

# Fuller Long

## Planning Statement

Grove Close,  
Hampkins Hill Road  
Chiddingstone  
Edenbridge  
Kent TN8 7BA

Date : September 2021

Ref: FL11751

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# 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the retention of stables with ancillary storage and the provision of a menage.
- 1.2 The document provides an assessment of the proposal against the relevant planning policies and guidance and sets out the following information relevant to the consideration of the application by the local planning authority.
- (i) A description of the site and surroundings (Section 2.0)
  - (ii) A description of the proposed development (Section 3.0).
  - (iii) A review of planning policies including the development plan and material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework (Section 4.0).
  - (iv) A review of key planning issues relevant to the proposal (Section 5.0).
  - (v) Summary and conclusions (Section 6.0)

## 2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site in the main comprises a substantial paddock located at the corner of Hampkins Hill Road and the B2027. It is owned and managed by the owner occupier of Grove Close, a two storey house on the site fronting Hampkins Hill Road. The paddock is currently used for grazing land for the applicant's horses. The grazing land itself extends to some 6 acres.



*Figure 1: Satellite photograph of the application site*

- 2.2 Whilst the centre of the site is open, as can be seen from the image above its boundaries are lined by trees and hedgerows. The site is in a rural area and is predominantly surrounded by open countryside, save for a row of residential development to the north and the railway line to the south.
- 2.3 The site gains access from Hampkins Hill Road and benefits from an area of hard surfacing adjacent to the house which provides ample parking.



*Figure 2: Parking adjacent to the house.*

- 2.4 The site is not in a Conservation Area and does not contain any listed buildings. It is also not in an area covered by a Neighbourhood Plan. A review of government flood risk maps indicates that it is in Flood Risk Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). It does not contain any trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and it is not subject to an Article 4 Direction.
- 2.5 In terms of site designations, according to the Council's adopted Policies Map, the following designations apply to the site:
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
  - Metropolitan Greenbelt
- 2.6 There is no planning history associated with the property on the Council's online records.

## 3:0 Proposal

- 3.1 The application is made on a part retrospective basis. As the Council are aware, 4 separate equestrian buildings have been constructed in a courtyard arrangement behind the main house. Whilst the stables boxes currently house the applicant's horses it is her intention to operate a low-key livery from the site as well as offering riding lessons. It is anticipated that 4 stable boxes will be retained for the use of the applicant with 2 being available for livery purposes. To support the use, it is proposed to construct a menage for the purposes of exercising the horses.
- 3.2 As can be seen from the drawings, the stables are rural in design being low profile timber clad structures. They accommodate a mix of horse boxes (6), tack stores, feed rooms and other associated equestrian storage. Importantly, the stable boxes themselves meet the minimum standards set out by the British Horse Society. Furthermore, being set adjacent to 6 acres of paddock, there is sufficient land to support the number of horses.
- 3.3 Horse manure is currently in a heap at the end of the field which is removed by a local approved farmer who uses the muck on this land as a fertiliser.
- 3.4 No staff will be employed at the site with the business being run by the applicant with assistance from her niece. Any lessons would primarily be undertaken during the daytime on the weekend and are unlikely to be more than two a day. These would be mainly on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups.
- 3.5 More than sufficient off-road parking is available adjacent to the house for the proposed use of the site in this manner.
- 3.6 The applicant wishes the yard to be a quiet haven where people would come for the enjoyment of the horses to learn and relax.
- 3.7 The following information has been provided by the applicant on the proposed business.

*The riding school will mainly be one to one lessons with adults. It involves them learning how to tack up, and the progress through learning how to ride firstly being on the lunge. Lunging involves the horse being on a long line and walking around me so I have control of the horse whilst the rider is learning. This would be done in the round pen hexagon area. It's nice and safe as the area is more enclosed. The better riders will be off the lunge and will ride in the menage area that is bigger as they learn how to canter and jump. I will be training my own horses. I produce young horses, and they will be lunged and longreined, this is safer in the round pen. They progress to being in the arena as they are backed where I need more room. My advanced horses need the arena as i do dressage and need to train with my own trainers.*

*I also have miniature ponies that are world champions that i show, breed and drive. Id like to open a pony club called Little Hampkins Miniature Ponies and have children that have a membership that come and learn about showing and getting the horses ready and their ongoing care. The ponies are not ridden and do all their work in hand. So i need the arenas to be able to offer this service. The children will learn horsemanship, how to show, and i will run little shows for them. The ponies will be taken showing, and so the kids will actually see it happening for real. The ponies being taken offsite. Ive also arranged for a special class where they can 'compete' for real. We will have practice shows at home as well.*

*We can also do a series of pony birthday parties.*

*The area is crying out for something like this where the kids can safely come and learn. Numbers will be limited. The idea is that its a quiet safe place to learn and enjoy the ponies.*

## 4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### 1. Development Plan

- 4.2 The development plan consists of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015). The most relevant policies are set out below.

#### Core Strategy (2021) policies:

- 4.3 **Policy LO1 (Distribution of Development)** requires development to be focused within the built confines of existing settlements. In other locations priority will be given to protecting the rural character of the District. The policy states that development will only be permitted where it is compatible with policies for protecting the Green Belt and the High Weald and Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where relevant.
- 4.4 **Policy LO8 (The Countryside and the Rural Economy)** states that extent of the Green Belt will be maintained. The policy seeks to conserve the countryside and the distinctive features that contribute to the special character of its landscape and its biodiversity.
- 4.5 **Policy SP 1 (Design of New Development and Conservation)** requires all new development to be designed to a high quality and to respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. In rural areas, the policy requires account to be taken of guidance in the Countryside Assessment and AONB Management Plans.
- 4.6 **Policy SP2 (Sustainable Development)** requires new development to create safe, inclusive and attractive environments that meet the needs of users, incorporate principles of sustainable development and maintain and enhance biodiversity.

#### Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) policies:

- 4.7 **Policy EN1 (Design Principles)** requires proposals to be high quality design and to meet several criteria such as responding to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area, delivering a site layout that respects topography and character, increase biodiversity, ensure satisfactory means of access and incorporates green infrastructure features where possible.
- 4.8 **Policy EN2 (Amenity Protection)** states that proposals will be permitted where they would provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties by ensuring that development does not result in excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicle movements, overlooking or visual intrusion and where the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties.

- 4.9 **Policy EN5 (Landscape)** states that the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals within the AONB will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design would conserve and enhance the character of the landscape and have regard to the relevant Management Plan and associated guidance.
- 4.10 **Policy EN7 (Noise Pollution)** states that proposals should not have an unacceptable impact when considered against the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment including existing and future occupiers of the development and the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties. Where proposals for high noise generating development would affect Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or open countryside or sites designated for their biodiversity value, development will not be permitted if it would undermine the character or harm the biodiversity of these areas.
- 4.11 **Policy LT2 (Equestrian Development Proposals)** allows for new equestrian development in the countryside subject to compliance with a number of criteria which seek in the main to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and are acceptable in environmental/ecological and green belt terms.

## 2. Other material considerations

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

The following SPD are considered relevant:

- Green Belt SPD
- Countryside Character Assessment SPD

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.12 The document confirms the Government's support for the development of a wide range of sports and recreation, which contribute to quality of life. Specifically Paragraph 98 of the NPPF states:

*“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.”*

- 4.13 Paragraph 145 goes onto recognise the opportunities land within the Green Belt can provide for outdoor sport and recreation advising:

*“Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land”*

- 4.14 Paragraph 149 of the document confirms that appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation should be regarded as an exception to inappropriate development 'as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it'.
- 4.15 Furthermore, Paragraph 150 goes onto confirm that certain other forms of development in the Green Belt are not inappropriate, such as material changes in the use of land (such as changes for outdoor sport or recreation.....) provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 4.16 Finally Paragraph 84 states that local planning authorities should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
- 4.17 In short, the Government recognises the important role rural areas have to play in providing appropriate leisure opportunities such as sought by virtue of the enclosed application. Furthermore, this approach is recognised within Green Belt Policy, which actively promotes the use of Green Belt for recreation purposes and includes appropriate facilities associated with outdoor sport and outdoor recreation as 'appropriate' development subject to the preservation of the openness of the Green Belt.

#### Emerging Local Planning Policies

- 4.18 The Draft Revised Sevenoaks Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in 2019 and the Planning Inspectorate issued the final report following the examination in March 2020. The report concluded that the Sevenoaks District Local Plan is not legally compliant in respect of the Duty to Co-operate and, as such, the Inspector recommended that the Plan is not adopted. In December 2020, the Council asked for permission to challenge the Judicial Review ruling that upheld the Planning Inspector's reasons for rejecting its draft Local Plan but the Council was informed in April 2021 that it had not succeeded with the challenge. The Council is now speaking with the Secretary of State to put forward a strategy that ensures a new Local Plan can be put in place as soon as possible. The emerging Local Plan therefore carries limited weight in planning decision making.

## 5.0 Planning Assessment

5.1 This section sets out a review of the relevant issues for the determination of the planning application.

### 1. Impact on Green Belt and AONB

5.1 Equestrian use is generally considered to be a use for outdoor or recreation and is a use that would normally be associated with a rural environment. As set out within the NPPF the material change of use of land is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt provided it preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and indeed changes of use for outdoor sport is one of the examples given for changes of use that might not be inappropriate. Furthermore, Paragraph 149 of the NPPF includes *‘the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use of land’ for outdoor sport.....; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;’*

5.2 With regard to local policy Paragraphs 9.6 and 9.7 of the Green Belt SPD under the heading ‘Equestrian Development’ confirms

*“Horse and other equestrian-related activities are popular forms of recreation in the countryside that can fit in well with farming activities, and help diversify the rural economy.*

*The Council will support equine enterprises in the Green Belt that maintain environmental quality and countryside character.*

*Policy LT2 of the ADMP covers Equestrian Development in the Green Belt and states: Proposals for equestrian development in the Green Belt will be permitted where the scale of the development is appropriate to a Green Belt setting, and where the cumulative impact of other buildings, does not harm the openness of the Green Belt. Where stables or associated equestrian buildings are proposed they should be designed and constructed in materials appropriate to a rural area and should not be of a size and degree of permanence that they could be adapted for other use in the future. Buildings would be appropriate in scale to their setting and would be closely related to existing farm buildings or other groups of buildings that are well screened from public view.”*

5.3 Although openness at its simplest is an absence of built development, preserving Green Belt openness is not a preclusion on new buildings. The Green Belt is functioning countryside that, among other things, should serve the urban areas which it surrounds. Hence new built development that sits comfortably within the rural landscape and contributes to the beneficial functioning of the countryside can preserve openness. In this case whilst the built development is not insubstantial, it only takes up a small part of the land which it is proposed to serve. The structures are of a simple form and rural design with the materials being appropriate for its rural context. Furthermore, the buildings have been

focused in a single area to the rear of the existing property in a courtyard form, thus ensuring that the majority of activity associated with the use is focused on an enclosed area.

#### Environmental Considerations

- 5.4 The land can be lawfully used for the grazing of horses. We do not consider the change of use for the keeping of horses would lead to any environmental or ecological concerns.
- 5.5 The applicant is environmentally conscious. In this regard the yard has been built on eco mud mats made from recycled plastic, they have solar lights, and recycle rainwater. Horses are organically fed and Hemp bedding is used.

#### Highways

- 5.6 Any additional vehicle movements generated from the proposal would be extremely limited. Four of the stables will be occupied by the applicant's horses with only 2 intended to be for livery purposes. Furthermore, lessons would in the main be conducted on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups. There is more than sufficient parking available to accommodate this level of use adjacent to the house. Furthermore, the small level of additional vehicle movements can easily be accommodated by the highway network.

#### Amenity

- 5.7 As can be seen from Figure 1, there are no other residential properties adjacent to the site with the nearest being on the opposite side of the B2027 to the north. Given the low-key nature of the use and the distance between properties we do not consider any impact on amenity could arise.

## 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The use of land within the Green Belt for recreational purposes is supported by the NPPF, furthermore, appropriate facilities in connection with recreational uses are listed an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt subject to considerations of openness. Regarding other planning considerations, we consider there will be no adverse impact in connection with environmental, amenity or highway matters.

Thank you for viewing our Planning Statement.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss anything further with us please don't hesitate to get in contact [hello@fullerlong.com](mailto:hello@fullerlong.com)

