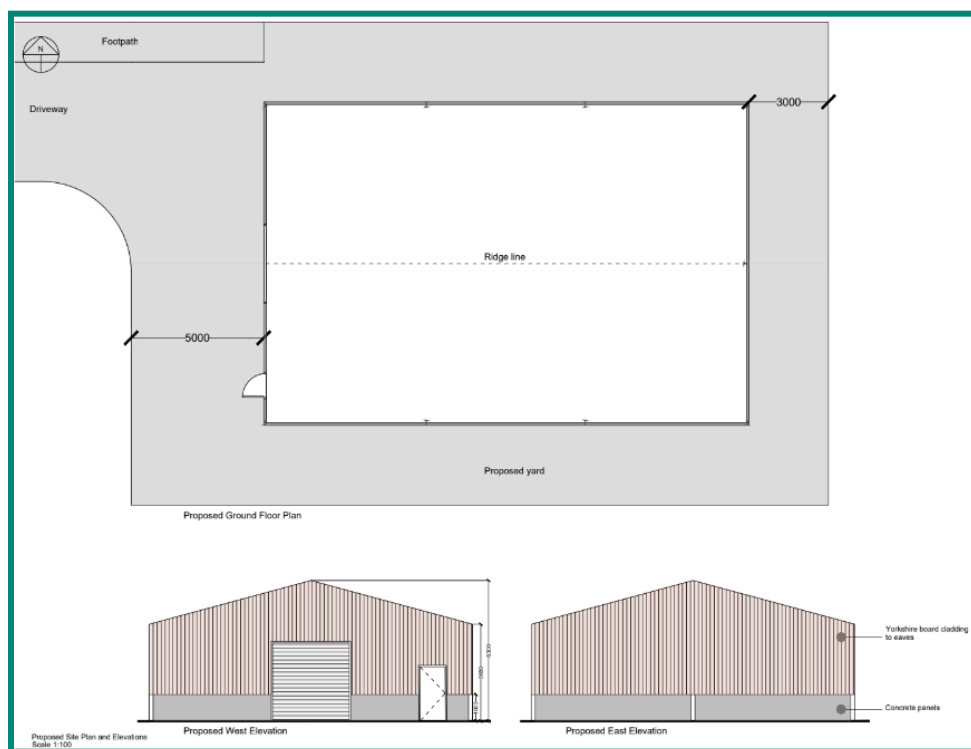




## PLANNING STATEMENT & AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION

19th March 2024

### ERECTION OF A MULTI PURPOSE AGRICULTURAL BUILDING



## Farm buildings at Lower Lench Farm, Cowpe, Rossendale, BB4 7AF

Prepared by MacMarshalls Rural Chartered Surveyors & Planning Consultants.

On behalf of Mrs Anne Morton

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Rev	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
1	19/03/2024	Supporting Statement	RM	SM	RE

## 1.0 INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.1 MacMarshalls are instructed on behalf of Mrs Morton, herein referred to as the 'Applicants', to submit an application for:
  - The erection of a multi purpose agricultural building on her property at Lower Lench Farm, Cowpe.
- 1.2 This planning statement accompanies a submission to Rossendale Council for full planning permission.
- 1.3 No pre-application advice has been sought however it is noted that the same agricultural building has previously been granted, this application seeks to move the building towards the farmhouse where the majority of the machinery is stored.
- 1.4 The agricultural building was approved in March 2023 under reference 2023/0042
- 1.4 This report has been prepared on behalf of the applicant by Robert Mackenzie BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV. Robert is a qualified member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Rural), an RICS registered valuer and a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers. During his time as a Rural Chartered Surveyor (7 years) Robert has submitted a substantial number of rural planning applications to local authorities as well as providing agricultural reports for others. Having grown up on a mixed beef and sheep hill farm in East Lancashire, Robert has gained experience in all aspects of agriculture and rural business. Robert has worked closely with the applicant to ensure that the proposal is policy compliant in terms of both local and national policy. The applicant wishes to involve the council in every step of the way to ensure the scheme is supported.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

2.1 The Applicants purchased Lower Lench Farm decades ago, the property currently comprises:

- Farmhouse.
- Yard area
- Agricultural barn
- Approximately 90 acres of adjoining grassland (See location plan) used for haymaking and grazing.

2.2 The applicants have used the land for their animals and have utilised the meadows for haymaking annually, they now seek planning permission for an agricultural building to support their agricultural business.

Current stocking levels:

- 220 Breeding ewes
- 120 lambs
- 5 tups

2.3 The Applicant wishes to manage the land in a sustainable way and in turn improve the viability of the agricultural business she operates. The applicant has invested in machinery which she uses to farm the land.

2.4 The Applicant's have registered their land with the Rural Payments Agency which enables the Applicant to keep livestock on the land and ensure they comply with relevant livestock movement regulations. They have also shown interest in other government led grant schemes which include: The Boundaries and Hedgerow Grant Scheme and the Mid Tier Stewardship scheme to help enhance the land. These schemes help landowners manage their land more efficiently and can generate income for ongoing maintenance. They are also showing interest in The RDPE Growth Programme for funding for projects which will create jobs and growth in the rural economy. The main drivers of the scheme are:

- Business development
- Food processing
- Rural tourism infrastructure

### 3.0 THE PROPOSAL & JUSTIFICATION

3.1 The Applicant proposes:

- The erection of a multi purpose agricultural building.

3.2 The agricultural building will be multi purpose and serve the applicant in a number of ways these being:

- Housing of livestock (Sheep)
- Storage of hay and feedstuffs required for the livestock.
- Storage of machinery and equipment used to farm the holding
- Storage of chemicals, tools and equipment.
- Storage of fertiliser (In line with regulation)

3.3 The applicants use the sheep to graze the land more productively, the ewes are lambed annually in spring and lambs sold at market. With the sheep numbers increasing, the applicant now wishes to grow their flock. The applicants hope that they can improve the welfare of their stock by building a new agricultural barn. In order for the Applicant's to farm the land effectively, and lamb indoors, it is necessary to erect an agricultural building. The building will be of mixed use, the specific use depending on the time of year, it will be used for lambing, shearing, housing sheep during poor weather, fattening lambs and preparing the sheep for shows. The building will also be used to house machinery used to farm the land as well as storage of hay and forage, furthermore, the applicant will be able to store all of his chemicals and fertiliser within the building. The building will store muck during different periods of the year which will be spread on the land in the spring.

3.3 The ewes on average breed 1.75 - 2.0 lambs per ewe per mating meaning that during lambing the applicants could have up to 420 lambs born annually. Sheep have a much better survival rate if lambed inside, the lambs will be fattened prior to being slaughtered or incorporated into the flock as replacements. The lambs will take approximately 4-5 months to reach market weight.

3.4 Sheep are useful for land management as they keep the grass down and compact the sod. They will be cared for by all the family to teach the children about responsibility and to learn an alternative skill that they will be able to use into adulthood.

3.5 The breakdown of required building space (222 sq m) is as follows:

- The storage of hay made from the grassland. Hay must be stored undercover and protected from adverse weather which ruins hay crops
- Items of agricultural machinery and offer protection against theft and deterioration from adverse weather these are currently stored outside, photos can be provided if required.
- Shelter for the sheep flock during the winter period and adverse weather

- Space is needed for sheep feed & mineral supplements, hurdles, marker spray, sprays, buckets, troughs, wormers, hay racks, foot shears, fly cream, shears, electric fencing (to manage the land), miscellaneous veterinary supplies.
- The applicant intends to install two steel containers which will be used to house hand tools, chemicals and fertilizer, all of which will be locked away as per HSE guidance
- Space is required for tractors, quad bikes and implements used for managing the land. 2

A list of the machinery is given below along with sizes and dimensions.

Machine	Size	Floor area
Land roller	2.4m x 3m	7.2m <sup>2</sup>
Chain harrows	2.4m x 2m	4.8m <sup>2</sup>
Topper	2m x 1.9m	3.8m <sup>2</sup>
Back Box	1.8m x 1m	1.8m <sup>2</sup>
Quad trailer	2.3m x 1.6m	3.68m <sup>2</sup>
4WD Tractor	6m x 2m	12m <sup>2</sup>
Tipping trailer	1.8m x 3m	5.4m <sup>2</sup>
Quad bike	2.2m x 1.1m	2.41m <sup>2</sup>
Mower	2.4m x 3m	7.2m <sup>2</sup>
Baler	2.4m x 3m	7.2m <sup>2</sup>
Hay shaker	2.4m x 4m	9.6m <sup>2</sup>

N.B Photographs of machinery can be provided if required.

- 3.6 The space required for the machinery, feedstuffs and livestock is being stored on the yard at the farm at the moment, machinery should not be left outside as they would deteriorate to the weather or be stolen. The machinery being left outside is also an eye sore to the surroundings, the proposed building will ensure that the yard is tidier than present.

- 3.7 The Applicant wishes to manage the land in a sustainable way and in turn improve the viability of the business he operates. They require a building for his livestock, these livestock will require a suitable agricultural building during:
- i) The winter months and during adverse weather conditions;
  - ii) During lambing seasons;
  - iii) During illness or when receiving treatment.
- 3.8 The proposed agricultural building is well ventilated and therefore any potential ingress and build-up of ground gas is likely. The Applicant plans to store any manure and / or slurry within the proposed building and therefore there would be no risk of contamination or pollution.
- 3.9 The valuation process has considered the relevant planning policy to be applied to determine this application. The layout, design and materials are typical of agricultural buildings in the North of England. The scale is limited to that which is required and no more. The access arrangement will ensure the safety of traffic access and the application site, this will not materially increase traffic movement. The predominant use of surrounding areas is agriculture, this application is for agricultural use and therefore will have no material impact on its surroundings due to its compatibility with surrounding areas.
- 3.10 Details of Proposed Works:  
**Length** - 18.28m  
**Width** - 12.19 m  
**Height** to eaves - 3.65m  
**Height** to ridge - 6.5m
- 3.11 Furthermore, the building is sited some 35 from the access road the applicant has created a turning area and an agricultural yard on the site to assist maneuverability of machinery.
- As the topography of the land is undulating, a track will be required to gain access to the building. This track will be constructed by removing the topsoil, which will be used to landscape around the surrounding land. A layer of terram will then be installed to prevent weed growth through the track. Following this, hardcore will then be tipped over the terram with a layer of geotex on top. The geotex binds the hardcore and the top coat which will be road plaining, photos of similar works are shown below:



Terram over the clay which will prevent weed growth.



Installation of hardcore (crushed brick) and compaction of the same, the geotext is then used to bind the layers together.



Finally, a top layer of road planings or concrete will cover the hardcore and make a smooth top layer.

This will then be compacted using a vibrating roller.



## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 The site is designated in the Green Belt according to Rossendale Mbc's proposal map.
- 4.2 The principle of the development will therefore be determined under Local, Regional and National Green Belt Policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, setting out the government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) compliments this requirement. The revised NPPF was updated on 19 February 2019 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, alongside other national planning policies. Paragraph 213 of Annex 1 (Implementation) of the NPPF advises to the effect that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The closer the policies in the plan to the NPPF policies, the greater the weight they may be given.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes that for decision taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: -
  - i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed;
  - ii). any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. The development is within the designated Green Belt as such the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

- 4.3 Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that:

154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

(b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

(c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

(d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

(e) limited infilling in villages;

(f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

(g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

4.4 155. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

4.5 The Rossendale Core Strategy DPD (2011 - 2026) was adopted on 8th November 2011, an emerging Core strategy is also due to be adopted in Rossendale (2019 - 2034).

The policies affecting agricultural buildings are listed below:

- Policy 9 Accessibility
- Policy 18 Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Landscape Conservation
- Policy 21 Supporting the Rural Economy and its Communities
- Policy 23 Promoting High Quality Design and Spaces

■ Policy 24 Planning Application Requirements

4.6 Policy 21 states:

*‘Supporting the Rural Economy and its Communities The rural environment and economy will be protected and enhanced through the following principles: Development will be restricted to existing rural settlement boundaries and within identified major developed sites. Outside of these areas, proposals should demonstrate the social and/or economic needs/benefits for the local rural community and strict consideration will be given to the impact of rural development on the countryside (including the natural environment) and/or Green Belt.*

*Support will be given to the social and economic needs of rural communities by encouraging:*

- **The retention or expansion of appropriately sized businesses**
- *The re-use or replacement of suitable rural buildings for employment generating uses*
- *Proposals Seeking to widen local facilities and services for everyday needs*
- *Live-work units*
- **Diversification of the agricultural economy for business purposes**
- *Sustainable tourism developments, including recreation and leisure uses appropriate to a countryside location such as horse-related activities*
- *Arts and crafts based industries*
- *Technological developments needed to facilitate employment development in rural areas and help address social exclusion*
- *The improvement of public transport links to identified urban centres, employment areas and visitor attractions*
- *Increased accessibility to and from rural communities by sustainable modes of travel In all cases, the Council will seek to protect the most productive and versatile agricultural land in the Borough, including agricultural practices unique to the area.*

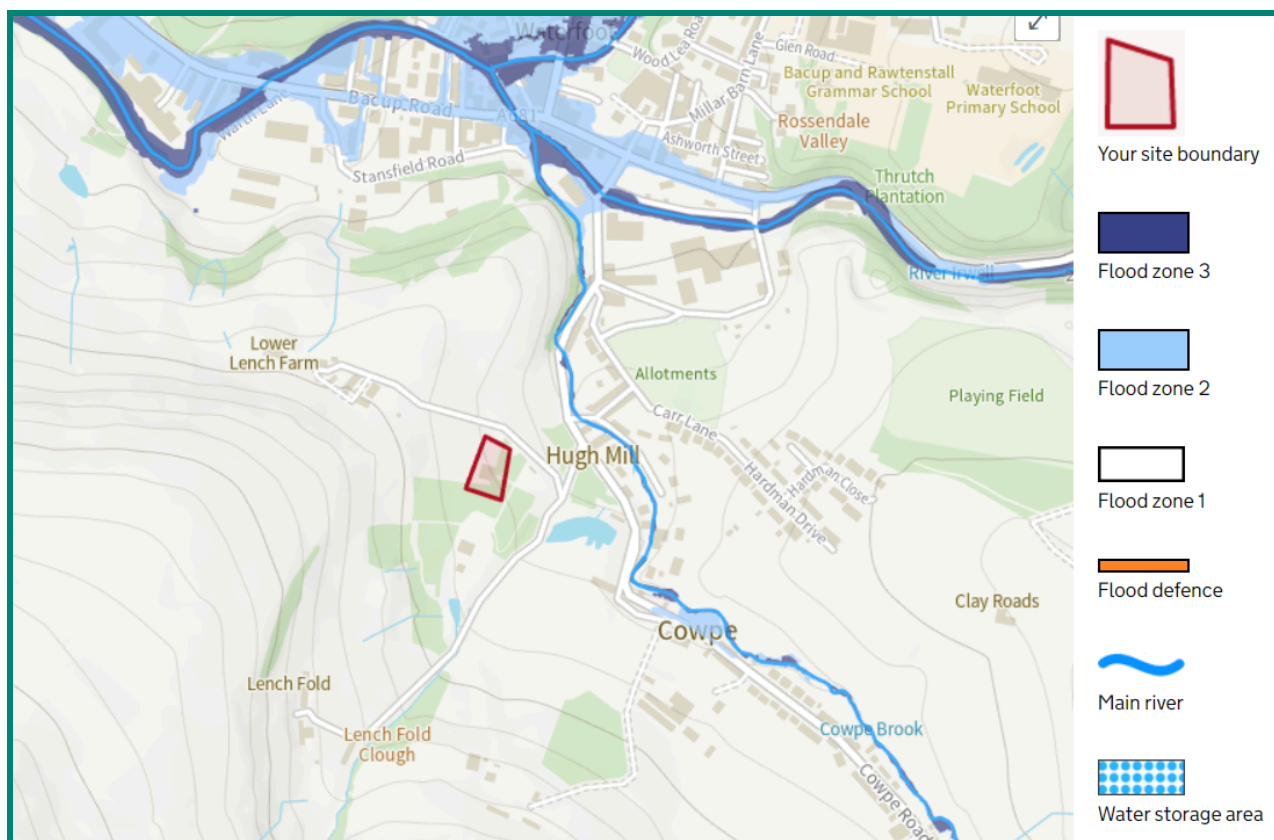
4.7 Recent appeal decisions have been ascertained and can be provided if required for similar agricultural buildings on established holdings.

## 5.0 ECOLOGY

5.1 No building, trees or hedges are being removed as part of the proposal therefore there are no ecology concerns that require consideration.

## 6.0 SOCIAL

- 6.1 The proposed development will have a positive impact upon the continued management of the land as it will allow the Applicant to fully utilise their agricultural operation. It will also mean that they will be able to tend to their flock's needs better.
- 6.2 The building will allow the applicant to house their livestock, Machinery and feedstuffs, which means that management of the land will be far more simplified.
- 6.3 EA flood maps are shown below:



## 7.0 ECONOMIC

- 7.1 The proposed development will have a positive impact upon the local economy, the applicant hopes that with the addition of the new building, they can grow the agricultural business and produce more livestock which can be sold on at local markets.
- 7.2 The applicant also wishes to utilise rural grants available, all which are aimed to drive a 'Prosperous Rural Economy'.

## 8.0 LANDSCAPING

- 8.1 The site has been used for agricultural uses for generations and will continue to be used for the same use. There is no landscaping proposed for the building as it has been designed with a very low eaves height to mitigate the impact, the topography of the land along with the existing trees and landscaping will mean that the building will not be visible from local receptors.

## 9.0 APPEARANCE

- 9.1 The proposed development will take on a traditional appearance, the building will be clad in green box profile sheeting which will blend in with the surrounding, the building will have a door for access at the front for access as well as a personnel door.

## 10.0 SECTION B

### 10.1 VEHICULAR ACCESS

Vehicular access will be via the existing access from Lower Lench Road, which has been used for generations to access the farm. The proposed development is a private development solely for the Applicant's use. The vehicular movements will be limited to that of the Applicant only, in line with current vehicular movements in order to farm the land.

### 10.2 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

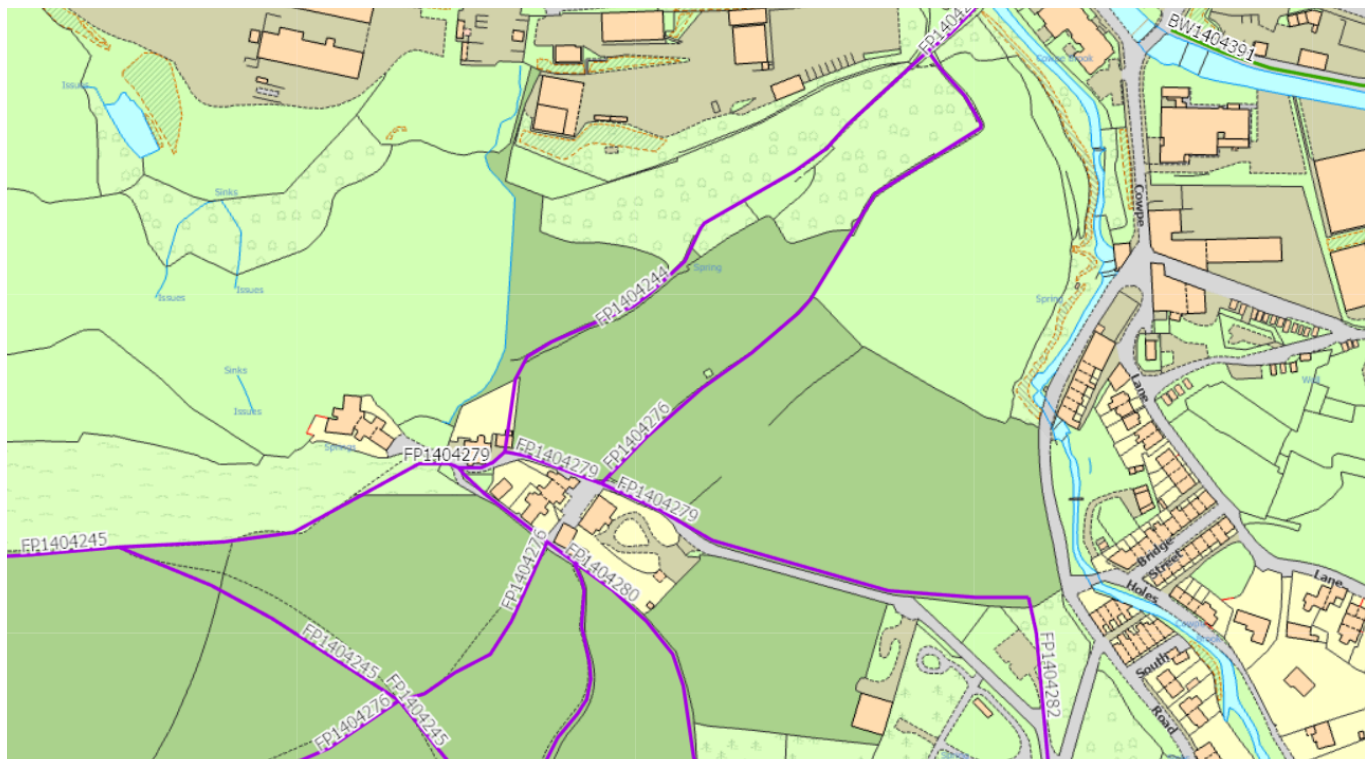
Pedestrian access will be as per 10.1 above. No public rights of way pass through the site and therefore will be unaffected by the development. Disabled access is not applicable to this development.

### 10.3 Public rights of way

A public right of way passes to the West of the site FP1404244 and FP1404276 close to the proposed building, however the new building will not obstruct or alter the path.

The path is shown purple on the site plan and location plan and will be unaffected by the proposal. A plan ascertained from Lancashire County Council website is shown below:

The building and track will leave a 3m track down the side to allow safe use of the footpath by ramblers.



## 11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 It has been demonstrated within this supporting statement that a need exists for a new agricultural building to fulfil the applicants agricultural operation need Lower Lench Farm.
- 11.2 The agricultural building has been designed so that it is sympathetic and respectful of its surroundings the building has already been approved in a different location so the need has been accepted by the council.
- 11.3 The Application satisfies the policy and guidance relevant to determining the application, therefore we respectfully request the LPA approves the application.
- 11.4 Signed:



19.03.2024

**Produced & signed by: Robert Mackenzie BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV**

**Checked and overseen by Sophie Marshall BSc (Hons) PGDipSurv MRICS MRTPI FAAV**

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NB: This report has been prepared on behalf of the applicants all the details on the farming system have been supplied by the Applicant and not the Agent.