounding area and there will be no measured change in ambient sound level as a result of the development at the closest residential receptors.

6.55 On this basis the proposed development is not considered to generate an unacceptable level of noise and thereby accords with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, the supporting guidance contained in the NPPF Noise and draft policy NE5.

Landscape

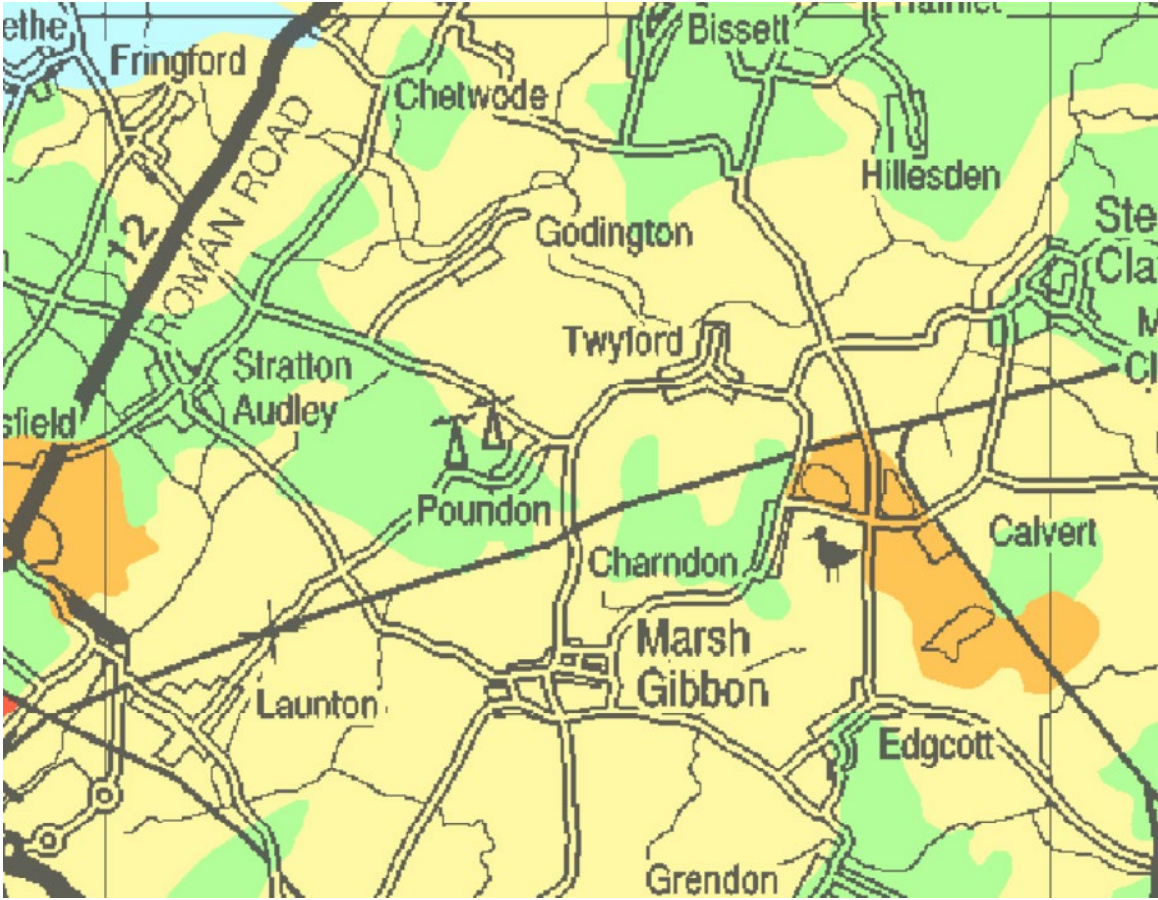
6.56 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. This is achieved in part by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

6.57 Draft policy NE5 (Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape) requires development to be grouped where possible with existing buildings to minimise impact on visual amenity.

6.58 Draft policy NE8 (Best and Most Versatile Farmland for the long term) seeks to protect the best and most versatile farmland for the longer term.

6.59 The site in question is not within a designated landscape so is not considered to have high environmental or amenity value.

6.60 The agricultural land classification map shows the site to be of poor quality (grade 4). The use of the land at the rear of the site will not therefore result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land.



<u>Grade</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Excellent
2	Very Good
3	Good to Moderate
4	Poor
5	Very Poor

Figure 4. Agricultural Land Classification Map.

6.61 The proposal will result in a temporary loss of amenity for those using the public right of way. This is however a temporary rather than a permanent impact and at the end of seven years the loss of amenity for those using the public right of way will be restored.

6.62 The proposed modular buildings will be placed next to the existing barns and dwelling house so further reducing any landscape impact.

6.63 Any impact also has to be balanced with the need for the training facility in order to deliver the major infrastructure projects coming forward. In assessing this impact, the need for the training facility combined with the temporary timeframe outweigh the impact. On this basis the proposal is considered to accord with draft policy NE5, NE8 and 170 of the NPPF.

Heritage

6.64 GP59 requires development proposals to protect, enhance, and preserve the historic interest and its setting.

6.65 Policy BE1 of the draft VALP states the “impact of the proposal must be fully assessed in proportion to the significance the heritage asset and supported in the submission of an application.

6.66 Paragraph 203 of the NPPF relates to the harm of development on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. It requires a balanced judgement to be had having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

6.67 Concern was raised the conservation and design officer during the pre-application meeting over the impact of the proposals on the ridge and furrow.

6.68 An Historic Environmental Desk Based Assessment has been completed by Cotswold Archaeology and accompanies the application. It concluded that there is evidence of slight earthworks within

the site that correspond with highly eroded remains of ridge and furrow. The remains were however considered to be only very limited heritage significance and were poorly preserved. These undulations were considered to not be visually intelligible and provide no meaningful appreciation within the landscape.

6.69 Although the earthworks were of local interest due to their condition and the fact similar examples of these earthworks can be found elsewhere in the Parish due to their poor condition, they are not considered to be of sufficient significance to warrant preservation.

6.70 The loss of the ridge and furrow from this site would result in an overall loss of around 1.2% of the ridge and furrow surviving within the parish. This would result in an overall decrease of ridge and furrow from 21% to 19.9%. On this basis although the proposal will result in the partial loss of an undesignated heritage asset the fact there are remains of other ridge and furrow within the Parish means its loss is not considered significant.

6.71 The benefits of the proposed development in terms of meeting an identified need for plant machinery operators combined with the temporary nature of the proposals outweighs the harm to ridge and furrow. On this basis the proposal is considered to comply with paragraph 203 of the NPPF whilst also complying with policy BE1 and GP59.

Flooding and Drainage

6.72 Paragraph 159 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Similarly, paragraph 161 of the NPPF sets out the sequential test which is to steer development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.

6.73 The site in question falls within flood risk zone 1 and is not therefore considered at risk of flooding from seas or rivers.

6.74 The proposed use is also not considered to be highly vulnerable. The proposed buildings are mostly located on areas of existing hard standing and as such are considered unlikely to result in an increase in surface water run-off. On this basis the proposal is considered to accord with paragraph 159 and 161 of the NPPF.

Transport

6.75 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF clearly states that “development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”.

6.76 An access appraisal has been prepared by David Tucker Associates and accompanies the submission of this application.

6.77 Accident records for the area have been reviewed as part of the access appraisal. These showed that there have been no recorded collisions in the last five years, meaning the access has operated safely.

6.78 Traffic Counts were undertaken in May 2021 in the vicinity of the access. The results showed that recorded speeds are significantly below the signed 60 MPH speed limit.

6.79 The provision of on-site accommodation means that once those attending the site course have arrived there will be very few vehicle movements during the day. Even at the beginning of the

course the site is not expected to generate more than 40 vehicle movements per day. This is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the users of Bicester Road.

6.80 Overall, the access appraisal concluded that the residual cumulative impact of the proposed development cannot be considered severe and it is therefore considered to comply with paragraphs 111 of the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application seeks to provide a new training facility to help meet the shortfall in skilled plant machinery drivers in the region. This shortage is due in part to the significant infrastructure projects that are coming forward within the region. Not allowing applications such as that proposed here risks having an insufficient skilled labour supply that is key to the timely delivery of the infrastructure projects coming forward.
- 7.2 The proposed development complies with the economic objective of the NPPF which seeks to ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 7.3 At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Infrastructure Commission recognise that the delivery of high-quality infrastructure depends on the availability of the right skills, the approach to construction and project management and the depth of the supply base.
- 7.4 It is also supported at a more local level by the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) (2019) which seeks bring employers and skills together in order to understand the current and future skills required and planning provision to meeting them.
- 7.5 The site has been chosen due to both a lack of suitable sites within the designated employment area and due a specific set of requirements that require both an open training area and space of the teaching/living blocks. There is a need to have a regional hub/ training centre that is responsive to the infrastructure projects coming forward within the region. This limits the number of sites that are available both spatially and geographically.

- 7.6 The proposal will result in economic benefits in terms of new employment opportunities and spending within the local area. This is supported as part of the NPPF's sustainable development objective.
- 7.7 The temporary nature of the proposals means that once the seven years has ended the site can return to its existing use. Any temporary harm arising from the proposed development will therefore be short term.
- 7.8 Paragraph 82 of the NPPF requires planning policies to be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan. Local Plans cannot always plan for all types of development, a flexible approach to development coming forward is therefore required assessing each application on its merits and needs. This application has demonstrated that there is a need for this sort of development in this location and on this basis should be supported.