

Erection of 5 holiday lodges

Land at High Laithe Farm
Skipton

Planning Statement

February 2024



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by LJG Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of Mr M Speres and Ms R Abbey in support of a planning application for the erection of 5 holiday lodges, with associated infrastructure on land at High Laith Farm, off Keighley Road in Skipton.
- 1.2 This Statement describes the application site, the proposed development and assesses its merits against the relevant up-to-date policies of the development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and all other relevant material considerations.
- 1.3 It demonstrates that the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant technical and general development management policies of the Craven Local Plan ('the Local Plan') and also accords with Government policy and guidance as detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').
- 1.4 Consequently, having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, there is a compelling case for planning permission to be granted without delay, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at Paragraph 11(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2 Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises an area of agricultural land which extends to circa 0.18 hectares in size and is currently laid to grass, bound by a combination of fencing and hedgerows.
- 2.2 The land is located 50m from the nearest point of the settlement of Skipton and within the open countryside. To the north, south and east are open fields, interspersed with built form by way of rural dwellings, farmsteads and other uses found in rural locations. To the west is the canal, beyond which is a range of services and facilities at the southern end of the town.



Figure 1 – site location

- 2.3 Access will be taken via an existing track from Keighley Road (the A6131) which currently serves a handful of properties and is within the control of the Applicant. Accounting for its location the site benefits from high levels of accessibility, which will be expanded upon later in this Statement. In brief, however, the site will allow future visitors to travel along the canal bank on foot or bike into the centre of Skipton; utilise boat hire services to make similar journeys; walk to convenience and food outlets across Keighley Road (to the west) and access public transport opportunities along the main road.
- 2.4 With regard to constraints, the site lies in Flood Zone 1 (see Figure 2 below) and is therefore at low risk of flooding. There are no known protected trees on site and no listed buildings or conservation areas which would be affected by the proposals.

- 2.5 There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the vicinity, as shown in Figure 3. The relevance of these monuments and the relationship with the proposed development will be outlined in greater detail later in this Statement.
- 2.6 There are no public footpaths within the application site which would need to be altered or diverted to facilitate the proposals, though the proposed access forms part of a PROW, before heading in a north easterly direction as shown in Figure 4 below.
- 2.7 In terms of agricultural land quality, the site falls within a Grade 4 area (poor quality) and as such the change of use of this land to a more productive rural uses raises no adverse issues.
- 2.8 No other constraints have been identified which would prevent the scheme from being delivered as set out.



Figure 2 – Flood Zone maps showing the site wholly within FZ1



Figure 3 – Scheduled Ancient Monuments (denoted by red circles)

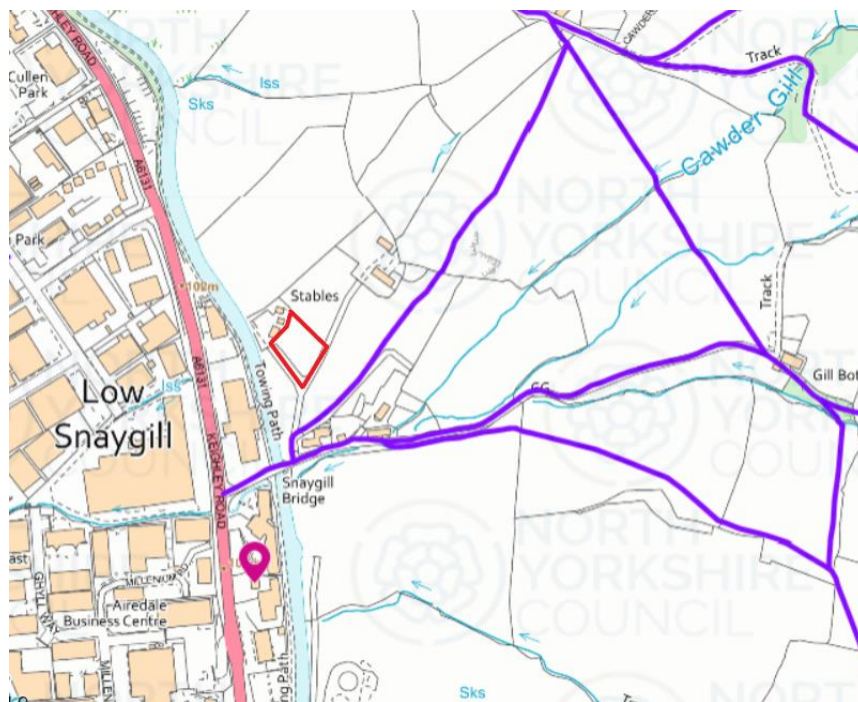


Figure 4 – public rights of way

3 Proposed development

- 3.1 The proposals seek to erect 5 holiday lodges on the site, with access via the existing track leading from Keighley Road.
- 3.2 The proposed lodges adopt a simple vernacular and would have a vertical timber clad exterior finished with a dark staining to provide a muted appearance and to reflect the appearance of agricultural structures found in the rural landscape. The buildings will have a modest profile, height and massing, providing commensurate areas of outdoor amenity space and parking for each unit.
- 3.3 The lodges would be sited on the lower slopes of the wider field, adjacent to the proposed access point, with new soft landscaping provided to the site boundary to soften views of the development from public vantage points.
- 3.4 In order to offer choice and variety to future visitors, two types of lodge are proposed, with a smaller and larger option as shown in the site layout excerpt below. Each will provide a good standard of amenity for occupants and will be afforded modest curtilages commensurate with their overall size.

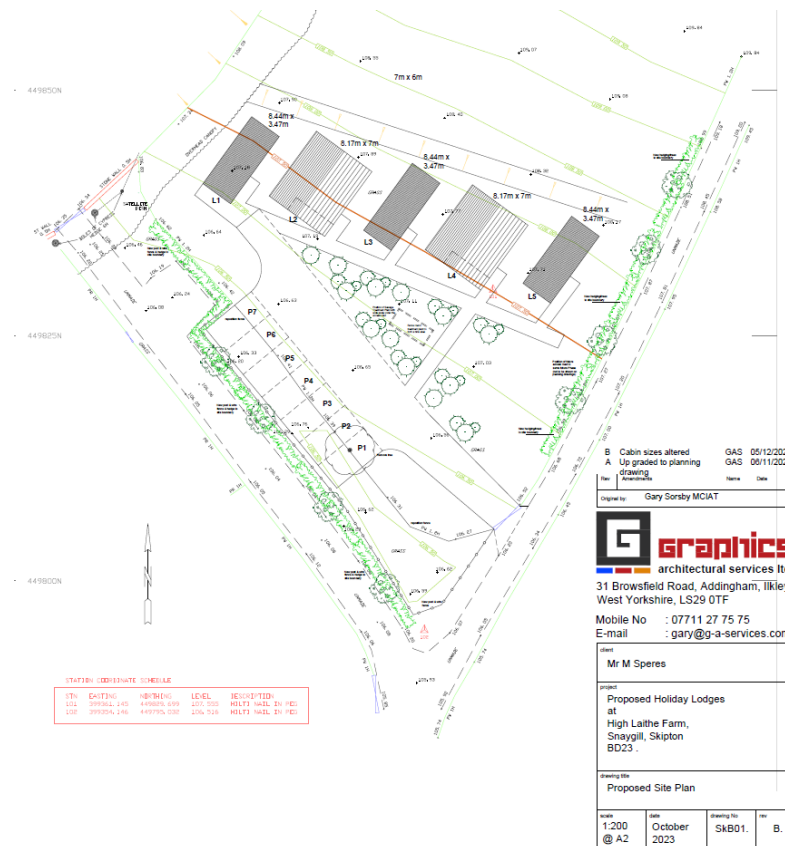


Figure 5 – proposed site layout

- 3.5 Parking would be provided across the access road from the proposed lodges, along the southern boundary of the site. The remainder of the site would be finished with soft landscaping and wild flower planting to provide an attractive environment for future users.

4 Planning policy

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 refers to the development plan as a whole and requires that application be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 For the purposes of this application, the development plan comprises The Craven Local Plan (2019). An excerpt from the associated Policy Map is included below and shows that the site lies within the open countryside and no other specific designation. It should be noted that as of April 2023, Craven now forms part of the larger, amalgamated North Yorkshire Council (made up of 8 former LPA's). Whilst a new Local Plan will be prepared for the combined Authority in due course, the Plans relevant to the former areas (in this instance the Craven Local Plan) will be utilised until such time as that is adopted and carries weight in decision making.

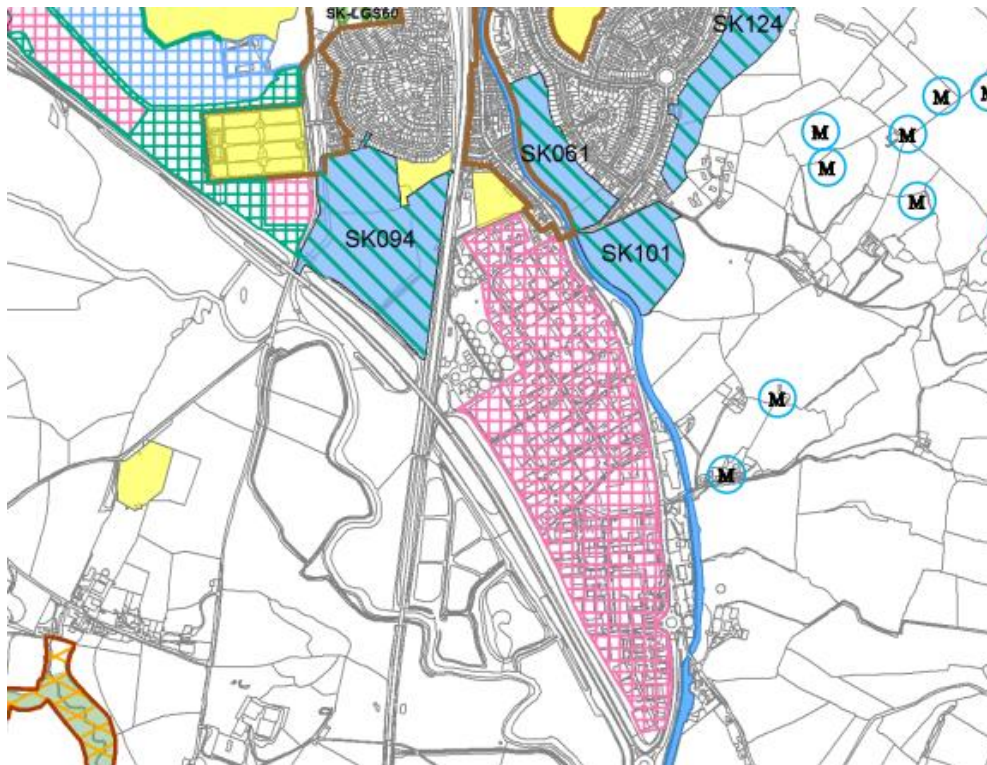


Figure 6 – policies map

The development plan

- 4.3 In light of the designation above and the nature of the development, the Local Plan policies applicable to the determination of this application are:
- **Policy SD1** reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as detailed within the Framework;

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- **Policy SP2** advises of the need to grow and diversify the local economy, promoting new sustainable economic activity within towns, villages and rural areas;
 - **Policy SP5** confirms that as the principal settlement within the Craven area, Skipton will be the focus for future growth in terms of housing, regeneration and employment;
 - **Policy ENV1** states that sustainable growth will ensure that the quality of the countryside and landscape will be conserved for future generations. In areas not subject to national landscape designations, new development should respect, safeguard and where possible enhance the character of the area;
 - **Policy ENV2** requires new development to have due regard to the significance of any heritage assets which might be affected by proposals;
 - **Policy ENV3** promotes good design and supports development which responds positively to its environment, whilst also protecting the amenities of existing and future residents;
 - **Policy ENV4** seeks to protect and improve biodiversity;
 - **Policy ENV7** confirms that the Local Plan will seek to safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land in the area and avoid adverse impacts on air quality by resisting development which generates significant, cumulative traffic congestion;
 - **Policy ENV9** supports development which helps to reduce carbon emissions and promotes the use of renewable energy in achieving sustainable development;
 - **Policy EC1** is supportive of development which benefits the rural economy;
 - **Policy EC3** supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy, including tourism based land uses, which will be supported wherever possible;
 - **Policy EC4** confirms that sustainable tourism will be supported where it helps to enable established destinations to become even better through the provision of new and improved facilities; recognising the range of activities which people will seek to engage in as tourists; ensuring that development provides easy access to public transport, footpath and cycle routes and seeks to provide benefits for associated and related uses in the same location.
 - **Policy INF4** seeks to secure sufficient on site parking for new developments; and
 - **Policy INF7** promotes supports sustainable patterns of development which provide good levels of accessibility for all users.

National policy

- 4.4 In addition to the Local Plan, the Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and details how they should be applied. It requires local planning authorities to adopt a presumption in favor of sustainable development, as detailed within paragraph 11.
- 4.5 With regard to new residential development at this site, the following sections of the Framework are relevant:
- Paragraph 11 confirms that the presumption in favor of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework. For decision making this means approving development where it accords with an up-to-date development plan, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits;
 - Paragraph 38 states that decision makers should approach decisions in a positive and creative way;
 - Paragraph 85 confirms that planning decisions should help to create conditions in which businesses can invest and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity;
 - Paragraph 88 supports the creation of a prosperous rural economy, including sustainable rural tourism;
 - Paragraph 124 d) confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land;
 - Paragraph 128 states that development should make efficient use of land taking into account the need for different types of housing and other development and the availability of suitable land; market conditions and viability; availability and capacity of infrastructure; the scope to promote sustainable travel; the desirability to maintain the character and setting of an area or promote regeneration; and the importance of creating well-designed, attractive, healthy and safe places; and
 - Paragraph 131 advises that development should achieve good design and create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places.

5 Planning appraisal

- 5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Act and the requirements of the Framework, this application must be considered in accordance with the provisions of the adopted Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of development

- 5.2 Policy SD1 of the Local Plan sets out the positive and proactive approach which will be adopted by the Council in considering development proposals which are consistent with the presumption in favor of sustainable development, as required by the Framework.
- 5.3 Policy SP2 outlines the Council's strategic aspirations for economic growth, including sustainable activity within rural areas, which accords with the provisions of Policy EC1 of the Plan. This policy offers support to development which benefits the rural economy and is, in turn, endorsed by Policy EC3.
- 5.4 Policy EC4 relates specifically to rural tourism and advises that the economy in this sector will be expected to grow in a sustainable manner. This includes enabling established destinations (such as Skipton) to become better through the provision of new and improved facilities.
- 5.5 All of these requirements are consistent with the approach set out in the Framework in supporting development of this nature. Furthermore, it is noted that last year North Yorkshire Council announced plans to boost the visitor economy, which currently brings in £1.5 billion of expenditure per year. These plans will include the creation of a management plan for the area and bids to secure funding from central Government to form a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, involving both the public and private sector (<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-north-yorkshire/ambitions-plan-boost-visitor-economy-be-developed>).
- 5.6 It is evident that the tourism industry provides a significant economic benefit to the area by way of visitor expenditure and employment opportunities. Whilst the development proposed in this application is modest, it wholly aligns with the aims of the Local Plan and in particular will help to sustain Skipton as a key visitor destination in accordance with criterion a) of Policy EC4.
- 5.7 The application site is ideally located to offer sustainable tourist accommodation and to exploit everything which Skipton offers, in that it will provide an attractive rural environment for visitors who wish to holiday in the countryside, whilst also offering direct access to the wide range of services and facilities in the town.
- 5.8 Within walking distance future users of the site will be able to access;
- The bar and restaurant at the adjacent Rendezvous Hotel;
 - A range of shops, services and food establishments on the adjacent retail park;
 - The canal and its towpath, which lead into the heart of Skipton and allow both pedestrians and cyclists to make journeys away from vehicular traffic on the highway

- network, and to utilise local boat hire services;
- The local network of public rights of way which provide for recreational walking opportunities in the surrounding countryside; and
- Bus stops on the main road which offer regular services into Skipton, Keighley and beyond

5.9 The site is therefore ideally located to promote modes of transport by means other than private vehicle and lies within a highly accessible area, which includes all of the features which would bring visitors in to Skipton. Furthermore it will support and retain expenditure in the area and benefit associated tourism and convenience related businesses in the town.

5.10 The Applicants will make future occupiers of the lodges aware of the local offer and seek to forge partnerships with local businesses, which will help to sustain the economy in Skipton, which provides for a diverse range of activities ranging from food and drink, to outdoor leisure, entertainment, cultural activities and sport.

5.11 The site currently comprises under-utilised, poor quality agricultural land as part of a wider field. The proposed alternative use of the land can make a significantly greater contribution to the area without causing undue harm to the local environment.

5.12 Accounting for all of the issues outlined above, the principle of development is clearly compliant with the aims of the Local Plan, the Framework and North Yorkshire Council's ambitions for the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.

Landscape impact and setting

5.13 The application site is not subject to national landscape designations, as such Policy ENV1 of the Local Plan advises of the expectation that development in these locations should seek to safeguard and where possible enhance the character of the area.

5.14 The North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project provides a detailed breakdown of landscape types found within the area. Owing to its proximity to Skipton, the application site falls within an 'urban landscape'. These areas are defined by the presence of notable settlements, which have grown rapidly in the past 300 years.

5.15 The application site has a clear, visual link to the built form of the settlement and is also surrounded by clusters of development on the urban fringe. The proposed lodges have purposely been located on the lower slopes of the field and their height and massing limited to avoid undue prominence in the wider landscape.

5.16 The land rises significantly to the east and whilst the lodges would be seen from those elevated vantage points, this would be within the context of the existing clusters of buildings and against the backdrop of significant built form on the opposite side of the canal. Owing to the minimal massing of the proposed development, and by way of the use of soft landscaping within and around the site, it would not undermine or adversely affect the local character of the landscape.

- 5.17 The use of natural materials, such as horizontal timber to the walls of the lodges, which will be stained a muted colour, will help the development to blend into its surroundings and would not appear unduly prominent or incongruous when seen from the available public vantage points. It would simply be seen as a modest cluster of structures, commensurate with the scale and massing of other buildings in the vicinity. The proposed car parking area will be screened by soft landscaping along the southern boundary to avoid any visual prominence in this regard.
- 5.18 This compact form of development is appropriate for its countryside setting and the proposals are therefore compliant with the requirements of Policies ENV1 and ENV3 of the Local Plan.

Residential amenity

- 5.19 The development is located within a semi-rural area, with residential properties spread across the surrounding landscape. The quantum of development is modest and activity at the site will be subject to proportionate management requirements regarding the way in which the lodges and associated outdoor areas are utilised.
- 5.20 The location of the lodges provides no unacceptable opportunities for overlooking of adjacent dwellings and the development would not be overbearing for any nearby residents by way of their scale or form. Accordingly, the proposals raise no undue issues with regard to residential amenity or privacy and are compliant with Policies EC1(a) or ENV3(e).

Highway safety

- 5.21 The lodges will be served by an existing track from Keighley Road, which passes over the canal by way of the existing swing bridge. The majority of the track is within the control of the Applicant, as are the surrounding fields. It is intended to undertake surfacing improvements to the lane and, if required by the North Yorkshire Council Highways, passing places can be provided, though the length of the track is modest and good levels of forward visibility are possible with regard to oncoming traffic.
- 5.22 The swing bridge over the canal acts as a natural traffic calming measure, owing to its width, and the level of trips generated by the proposed development, accounting for the high levels of accessibility by other means, will not be significant. The Framework (para.115) advises that development should not be refused on highway grounds unless there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual, cumulative impacts of the development on the road network would be severe. The development does not meet this threshold and therefore poses no reason to resist the proposals.
- 5.23 Dedicated parking is to be provided within the site and suitable capacity is also provided for vehicles to comfortably enter, turn and leave in forward gear.
- 5.24 The accessibility credentials of the site have already been set out in this Statement and the location of the development is therefore in accordance with the requirements for rural tourism as set out in the Local Plan, helping to reduce reliance on private vehicles..

5.25 In light of these factors, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies SP2, EC3, EC4, INF4 and INF7 of the Local Plan and the relevant, associated sections of the Framework.

Drainage

5.26 The application site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1. It is therefore at low risk in this regard and compliant with Policy ENV6(a) which seeks to locate development away from areas of high risk, unless supported by the necessary sequential and exception tests.

5.27 Policy ENV6(e) of the Plan requires new development to manage surface water and foul drainage. In this instance the proposals include a sewage treatment plant with soakaway provision under the access road, which will deal with waters generated as a result of the scheme.

5.28 Accordingly, the development is not at risk to flooding, nor would it increase risk elsewhere, and internal drainage can be dealt with by way of the measures outlined above. The development is therefore in compliance with the Local Plan in this regard.

Biodiversity

5.29 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by BEK Enviro, to assess the potential impacts of the development with regard to biodiversity, protected species and their habitats.

5.30 Following a site survey and relevant desktop research, the Appraisal confirms that the site is of low conservation and wildlife value, with limited habitats present. Accordingly, no further surveys are required and enhancements are recommended, which can be secured by way of the new soft landscaping to take place around the site, including hedgerows to the boundaries.

5.31 The development is therefore compliant with Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Loss of agricultural land

5.32 The application site comprises Grade 4 agricultural land, meaning it is generally of poor quality. Policy ENV7 of the Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the Framework seek to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.

5.33 In this instance the loss of circa 0.18 hectares of poor quality land raises no conflict with these requirements.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

5.34 There are two scheduled ancient monuments within the vicinity of the site as shown in Figure 3 on page 4 of this Statement. They comprise a carved rock (list entry no. 1014980) 100m away to the south and a cup and ring marked rock (list entry no. 1014981) 150m to the north east.

5.35 Accounting for the aforementioned distances, the nature of the monuments, the scale of the development and the presence of intervening buildings, it is not considered that their setting or significance will be affected in any way. The proposals result in no harm to these assets and there is no conflict with the requirements of the Framework in this regard.

Sustainable design and construction

5.36 Policy ENV3 requires development to take all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy use, water use and carbon emissions and to minimise waste, to ensure future resilience to a changing climate and, where possible to generate power.

5.37 The proposed lodges are pre-manufactured products, rather than bespoke builds, but the buildings will be highly insulated in accordance with the relevant building regulations. Window and doors will be double glazed and the build materials to be used are sustainable and can be recycled if necessary. The lodges have been sited to maximise solar gain and the layout will include measures to harvest rainwater.

5.38 The location of the site is such that it promotes travel by means other than private car, reducing carbon reliance and energy use. Waste storage will be provided on site and with recyclable products will be separated out for collection.

5.39 The development will seek to capitalize on all opportunities to reduce climate change, by virtue of the factors above and through the ongoing management of the site. The development benefits from a range of sustainable travel modes as outlined earlier in this Statement, which reduce energy and carbon use on a daily basis. The proposals therefore comply with the Local Plan in this regard.

6 Summary and conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for the erection of 5 holiday lodges on land at High Laithe Farm in Skipton.
- 6.2 It has been demonstrated that the principle of development is acceptable, within a highly accessible and sustainable location, and the proposals raise no undue landscape concerns due to the modest scale of the scheme. The development is therefore compliant with the aims of the Craven Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, with no material considerations having been identified which would prevent the development from coming forward as set out.
- 6.4 Accordingly the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and permission should be granted, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework.