

Stroud District Council

28th November 2023

To whom it may concern,

Re: Full Planning application for a proposed Slurry Lagoon at, Hinton Farm

Hinton, Berkeley Gloucestershire GL13 9HZ (Easting: 394486, Northing: 142293).

Please find enclosed supporting documents for the full planning application, consisting of this statement and 4no supporting plans (230 0505-SKY160-Hinton-Farm – Site Location Plan, Existing Use Plan, Development boundary including site plan and levels, Cross Sections and Fencing detail). Also attached is a Preliminary Environmental Assessment carried out by Cotswold Environmental Ltd

1. Farm Information

- 1.1 Hinton Farm is farmed by Messrs V.A & R & M Allen and extends to approximately 360 acres servicing the main unit, where the proposal is to be sited. In addition, the partnership owns and farms land at Kingswood, Charfield, which is mainly cropped to cereals, but also provides accommodation for rearing the enterprise's youngstock.
- 1.2 The partnership has run a dairy enterprise at Hinton Farm for the past 30 years
- 1.3 The dairy enterprise utilises grass and maize produced at Hinton Farm and surrounding land supplemented by cereals grown at Kingswood, Charfield.
- 1.4 Recently, significant investment has been made in land and buildings, both here and at Grange Farm to sustain an increase in the number of dairy cows, to a total of 300 milking cows, in order to keep the enterprise sustainable, when presented with pressures on pricing and an increase in commodity costs.
- 1.5 The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (Wales) Regulations 2010 (SSAFO) set standards for the making of silage and the storing of silage, slurries and agricultural fuel oil, so as to minimise the risk of water pollution.
- 1.6 This legislation currently requires a minimum of four months slurry storage and it is likely that this will soon rise to 6 months storage. Six months storage is seen as good practice and the capacity requirements of the proposed slurry facility, forming part of the accompanying application has been based on this need. The proposal therefore seeks to achieve compliance with these changing environmental standards, ensuring that the infrastructure supporting the enterprise is fit for purpose and sustainable in the long term.

2. Details of the Proposal

- 2.1 The proposed location for the new slurry lagoon has been chosen to sit within the backdrop of the existing farm buildings and to benefit from a natural fall from the main (existing) slurry store, yards and silage pit, which will reduce the need for pumping, as a significant proportion of the separated liquids can travel via gravity fed pipes. The intention is to pump this liquid onto the surrounding fields, at the appropriate time within the relevant regulations and to dispose of any settled solids, via mechanised means. Ramped access has been provided into the store with a proposed connection, from the existing farm track to give a safe and efficient way of moving the settled solids, when required, within the regulations.
- 2.2 The proposed store has been designed as an excavated pit with a (partially buried) sealed unit comprising of a concrete base with vertical concrete retaining walls supported on metal stanchions. This facility is to have a footprint of 86.6 m x 23 m, with an area of 1991.8sqm. The dimensions and design have been influenced by the site constraints and the necessity to provide 10 m clearance from the nearest watercourse or ditch, which is situated immediately to the east of the site.
- 2.3 The topography of the site means that there is an existing fall from north to south and from west to east and the proposal is to excavate to a depth of approximately 3m at the northern end, as detailed on the cross sectional drawings, attached to this application. In doing so, the concrete components will be partially buried, which will be further enhanced by the reuse of the spoil arisings to raise the level of the land to the west of the store and to provide soil bunds to the remainder of the periphery. It is proposed that all of the arisings will be retained on site as part of this procedure, to avoid the need for additional lorry movements during construction. This is indicated on the attached drawing number 230 0505-SKY160-Hinton-Farm. The expected estimated volume figures are detailed below:

Cut = 5,811m³

Fill = 5,925m³

Net = -114m³

(Calculated to base of store)

These figures do not include the cut from the foundations for the retaining walls, which is expected to encompass the net shortfall, as indicated above. Therefore, all spoil is to be retained on site with no requirements for any muck away.

The total area of the development **including** the access ramp and filled areas (> 1m depth) around the proposed lagoon is estimated at approximately 4,497 sqm

The lagoon will provide storage for the dirty water/slurry emanating from the farm, including that dissipating from yards and silage effluent. The proposed development will supplement existing lagoons that are situated to the north of the site that are coming to the end of their life and require, additional works. These existing facilities do not provide sufficient storage for the required need and cannot be enlarged due to the constraints of the site.

2.4 A post and wire stock proof fence will be installed at the top of the surrounding soil bunds, for Health and Safety purposes, with access gates onto the ramped access and at the north west corner.

3. Planning Constraints and Policy Justification

3.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021, as amended)

3.1.2 2. Achieving sustainable development; The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11);

3.1.3 6. Building a Strong Competitive economy; Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy; Paragraph 84; “Planning Policy and decisions should enable; (a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; (b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses”. The proposal is essential for the development of the existing agricultural business and its ability to continue to produce a high quality product, whilst maintaining sustainable farming practices.

3.2 Stroud Local Plan (adopted 2015)

3.2.1 Core Policy 1:

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework

3.2.2 Core Policy15 : A Quality Living and Working Countryside

In order to protect the separate identity of settlements and the quality of the countryside (including its built and natural heritage), proposals outside identified settlement development limits will not be permitted except where these principles are complied with:

1. It is essential to the maintenance or enhancement of a sustainable farming or forestry enterprise within the District – The application is compliant in this respect

3. It is a ‘rural exception site’, where development is appropriate, sustainable, affordable and meets an identified local need– The application is compliant in this respect

3.2.3 Where development accords with any of the principles listed above, it will only be permitted in the countryside if:

ii) it does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; - The application has been designed to fit within the existing homestead

4. Conclusion

4.1 This full planning application seeks planning consent for a proposed slurry facility at Hinton Farm Hinton, Berkeley Gloucestershire GL13 9HZ (Easting: 394486, Northing: 142293). The applicant considers that the proposal accords with the relevant local and national policy

4.2 The applicants are planning to sustain their business and livestock numbers over the coming years. They are of the view that this is an important rural business, and that the proposal is part of the applicant's ambition to remain compliant with all relevant environment regulations and sustainable farming initiatives. The proposal is in line with the government's current objectives for rural businesses and one that warrants the Council's support.

In the meantime, please would you revert to us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

