



**Bourne Rural**  
PLANNING CONSULTANCY LIMITED

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**Proposals for the:**  
**Siting of a mobile home to provide rural worker's accommodation**  
**for a temporary period of three years**

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**at**



**Ox Drove Farm**  
**Wallops Wood Lane**  
**Wield**  
**Hampshire**  
**SO24 9RX**

**Planning, Design, Access and Rural Justification Statement**

Bourne Rural Planning Consultancy Limited

March 2024



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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Bourne Rural Planning Consultancy Limited ('BRPC') is instructed by Ms Vicky Spicer ('the Applicant') to act as agents in relation to proposals for the provision of a mobile home to provide accommodation for a rural worker for a temporary period of three years at Ox Drove Farm, Wield.
- 1.2 This Statement is submitted to East Hampshire District Council ('EHDC') in support of the planning application and provides an assessment of planning matters as well as an independent assessment of need for a worker to live on site to support the developing agricultural and equestrian activities in operation.
- 1.3 BRPC is an independent consultancy specialising in agriculture and rural land use planning issues. BRPC is regularly engaged by farmers, growers and local planning authorities to appraise a wide range of enterprises in the context of planning applications for new agricultural, horticultural, equestrian and other occupational dwellings and buildings.
- 1.4 Ms Scrivener, the author, regularly works as an expert witness in relation to rural planning matters, both for landowners and for various local authorities across England. She has assessed more than 600 rural sites and has attended more than 60 planning appeals in relation to both equestrian and agricultural development proposals.
- 1.5 The author is familiar with the site and has had the opportunity to view the land and buildings, secure a firm understanding of the agricultural and equestrian activities in operation and discuss the needs of the developing enterprise with the Applicant.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Ox Drove Farm is situated approximately 2km north-west of Medstead village and is accessed to the east of Wield Road. The holding lies outside the South Downs National Park and any Settlement Policy Boundary.
- 2.2 Ox Drove Farm extends to 7.65ha (18.9 acres) of permanent pasture and was purchased by the Applicant in 2016 as a bare land site.
- 2.3 Since purchasing the land holding, the Applicant has established a premium Boer goat herd on the farm (Wield Boer Goats, pedigree herd) producing high quality stock with the majority of kids produced being sold on as breeding does and bucks to further improve the British herd. More recently, the Applicant has diversified and established an equestrian breeding and training facility on the holding.
- 2.4 The establishment of these agricultural and equestrian activities have been fully supported by EHDC through the grant of various planning permissions, as set out below.

### Planning History

- 2.5 The development of the enterprise to date has been supported through the grant of various planning permissions, comprising (building references as shown at Figure 1 further below):

<b>Application Ref.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Decision and Date</b>
57603 (Building 1)	Prior notification – agricultural barn for storage of crops, machinery, fertiliser, seed and feed	Prior Approval Not Required 1 December 2017
57603/001 (Building 2)	Prior notification of agricultural development – construction of livestock barn, new hardstanding and new entrance	Prior Approval Not Required 22 October 2018
57603/002 (Building 2)	Notification for prior approval for installation of solar photovoltaic equipment on the roof of an agricultural barn	Prior Approval Not Required 12 September 2019
57603/003 (Building 3)	Prior Notification application for the erection of a hay barn	Prior Approval Not Required 8 October 2020

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57603/004 (Building 4)	Proposal for the erection of a stable barn, creation of a lunge pen and the change of use of land to a mixed use of agricultural and equestrian	Permission 3 August 2022
57603/005	Removal of condition 3 (restriction on number of horses on site) & condition 4 (Notwithstanding condition) on 57603/004	Permission 6 March 2023

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2.6 Conditions 3 and 4 of permission 57603/004 were not consistent with the need for the development as set out in the supporting documents. It was therefore necessary to submit a further application to remove the conditions (reference 57603/005) to enable the facilities to be used as required. This matter is now regularised.

#### Current Position

2.7 In summary, the holding now benefits from:

three agricultural buildings which provide for:

Building 1 – feed and machinery storage (220m<sup>2</sup>);

Building 2 – livestock housing and kidding barn (445m<sup>2</sup>);

Building 3 – hay storage (125m<sup>2</sup>);

Building 4 – a stable building incorporating 8 stables, a feed store and treatment bay; and

Building 5 – an all-weather surfaced lunge pen (20m diameter).

2.8 Building 1 is located approximately 175m from the main yard development on the northern boundary of the holding and benefits from an adjacent, separate access (south of Ashley Road).

2.9 Buildings 2, 3 and 4 (the livestock barn, hay barn and the stable building) are located centrally on the western boundary of the holding, to the east of Wield Road. These buildings benefit from their own access to the east of Wield Road and it is this access that would serve the development proposed here.

2.10 The existing buildings on the holding are detailed on the location plan submitted in support of this application, extract below at Figure 1:

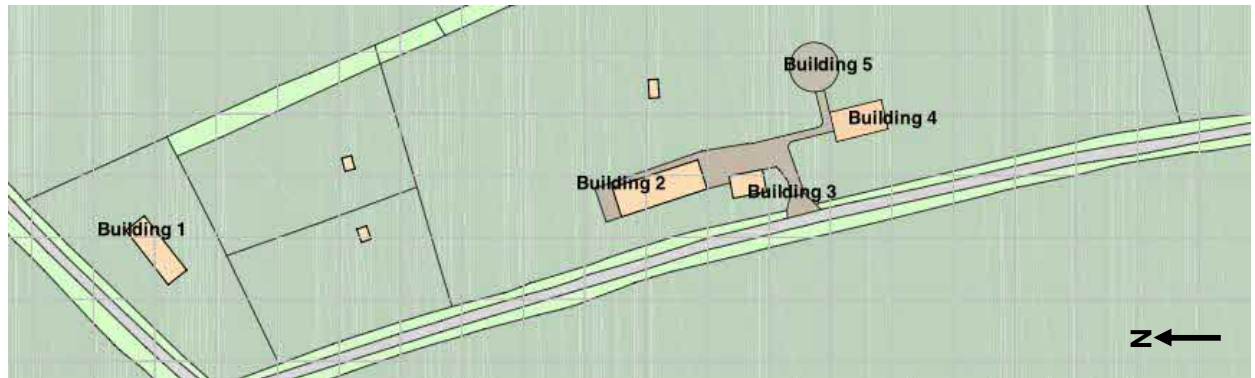


Figure 1: Annotated extract of location plan showing buildings across the site

2.11 The photograph below at Figure 2 shows the main buildings at Ox Drove Farm in the background, with a group of young Boer goats in the foreground.

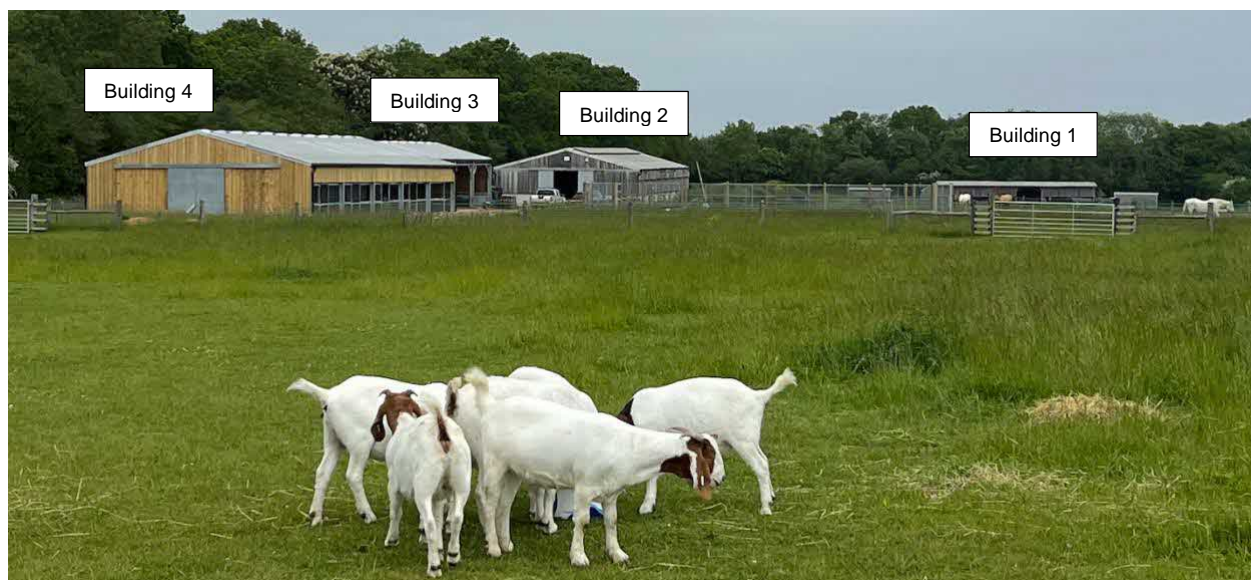


Figure 2: Photograph of Boer goats on the site

2.12 The proposed temporary dwelling would be sited to the north of the lunge pen (Building 5), opposite the main access to the holding and in close proximity to the main yard area.

#### *Wield Boer Goats*

2.13 The pedigree goat herd was established on the holding in 2018. It became apparent early on that the quality of the goats purchased was not sufficiently high to guarantee quality progeny and provide high financial returns. The initial goats were sold on and replacement goats purchased with a focus on the quality of the pedigrees and bloodlines.

2.14 The herd has not significantly increased in numbers over recent years. Instead, the Applicant has used this time to increase her expertise in the breeding and sale of Boer

goats. She now has a strong focus on producing the best quality of bloodline and confirmation for breeding purposes. In recent years, she has established herself as a producer of quality animals, particularly stud bucks. Over the last few years, approximately 25-30 does have kidded each year.

2.15 At the time of writing, the following Boer goats are on the holding:

30 does, either with kids at foot or in-kid;

37 females, including both youngstock not yet ready to breed and older does which have not been put in kid due to a lack of on-site care;

1 British Boer buck, 1 American Boer buck (50% American bloodline) and 1 American Boer (75% American bloodline); and

16 young goats (less than 1 year of age), which will soon be sold.

2.16 All kidding has taken place in Building 2 (permitted under planning ref. 57603/001) and young kids remain housed in the barn throughout the year to ensure the Applicant has full control over their feeding and environment.

2.17 In winter 2023, the Applicant made the decision to purchase a specialist (50%) American Boer buck to introduce fresh bloodlines to the herd and to promote increased health and growth within the herd. A further Boer buck with a 75% American bloodline was purchased last month to further improve herd quality.

2.18 American Boer goats are a recent introduction to the UK and the Applicant's herd is only one of a limited number of herds in England which has this bloodline. The main benefit of the American Boer goats over and above the English Boer is the rate of growth and carcass quality, which is approximately 25% larger than the English Boer goat carcass.

2.19 Ms Spicer has provided a detailed summary of the goat herd pedigree and bloodlines at **Appendix 1**, with further information available on the Wield Boer Goat Facebook page<sup>1</sup>. Through her diligent approach, focus on premier breeding and a desire to continually improve the herd, Ms Spicer is now ideally placed to further expand this existing herd to optimise the real potential which is evident in the strong demand for her goat genetics.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/p/Wield-Boer-Goats-100069049374837/>



*Existing Equestrian Activity*

- 2.20 Ms Spicer has kept horses for many years and currently owns 12 horses including two stallions (riding horses also standing at stud), four mares (riding horses also used for breeding), five youngstock and a Shetland pony (companion horse).
- 2.21 Until recently, the Applicant has been able to function and care for the horses from two separate sites within Medstead. However, these sites are no longer suitable and, on this basis, planning permission was granted in 2022 for the new equestrian facilities at Ox Drove Farm. All owned mares and youngsters have been kept at Ox Drove Farm since the stable building was completed in summer 2023. The two stallions remain at the Applicant's home address.
- 2.22 The owned mares and stallions are of excellent bloodlines and the stallions are of exceptional quality (one is a graded stallion by Olympic dressage stallion, Fuego). Ms Spicer has prepared a document (at **Appendix 2**) providing more detailed information on the breeding of the horses which form the core of the breeding and training enterprise.

*Breeding*

- 2.23 Historically, the stallions were taken to an artificial insemination centre (approximately 1.5-hour drive from the holding) where sperm is collected and then sold on to third parties.
- 2.24 All owned mares are covered in hand (traditional serving) by the owned stallions and mares have foaled every two years or so, with a number of youngstock retained and trained by Ms Spicer and the remainder sold on as weaned foals/yearlings.
- 2.25 Because of the quality of the stock, Ms Spicer had hoped to keep all young males entire (known as colts) but due to some extremely significant issues with the entire horses resulting in the loss of one of the young colts, this has not been possible. Going forward, if planning permission is granted for the temporary worker's dwelling, all young males will be kept as colts to ensure optimum opportunity and sale value.
- 2.26 In the past, a stallion service has also been offered to mares belonging to others and, due to the quality of the stallions, there was good demand for this service (although numbers have been kept low due to the previous lack of facilities). This element of the activity was halted due to COVID-19 restrictions and the decision was made not to restart this visiting mare service until the new facilities were available at Ox Drove Farm. The visiting mare activity is planned to commence again in 2024 if this planning application is successful and Ms Spicer is living on site and able to properly care for the horses in her care.

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### Experience, Expertise and Letters of Support

2.27 The Applicant has produced a summary of her experience and expertise, produced at **Appendix 3**.

2.28 From the extensive information provided at Appendices 1 and 2 and from the information set out at Appendix 3, it is evident that the Applicant is ideally placed to develop the equestrian and goat breeding activity. She has extensive professional experience working with horses and has worked with a number of prestigious equestrian professionals. She clearly has great knowledge and understanding of horse breeding and Boer goat breeding and sale.

2.29 In addition to her own summary of experience, a number of letters of support have been provided to the author in her preparation of this statement (also produced at Appendix 3). A summary of the comments are as follows:

Charlotte Riggs (Himmon Boer Goats) confirms that:

*the Applicant is dedicated and enthusiastic and has an unwavering determination to improve the Boer goat breed. She confirms that Ms Spicer has built a herd of quality animals that are free from genetic faults and has also supported many other breeders.*

*Ms Spicer is an asset to the Boer goat world and her knowledge of lineages and genetics in the national herd firmly establishes her as an influential breeder*

Mel McPherson BVM&S CertAVP MRCVS – the vet responsible for the goats from 2021 to 2023. She confirms that:

*she visited the farm regularly with vet students from the Royal Veterinary College as part of their final year farm rotation. She used their premises to show the students an excellent example of a well kept goat herd. Ms Spicer and her partner are very knowledgeable, and always very willing to engage with vets... the goats are in great condition.*

Jane Domhill (Chair of the British Horse Society Qualifications, Non-Executive Director at the British Equestrian Federation and Vice-Chair of The Showing Council) has known Ms Spicer since 2011 and confirms that:

*Ms Spicer has a dedication for the care and wellbeing of her own and her client's horses which is beyond the standard practice normally expected. Her knowledge, skill and experience when handling stallions and mares is excellent and requires very special abilities.*

Debbie Marshall (board member of the British Boer and Meat Goat Association and previous Trustee with the British Boer Goat Society) and confirms that:

*Ms Spicer is committed to providing the best possible facilities in order to maintain a high level of welfare for her animals. She has developed and improved her stock each year as she strives to eradicate faults and focus on the good traits required to produce top quality goats and horses. Ms Spicer's knowledge of genetics and requirements for breeding a better animal have come from years of breeding horses.*

2.30 Based on the information provided by the Applicant herself and independent comments provided by others, it is evident that Ms Spicer has the experience, expertise, motivation and focus needed to develop the enterprise proposed within this application.

### **3.0 Proposal**

- 3.1 This application seeks permission for the provision of a temporary dwelling (mobile home) to provide for worker's accommodation for a period of three years and would be occupied by Ms Spicer and her partner.
- 3.2 The mobile home would be sited to the north of the lunge pen, approximately 40m to the east of the main access to the farm holding. The temporary dwelling would be sited in close proximity to the existing agricultural and equestrian buildings. It is also ideally located to enable the occupants to have good sight of the buildings and much of the grassland, which will aid in the general care of the livestock and horses on the holding.
- 3.3 The temporary dwelling would be a mobile home structure measuring 6m x 18m and would be clad in wood. Full details of the temporary structure are detailed in dwg. 2490/04, submitted in support of this application.

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## 4.0 Relevant Planning Policy

4.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies set out in the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The documents that comprise the development plan for EHDC are the:

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014) ('the JCS'); and  
East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006) ('the Local Plan').

4.3 The Draft Local Plan (2017-2036) is currently at Regulation 18 stage of its preparation and therefore carries no weight in the determination of this application. The plan is not expected to be adopted until Autumn 2025.

4.4 There is no relevant neighbourhood plan for the area.

4.5 Government advice is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework ('the NPPF'), with detailed guidance provided in the Planning Practice Guidance ('the PPG').

### Joint Core Strategy (2014)

4.6 The JCS was adopted in May 2014 and provides the policy framework for new development in the district.

4.7 Policy CP1 outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It states that, when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.

4.8 Policy CP6 deals with development for the rural economy and enterprise and identifies that development will be permitted to support enterprises that help maintain the viability of farm businesses and includes equine enterprises. Whilst there is no specific reference within the policy to rural worker's accommodation, supporting paragraph 5.28 states, *inter alia*, that:

*The rural economy and enterprise strategy is to retain and enhance both established and new businesses and rural enterprises subject to their being consistent in scale and environmental impact with their location. As a part of this strategy priority will also be given to:...*

*enabling residential development essential to maintain a rural workforce, including agricultural workers' dwellings and rural affordable housing where there is an established local need (see Chapter 5 Housing).*

4.9 It is outlined in supporting paragraph 5.32 that one of the key issues facing the farming community is “*the lack of affordable rural housing and difficulties for young people/farm workers in finding suitable accommodation*”.

4.10 Policy CP19 deals with development in the countryside and states:

*The approach to sustainable development in the countryside, defined as the area outside settlement policy boundaries, is to operate a policy of general restraint in order to protect the countryside for its own sake. The only development allowed in the countryside will be that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location, such as that necessary for farming, forestry, or other rural enterprises (see Policy CP6).*

4.11 Supporting paragraph 7.6 goes on to state:

*It is therefore recognised that some development can take place which is beneficial to the countryside and the people that live and work there. The emphasis in the Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy is therefore to **allow development in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is both necessary and justified**. Such an approach will preclude development for which a rural location is not essential.*  
[emphasis added]

4.12 Other policies of relevance in the JCS include:

Policy CP20 – Landscape

Policy CP25 – Flood Risk

Policy CP29 – Design

Policy CP31 – Transport

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review (2006)

4.13 There are a number of policies within the Local Plan which remain extant. This includes Policy H14 which deals with housing outside settlement, and states:

*Outside settlement policy boundaries, residential development will only be permitted where it is essential to house a full-time worker in agriculture, forestry or other enterprise who must live on the site rather than in a nearby settlement. The Council will need to be satisfied that:*

- a. there are no opportunities for providing the accommodation by converting and/or extending an existing building or by the subdivision and/or extension of an existing dwelling;*

- b. the availability of suitable tied dwellings in the area has been investigated;*
- c. new dwellings, where possible, should be located within or adjoining an existing group of buildings that already have a residential content and enjoying basic services;*
- d. where it is not possible to locate the new dwelling within or adjoining an existing group of buildings, it must be demonstrated that its siting will maximise the functional benefit to the enterprise, whilst minimising landscape impact;*
- e. the dwelling is commensurate in size to the established functional requirement and financial viability of the enterprise;*
- f. the siting, design and construction of the dwelling incorporate measures to optimise energy efficiency; and*
- g. the owner/occupier of the proposed dwelling has not been instrumental in disposing of any residential property in the preceding 5 years that would have satisfied the need now identified.*

4.14 In the supporting paragraphs it is stated, *inter alia*, that:

the Council recognises that there will be occasions when the staffing needs of farms and other enterprises in the countryside change and additional staff accommodation is required;

temporary accommodation may be permitted until such time as a functional need and financial viability can be proven; and

a functional need to live on site could be justified where the care of animals requires immediate attention at short notice.

4.15 Whilst Policy H14 was produced in accordance with Annex A to Planning Policy Statement 7 ('PPS7') which is now deleted, the tests as detailed remain broadly consistent with current national policy and guidance as provided in the PPG.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

4.16 The revised NPPF (last updated December 2023) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

4.17 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF identifies that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless, of relevance here:

*a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;...*

4.18 Section 6 of the NPPF sets out the importance of building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 88 sets out details on how to support a prosperous rural economy and states that planning policies 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, beautiful new buildings;*

*b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;...*

4.19 Whilst paragraph 89 goes on to state:

*Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*

#### Planning Practice Guidance

4.20 Matters relevant for consideration in relation to planning applications for new homes in the countryside under paragraph 84(a) (previously paragraph 79(a)) of the NPPF are set out in the PPG, paragraph 010 (ref. 67-010-20190722). These considerations could include (of relevance here):

*evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products);*

*the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future;*



*whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context; and*

*in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period.*

4.21 The above policy background forms the basis for this assessment.

## 5.0 Appraisal

### Principle of Development

- 5.1 Policy CP19 of the JCS sets out that permission will only be granted for development within the countryside provided it meets several criteria, one of which is that there is a proven need for a countryside location. The rationale behind the justification for the temporary worker's dwelling is that it must be within close proximity to the livestock and horses which generate the essential need for a worker to be on site and readily available throughout the day and night.
- 5.2 The core requirements concerning the development of the proposed temporary worker's dwelling are those which relate to the essential need for the worker to live on site as set out in the NPPF and the functional and financial tests as set out in Policy H14 of the Local Plan, in as much as they are relevant to the provision of a temporary dwelling and not a permanent dwelling.
- 5.3 Detailed information has been provided in this Statement in relation to the existing and proposed activities. It has been demonstrated that the developed/proposed activities would generate a functional need for a worker to live on site and the combined equestrian and agricultural activity is capable of achieving financial viability and sustainability over the next three years.
- 5.4 In consideration of Policy H14, the main findings are:
- the welfare requirements of the livestock and equines generate an essential need for a worker to be on site at most times;
  - the proposed developed enterprise is capable of achieving financial viability and sustainability over the next three years;
  - there are sufficient facilities at Ox Drove Farm to support the expansion of the agricultural and equestrian activities as proposed;
  - there are no buildings on site which are not fully utilised and therefore no ability to convert existing buildings or to extend an existing dwelling;
  - there are no suitable tied dwellings in the area; and
  - no other property has been owned, or sold, by the Applicant which would have satisfied the need now identified.

5.5 The proposals have been assessed in detail and, based on the extensive experience of the author, it is considered that the functional and financial tests are met and the need for the temporary rural worker's dwelling is fully justified.

5.6 On this basis, there is in-principle support for the proposals within this application.

Basis of the Agricultural and Equestrian Assessment

5.7 The Local Plan clearly pre-dates the NPPF and the requirements of Policy H14 were based on the requirements of, now deleted, Annex A to PPS7.

5.8 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF identifies that development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided except in specific circumstances, which include when (of relevance here):

*there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.*

5.9 In consideration of the assessment required to support the need for a permanent worker's dwelling, no reference is made to any requirement to carry out a financial test. However, this is a requirement of Policy H14 of the Local Plan. This indicates the potential for conflict between national and local planning policies.

5.10 It is noted that, whilst not specifically referred to in the NPPF, a viability requirement is referred to in the PPG which states that, when considering the need for new (permanent) dwellings as set out under paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF, it is reasonable to consider "*the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future*".

5.11 Policy H14 identifies that temporary accommodation may be permitted to support the development of a new or expanding rural enterprise, as is the case at Ox Drove Farm.

5.12 There is no express reference in national policy to the provision of a temporary worker's dwelling. There is, though, reference to same in the PPG which sets out considerations which may be relevant when considering planning applications for new homes in the countryside under paragraph 84(a) of the NPPF, stating:

*in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period...*

5.13 Although there is no specific requirement in either local or national policy to provide financial projections to support this application for a temporary dwelling, this information has been produced to give assurance to the decision-maker as to the robustness of the proposals.

5.14 It is evident that this proposal for a temporary worker's dwelling for a period of three years is an appropriate route to allow the Applicant to develop the proposed rural enterprise whilst benefitting from the opportunity of living on site to ensure the welfare requirements of the horses and goats can be met.

5.15 In summary, the provision of a temporary dwelling supports the development of a new and/or expanding enterprise to enable it to be demonstrated over a number of years (three in this instance) that the enterprise is capable of developing to such a level as to generate the essential need for a worker to live on site and that it is capable of operating in the long term as a viable and sustainable business.

5.16 The above policy framework forms the basis of the essential need assessment undertaken here.

#### Essential Need

5.17 A functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times.

5.18 The basis for the functional test was set out in Annex A and is repeated in Policy H14 which states that it is necessary to provide "*evidence of the necessity for a rural worker to live at, or in close proximity to, their place of work to ensure the effective operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar land-based rural enterprise (for instance, where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products)*".

5.19 Such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night in case animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products.

5.20 Any livestock enterprise gives rise to supervisory demands arising from:

the general welfare of the animals involved;

the management of breeding stock; and

the management of housed or confined stock.

5.21 Agricultural legislation requires that all farm animals are managed in a manner which accords them:

freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition;

appropriate comfort and shelter;

the prevention, or rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury, disease or infestation;

freedom from fear; and

freedom to display most normal patterns of behaviour,

and it is accepted that, without good stockmanship, animal welfare can never be adequately protected.

5.22 The welfare of animals is protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 under which it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act also contains a 'duty of care' to animals which means that anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to ensure that the animal's needs are met.

5.23 These general requirements are supplemented by the more detailed requirements set out in the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, as amended. Schedule 1 of these requirements is applicable to all animals and contains specific requirements concerning the provision of, for example, water, shelter, dry lying areas and food.

5.24 Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 also requires that animals must be cared for by a sufficient number of staff who possess the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence. Paragraph 2 indicates that animals must be inspected at regular intervals sufficient to avoid any suffering, and paragraph 5 specifies that any animals which appear to be ill or injured must be cared for appropriately and without delay.

#### *Boer Goat Activity*

5.25 Ox Drove Farm has been the base for the Wield Boer goat herd since its inception in 2018. Doe numbers have gradually increased to current levels of c.30 breeding does. The kidding period usually extends over a period of five months. For instance, in 2023, the first kiddings were in January with the remainder of does kidding throughout April, May, June and July.

5.26 The goat enterprise development allows for an increase over the next three years to a maximum of 50 does and 2 bucks. With the ready availability of Ms Spicer living on site, the herd management will be changed to allow for the kidding of all does three times every two years. The goat herd currently kids at approximately 170% which, with the increased numbers and additional kidding period, will result in approximately 255 kids being produced over a two-year period – or c.128 kids per year. Each year, approximately 75 does will kid leading to approximately 7-8 kiddings/month over the ten-month period between March and December.

- 5.27 The Applicant has resisted increasing the goat herd above current levels as she considers she is unable to properly meet the welfare requirements of a larger herd. However, she has used this time to increase her knowledge base, establish the herd and has created a ready market for the young breeding stock produced. The introduction of the new American bloodlines will have yet further positive impact on the demand for the breeding goats produced.
- 5.28 The focus on high-quality genetics means that the goats are of high value and any loss to the business is significant. Indeed, the 2023 kidding has been extremely difficult and there have been substantial losses during kidding. The farm vets have been fully involved throughout but have been unable to properly establish the cause of these difficulties, which have resulted in a high mortality rate. The increased supervisory requirements during this year have generated significant issues for the Applicant with the need to attend site even more frequently than usual. Whilst she has done her utmost to ensure that the welfare requirements of the stock have been met, she considers that her lack of presence on site has, to some extent, undermined her ability to properly and fully meet the welfare requirements of the goats. This situation will be further exacerbated with any increase in goat numbers. Without the ability to live on site, Ms Spicer is unable to develop this agricultural enterprise further.
- 5.29 There are increased supervisory requirements at and around breeding and during periods that the goats are housed. The high quality and value of the stock generates an additional requirement for a worker to live on site.

#### *Equestrian Activity*

- 5.30 At Year 3 there will be four mares with four foals at foot, two stallions standing at stud, two yearlings and one youngster in training and in preparation for sale. In addition, there will be one or two visiting mares on site at any one time from March through to August and, outside of breeding season, two of the stables will be used for box-rest of horses.
- 5.31 Horses should be inspected frequently for signs of illness, distress or injury and equestrian establishments have a duty of care to ensure the rapid diagnosis and treatment of injury, disease or infestation.
- 5.32 Unforeseen incidents can occur at any time of day or night and cover a wide range of situations, from dealing with emergencies such as a horse cast in its box, a difficult foaling or a horse with colic, to damage to the stables and associated buildings from the horses, severe weather conditions or fire.

5.33 The scale and nature of the equestrian enterprise in operation and proposed at Ox Drove Farm gives rise to the following requirements:

the close supervision, management and daily requirements of horses either boxed in stables or grazing the paddocks;

the nutrient requirements for breeding horses to ensure mares are kept in prime condition to meet the demands of pregnancy and lactation;

the close supervision of mares, both owned and visiting, during the breeding season and at foaling;

the preparation of brood mares, both owned and visiting, for covering;

high levels of supervision in relation to the horses on box-rest between August through to March;

the provision of security for valuable horses, breeding stock and youngsters from theft or malicious attack; and

dealing with unforeseen emergencies.

5.34 There are increased functional requirements at mating time as it is essential that the mare is caught at the right time in order to provide the most appropriate time for conception. Increased functional requirements persist during the 11-month pregnancy with even greater attention required during the foaling period (a period of 5-6 months, from March through to August). The level of supervision increases as the mares get closer to foaling in order to ensure a stress-free foaling environment for the mares and newly-born foals, and to ensure prompt intervention during foaling when required.

5.35 At and around birth, the mare needs to be closely monitored. It is vital that the foal is up and feeding as soon as possible. Staff must be present to ensure the foal has a good feed close to birth to ensure sufficient colostrum is consumed to build up the foal's immunity to infection. Foals may need assistance to find the mare's teat or the mare may need to be milked and the foal bottle-fed.

5.36 Weaning can be a very stressful event for mares and foals, causing them to become highly strung which increases the risk of injury. It is essential that this process is supervised by a knowledgeable and competent person so that any injuries can be assessed and the appropriate action taken.

5.37 The owners of the mares who are staying, and foaling, at Ox Drove Farm expect the yard to benefit from 24-hour supervision, particularly for the mares which are stabled overnight.

The mares need to be closely monitored to ensure they are covered at the optimum time in their cycle and to ensure that they are healthy and in as good a physical condition as possible.

- 5.38 The daily routine on the holding involves checking the horses, rugging-up, feeding, watering, mucking-out, turning-out, returning horses to stables, changing rugs and grooming.
- 5.39 In addition, there are significant additional requirements associated with the two stallions who are standing at stud at Ox Drove Farm. The two stallions owned and kept by the Applicant have always been stabled within close proximity to her mother's dwelling which is within sight and sound of the stallions. This has enabled the Applicant to be satisfied that their welfare requirements are adequately met. However, this facility is no longer available to her going forward. In any event, she is keen to establish and develop the equestrian breeding enterprise on her owned land at Ox Drove Farm which benefits from sufficient land and facilities to support an enterprise of the scale and nature proposed.
- 5.40 There are also increased supervisory requirements in relation to the young horses. As the stallions are of such a high quality, the male foals will remain entire and be reared as colts. This will enable the Applicant to optimise value of the young horses should it transpire that they have excellent confirmation and ability. These young colts are more prone to issues in the fields as they are more highly strung and require increased management and input by staff.
- 5.41 All stabled horses at Ox Drove Farm need to be checked at around 10.00pm to ensure that none are cast in their box, have caught their feet in the hay net or are distressed or in pain. This check generally finishes at around 10.30pm.
- 5.42 If a horse becomes cast in its box during the night, it must be righted as quickly as possible. If it is left lying down and unable to move for several hours, it will sustain muscle damage. It is only possible to know that a horse is cast in its box if staff are within sound of the stables, as the horse will kick the sides of its box in trying to right itself. Once the horse is righted, it should be checked carefully for injuries and monitored for a couple of hours afterwards in case it has colic.
- 5.43 Horses are prone to dietary disorders. Competent workers should be available round the clock and be able to see or hear if an animal is in difficulty so that they can react immediately. Colic in horses encompasses all forms of gastrointestinal conditions which cause pain. There are a variety of different causes of colic, some of which require surgical intervention and can prove fatal. Colic is a major cause of premature death in horses, with



the incidence of colic in the general horse population estimated at about 10% on an annual basis. It is important that any person who works with horses is able to recognise the symptoms of colic and determine whether or not to call a vet.

- 5.44 In addition, sick horses need to be checked regularly throughout the night and medication may need to be administered at regular intervals throughout the night or dressings changed on a regular basis. Responsible staff also need to be available to recognise and deal swiftly with any emergencies that may occur, either through their own actions or by calling the assistance of the vet.
- 5.45 The Applicant has already installed CCTV cameras on and in all buildings on the site. However, whilst the cameras provide a useful tool, they do not take the place of having a person living on site and within sound of the stables. The sound alert is extremely useful for the management of equestrian yards and cannot be replicated by any CCTV or alarm system. If a horse is in difficulty, it would often thrash around in the stable, which would alert the nearby worker that attendance is required urgently. Indeed, in 2022, a foal was lost during foaling because (it is believed) the umbilical cord was wrapped around the neck and the lack of a worker living on site and being immediately available resulted in the loss of the foal. This was extremely distressing to the Applicant and she is no longer prepared to breed the mares without the ready availability of a worker on site.
- 5.46 The breeding mares (at and around foaling) and the young foals all have increased welfare requirements. It is essential for the continuation of this rural business, that a worker lives on site to provide for the out-of-hours supervision of the horses. The quality of the bloodlines and potential value of foals and youngstock further increases the need for a worker to be on site.
- 5.47 In addition, the owners of the brood mares would not allow their horses to remain at Ox Drove Farm for breeding purposes without the provision of Ms Spicer living on site and being able to ensure that the welfare needs of the horses with increased need are met throughout the day and night.

#### Labour Requirement

- 5.48 It is necessary to demonstrate that, where an essential need has been established, that the activity generates a need for at least one full-time worker.
- 5.49 An enterprise of the size proposed at Year 3 generates the need for a worker to live on site in order to be readily available at most times to meet the welfare requirements of the horses and goats. Using standard data, as set out in *The Agricultural Budgeting & Costing Book*

(Agro Business Consultants, November 2023) ('the ABC') and *The Equine Business Guide* (King, November 2022), where one standard man day ('SMD') relates to 8 hours and 275 SMDs are a full-time labour requirement, the labour requirements of the proposed enterprise at Year 3 are as follows:

	Numbers	SMDs/unit	Sub-total	Total SMDs*
Stallions	2	112	224	134
Owned mares	4	76	304	182
Foals	4	35	140	84
Youngsters	3	60	180	108
Visiting mares – covering	1.6**	76	121.6	73
Horse on box-rest	1***	68	68	41
Boer goats – does	50	0.5****	25	25
Boer goats – bucks	2	1	2	2
Goatlings	50	0.5	25	25
<b>Total</b>				<b>674</b>

\* equine totals reduced by 40% to reflect economies of scale.

\*\* 10 visiting mares per annum each staying an average of 2 months equates to 1.5 mares/annum.

\*\*\* two horses on box-rest for six months of the year equates to 1 horse/annum.

\*\*\*\* SMD for lowland sheep used with increase to allow for additional work for goats as set out in the ABC.

5.50 From the above, it is evident that, using standard data, the proposed enterprise would generate a requirement for approximately 2.4 full-time workers. However, it is important to note that labour data is notorious for over-stating the amount of labour required, particularly in relation to equestrian activities. It does, though, provide a helpful indication as to the likely activity level of the developed enterprise. From the extensive experience of the Applicant thus far, she considers that the actual labour requirement of the developed enterprise would be less than 2 full-time workers. In any event, it is evident that the labour requirement of the proposed enterprise would be more than one full-time worker.

5.51 This labour requirement relates to a need to have a worker living on site to meet the welfare requirements of the horses and goats for most of the time throughout the year and is not a seasonal requirement.

Conclusion on Functional Need of the Enterprise

5.52 As set out in full above, the core activities which generate increased supervisory requirements comprise:

the kidding of approximately 7-8 does/month for ten months each year, from March to December;

the housing of the goats at and around kidding;

the winter housing of the goats;

the foaling down of four owned mares each year including care of mare and foal post-foaling;

the care of up to ten visiting mares each year which will be at Ox Drove Farm for natural covering by the stallions, each on the holding for a period of two months;

two horses on box-rest for six months each year;

the stabled horses throughout the year; and

management and care of the stallions, colts and youngsters, all of which have increased welfare and supervisory requirements.

5.53 It is evident that the horse breeding activity and the Boer goat activity together generate the essential need for a worker to live on site and to be readily available at most times in order to ensure the welfare requirements of the stock can be appropriately provided for.

5.54 The core requirements of Policy CP6 of the JCS are therefore met in that the development would support an existing and developing rural enterprise and the provision of a worker's dwelling at Ox Drove Farm is development essential to maintain a rural workforce.

5.55 In terms of Policy CP19 of the JCS, it has been demonstrated that there is a genuine and proven need for this proposed development within this countryside location.

5.56 As set out in Policy H14 of the Local Plan, the requirement to demonstrate a functional need for a worker to live on site has been proven to allow the expansion of this rural enterprise.

### Financial Assessment

- 5.57 Policy H14 of the Local Plan states that it is necessary to establish “*the degree to which there is confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future*”.
- 5.58 The Applicant is to become sole owner of the holding within the next 12 months.
- 5.59 Financial projections (available on request) have been produced which demonstrate that the proposed enterprise is capable of covering all overheads including labour costs, over the three year period.
- 5.60 The proposed enterprise is capable of achieving financial viability and sustainability over the next three years.

### *Goats*

- 5.61 Ms Spicer has created a strong customer base for the goats produced. Her knowledge of the breed and commitment to developing only top-quality goats is at the core of the enterprise development going forward. She is well-respected in her field as being one of the top Boer goat producers in the UK.
- 5.62 The revised management of the goat enterprise, which allows for the does to kid three times in every two years, will significantly increase sales. The goat herd currently kids at approximately 170%, which, with the increased numbers and additional kidding period, will result in approximately 255 kids being produced over a two-year period – or c.128 kids per year.
- 5.63 The core focus is on producing top-level pedigree goats for breeding, with meat production used to provide an income from the goats which do not reach the high standards needed for quality breeding does and bucks.
- 5.64 As the percentage of American bloodline in the herd increases, so will the value of the breeding goats. American half-breeds are currently selling for £750 and these goats do not have the same quality pedigree as those produced by Ms Spicer. Further value will be brought in through the introduction of some dappling into the herd. As an example of potential value, a 75% American buck has a current value of £1,200, but, if that buck was dappled, the value would increase to £2,500. The projections are based on realistic sales prices for breeding stock and does not rely on either the introduction of the dappling nor on achieving top-end prices for each goat sold.

5.65 Currently, approximately 10% of goats produced are sold for meat and it is envisaged that this level will remain constant over the next three years as the quality of the goats produced continues to improve, thereby generating increased demand for the breeding stock.

5.66 Ms Spicer is also exploring opportunities to carry out embryo transfer work and it is anticipated that this activity will develop over the next three years. Due to the fledgling status of this activity, it is not included within the financial projections produced.

#### *Horses*

5.67 The quality of the horses owned by the Applicant is high as is set out at Appendix 2. The stallions are of exceptional breeding and the Applicant has already seen a strong demand for both semen and natural covering.

5.68 In addition to natural covering of the visiting mares, the stallions will continue to be used for artificial insemination. Semen will be collected from the stallions and sold on.

5.69 There will also be two horses on box-rest at Ox Drove Farm from September through to March each year to provide additional income and utilise stables which, during the summer months, are used by the visiting mares. Ms Spicer has already been approached by local vets in relation to providing this specialist service.

5.70 Due to the quality bloodlines, there is a strong demand for the foals produced. It is anticipated that four mares will foal each year, two foals would be sold and two retained. The two youngsters would be retained and sold as starter horses.

#### *Summary*

5.71 Financial projections have been produced which demonstrate that, at Year 3, the agricultural and equestrian enterprise would generate sufficient profits to meet all overheads including labour.

5.72 As set out in Policy H14 of the Local Plan, the requirement to demonstrate a functional need for a worker to live on site has been provided to allow the expansion of this rural enterprise.

5.73 The financial projections prepared demonstrate that the proposed enterprise would achieve financial viability at Year 3 and, therefore, one of the core requirements associated with the provision of a temporary rural worker's dwelling as set out in Policy H14 is met.

#### Land Availability

5.74 In order to be able to operate the enterprise as proposed, it is necessary to ensure that there is sufficient land available to support the developed enterprise. Ox Drove Farm

extends to 7.65ha (18.9 acres) of permanent pasture. In terms of the developed goat enterprise, at an average stocking rate of 17 does and progeny/ha would generate a requirement of approximately 3ha (7.4 acres) with some additional land required to support the increased number of kids produced (three kiddings in two years). In real terms, less grazing is required as the does are housed at and around kidding and the herd is housed for approximately six months each year, with all kids remaining housed until eight months of age. The management practices in place limit the grazing requirements of the goat herd farmed at Ox Drove Farm.

5.75 There is, therefore, approximately 5ha (12.4 acres) of land available to support the equestrian activity.

5.76 On sites where horses are grazed for all of the time, a typical stocking rate of 2.5 horses/ha (one horse/acre) is often assumed. However, the management practice proposed here requires the stabling of the two stallions, visiting mares (1-2 on site at any one time), owned mares at and around foaling, horses on box-rest and the youngsters that are being brought on. All eight stables currently available would be used for overnight (and daytime during the summer if required) stabling of horses. This will effectively increase the stocking capacity of the land and would support the number of horses proposed within this application. It is also noted that, if required, the Applicant does own some additional grazing land at Jenny Lane which is available to provide for some additional flexibility if required in extreme circumstances.

5.77 Furthermore, a number of the horses which would be kept at Ox Drove Farm are Spanish horses. These horses have evolved relying on poor (desert) pasture and can also be grass intolerant. They need to be carefully managed on sparse grazing and hay, with only limited access to grass. This further reduces the grazing requirement of the proposed enterprise.

5.78 It is evident that there is sufficient land at the application holding to support both the developed agricultural activity and the equestrian activity.

#### Existing Dwellings

5.79 In order to meet the requirements of Policy H14(a) of the Local Plan, it is necessary to establish *“whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context”*.

5.80 It is confirmed that there are no other dwellings at Ox Drove Farm and the requirements of criterion (a) to Policy H14 are therefore met.

- 5.81 The conclusion reached within this assessment confirms that there is an essential need for the worker to live on site, to be within sight and sound of the livestock and horses; a dwelling off-site would not be suitable even if one were available.
- 5.82 However, for completeness, a search has been undertaken on *Rightmove* to establish if there are any properties (including those with an agricultural tie) within one mile of the application site which are both suitable and available to provide accommodation for the essential worker.
- 5.83 In summary, as of 13 March 2024, there is one property for sale within one mile of the application site – a 2-bedroom property for £450k in Upper Wield (information at **Appendix 4**). This property is not affordable for a rural worker. There are also no properties available to rent within one mile of the application site at the time of writing.
- 5.84 In any event, it is evident that the proposed enterprise generates the essential need for a worker to live on site. A worker living off-site, even if in close proximity to the application holding, would not be able to properly meet the welfare requirements of the developed enterprise. This conclusion is consistent with the Applicant's view that there is no scope to increase the scale of the activities at Ox Drove Farm without the ready availability of a worker on site to meet the welfare requirements of the animals on the holding. A dwelling nearby would not be suitable to meet this identified functional requirement for a worker to live on site.
- 5.85 It is confirmed that there are no other dwellings, tied or otherwise, in the area which are both suitable and available and therefore the requirement of criterion (b) to Policy H14 is met.

#### Temporary Dwelling

- 5.86 Policy H14 of the Local Plan sets out that "*in the case of new enterprises, whether it is appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period*".
- 5.87 The provision of a temporary dwelling for a trial period of three years will allow the Applicant to develop the enterprise as proposed whilst being on site and readily available to meet the welfare requirements of the horses and goats.
- 5.88 In consideration of criterion (g) to Policy H14, it is confirmed that no other residential property has been disposed of within the preceding five years that would have satisfied the need now identified.

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### Countryside Location

- 5.89 Policy CP19 of the JCS identifies that the only development allowed in the countryside will be that with a genuine and proven need for a countryside location such that it is necessary for, amongst other things, rural enterprises. Supporting paragraph 7.6 goes on to say that the emphasis is to allow development in the countryside where it can be demonstrated that a countryside location is both necessary and justified.
- 5.90 As detailed above, there is an essential need for a temporary worker's dwelling on the site. There is a genuine and proven need for the dwelling to be sited in this countryside location in order to support the welfare requirements of the horses and livestock and to enable this rural business to develop and thrive.

### Landscape

- 5.91 The proposed temporary dwelling is of a typical design and would be clad in wood to ensure that it assimilates into its surroundings as much as possible.
- 5.92 The specific siting of the dwelling has been chosen as that which provides the best opportunity to be in close proximity to all stabled and housed livestock and horses, in addition to providing good visibility of any grazing animals. It also provides additional security benefits as it is within direct sight of the main access to Ox Drove Farm.
- 5.93 The temporary dwelling would be sited within close proximity to existing buildings and the access. In terms of visual impact, its proximity to the yard will limit any impact. The temporary dwelling will be glimpsed from the road but will be seen in the context of the existing yard development. There is robust hedgerow in situ adjacent to the road which further limits any wider views of the proposed temporary dwelling.
- 5.94 In terms of criterion (d) to Policy H14 of the Local Plan, it has been demonstrated that the proposed siting will maximise the functional benefit to the enterprise, whilst minimising landscape impact.

### Design and Scale

- 5.95 The mobile home is of typical, utility design and is appropriate for the proposed use. Such a design is commonplace to provide for temporary worker's accommodation in the countryside.



- 5.96 The requirement to consider the size of the dwelling as set out in Policy H14 of the Local Plan clearly relates to a permanent worker's dwelling and is not directly relevant here. However, for completeness, it is confirmed that the size of the temporary dwelling falls within the description of a mobile home. It is no larger than reasonably necessary and would provide accommodation for the worker, utility/bootroom area and a farm office.
- 5.97 Although not directly relevant, consideration has been given to the requirements of criterion (e) to Policy H14 and it is considered that the proposal is consistent with, where appropriate, this policy requirement.
- 5.98 Criterion (f) to Policy H14 sets out the need to incorporate measures to optimise energy efficiency within the "*siting, design and construction of the dwelling*". This requirement is clearly not relevant to the proposal for a temporary mobile home.

#### Transport

- 5.99 There is an existing authorised equestrian and agricultural activity in operation at Ox Drove Farm that, of itself, already generates highway activity. This will not change as a result of this application.
- 5.100 There are clearly traffic movements associated with the introduction of a residential use, however these movements would be offset by the removal of the requirement for Ms Spicer to visit the site 2-3 times each day in order to check the horses and livestock.
- 5.101 It is considered that the proposed development would not generate any additional traffic movements and would not conflict with Policy CP31 of the JCS.

#### Flood Risk

- 5.102 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, an area which has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. There is also a 'very low' risk of surface water flooding at this location. The proposals therefore do not conflict with Policy CP25 of the JCS.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas is supported at a national level. Businesses and enterprises in the rural parts of East Hampshire make an important contribution to the overall economic success of the district and contribute to the sustainability of the environment. This proposal would support the expansion of an existing rural business, thereby helping to support the rural economy in providing jobs for local people.
- 6.2 There is an existing rural enterprise in operation at Ox Drove Farm, the development of which has been supported by EHDC through the grant of various planning permissions to support the establishment and expansion of the agricultural and equestrian enterprises.
- 6.3 Ms Spicer has significant experience and expertise in the rearing of pedigree Boer goats and top-quality horses/youngstock. She has stock of exceptional bloodlines which provides a strong basis to the proposed business development. Ms Spicer is well-placed to develop the enterprise as proposed.
- 6.4 The nature of the proposed activities includes for the covering and foaling down of four owned mares, ten visiting mares for natural covering, care of two (active) stallions, two horses on box-rest, kidding of 50 top pedigree does (housed), care of two bucks and care of all kids produced. Eight stables will be fully occupied and all goats are housed during the breeding season and in winter months.
- 6.5 The proposed enterprise is of sufficient scale and nature as to generate the essential need for the worker to live on site and to be readily available at most times in order to meet the welfare requirements of the horses and goats kept at Ox Drove Farm.
- 6.6 There are no other dwellings nearby which are suitable to provide for the necessary worker's accommodation. There is no scope to develop the enterprise as proposed without the provision of on-site accommodation.
- 6.7 The proposed mobile home would be sited within close proximity to the existing buildings and the access. The siting is appropriate to enable the worker to properly meet the welfare requirements of the horses (stabled and grazing) and goats (housed and at grass) whilst also providing additional security benefits through close visual and physical proximity to the farm access.

**Appendix 1**

**Summary of the goat herd pedigree and bloodlines**

## WIELD BOER GOATS

This has been a steep learning curve. When we first established the herd we did not appreciate the importance of damlines, which resulted in our first females and buck being lower quality stock leading to their sale for meat.

Since that original error, we have focused on ensuring we purchase and rear only the best bloodlines.

### Pedigrees

Our original female stock came from top export herds. We purchased some of our initial does from the renowned Morley and Hornets herds. The Hornets herd is one of the top show and export herds carrying imported Australian genetics. The Morley herd is not retired but they were important to the UK Boer goat herd and used for embryo transfer and imported Australian genetics. They dominated the UK show scene plus exported to Europe and Internationally).

This focus on such high quality bloodlines has helped to established the Wield Boer Goats and created a strong demand for the youngstock produced.

Our herd sires that we owned and have dominated our bloodlines are Morely Elvis, a top quality Full Blood Boer buck (full blood is when all bloodlines are traceable back to South Africa, so they are held in high regard). He put us on the map as breeders as he consistently bred quality buck kids. It was because of this quality breeding that we decided to focus our business on the sale of top quality breeding bucks and selecting does that were consistently good at breeding quality animals without faults. His bloodline is in many of our current breeding does and, to ensure there was no inbreeding, he was sold on two years ago.

We then bought in Terraweena-UK Dickens, a very well respected buck who was an embryo transfer full blood buck. He was a risk as fairly old but he carried fairly rare bloodlines in the UK and which are highly sought after worldwide. Indeed, I was requested by his breeder to take collections for Australia to be used there but unfortunately I did not have the correct health status for export. He has bred me some top quality doe kids, the majority of which have been retained. He retired after two breeding seasons.

As Terraweena-UK Dickens was an older buck, we decided to buy a second, younger, buck to ensure that we were never left without a quality buck. We were offered Jersey Red Cherokee, a Kalahari red, full blood ET buck, who carried extremely sought after and rare bloodlines. We wanted to add some red blood into our herd and we used him for one season and then sold him on to another herd, as we had purchased our current buck, Knapps BK Avenger.

In November, 2022 we purchased Knapps BK Avenger. He was one of the first Boers to be bred in the UK from a new genetic import from America. The larger breeders managed to arrange and fund this exciting import and he was one of the first batch to be sold. I am in contact with the other herds who also invested in these first imports and they are all delighted with the progeny being produced. These are excellent bloodlines which have significantly improved the quality of the goats produced.

Avenger is half USA by a black Boer buck, out of a very well bred purebred doe, who herself is out an imported Dutch doe.

Our first kids were born this Spring (2023) by him and he has proven to be a huge asset. Not only has he brought new bloodlines into our herd but also the potential to bring new bloodlines into the UK. Genetics in the UK have become stagnant and inbreeding (sometimes referred to as 'linebreeding') as unfortunately having to be the norm in the UK Boer breeding scene. I have been alert to this for some time and it is because of this that I invested in new bloodlines through the purchase of Terraweena-UK Dickens and Jersey Red Cherokee. Sadly, until finding Avenger, we struggled to find anything new to follow them.

Avengers first kids have been consistently high quality, with all the qualities I look for in pedigree stock and the commercial viability for meat side of the trade. They have correct heads, wide, broad, long and exceptional growth rates and great carcasses for the meat side.

We were so pleased with Avengers stock, that we purchased a 75% USA dapple, buck kid (Knapp Captain America) from the same breeder. We used him in Autumn 2023 for kids in 2024.

We breed sought after quality animals. We produce about 10% for meat kids and the remainder are kept through to breeding age.

I have been an active member of The British Boer Goat Society and, eventually, took a position on the board. As the herd now carries American bloodlines, I am no longer able to be an active member of the BBGS.

**Appendix 2**

**Detailed information on the breeding of the horses**

## HORSES

### Two Stallions

Oasis MAC - 15.2hh PRE (pure bred Spanish horse) graded Spanish stallion, licenced to breed, bred by Cardenas stud (one of the most highly regarded Spanish horse studs globally). He was bought as a rising three year old by Imagine Dressage (UK based stud) at the first sale of Cardenas horse outside of Spain. Oasis MAC is the first son of Fuego. Fuego is one of the most famous Spanish horses in modern dressage history. He has competed at the highest level including at the Olympics representing Spain and is known as the King of Hearts after his spectacular performances.

Oasis MAC is the only son of Fuego standing at stud in the UK. Oasis himself has stood National Breed Champion, National Movement Champion and National Performance Champion. He has also sired national youngstock champions at the breed show and has progeny competing in affiliated dressage and MCI (Masters Du Cheval Ibérique – a European Dressage Championship) including Lago Illustrious who went to the European Young Horse Championships in Paris.

Oasis MAC has had two years off stud work due to a near fatal injury but in 2023 started AI work again and we had three bookings for him. He has also had a visiting dressage mare for natural cover.

Now that he is back at full fitness and able to deal with the travelling and stud work, he will be actively promoted by Equibreed UK in 2024. He is well liked at the stallion collection station as he is well behaved and with excellent fertility (with 80% motility on last collection). He is stood using chilled which means he has to visit the centre for collections when booked by mare owners.

Jaen XI is a stunning black 17.1hh PRE graded stallion, he will be standing at stud next season. He carries exceptional bloodlines from the Militar Stud in Spain and has already bred some beautiful top competition horses who will be out competing next season. He has competed to a good level including affiliated and shows great ability to move up the levels.

### Four Mares

\*Vesandra, Dutch bred KWPN, show jumper bred by Numero Uno, one of the top Dutch jumping sires out of a graded mare. Vesandra has consistently thrown big moving, big jumping stock with good conformation and trainable temperaments. She has thrown show jumpers and, now she is crossed with Spanish stallions, produces top quality dressage horses.

\*Casandra AES main stud book mare, by Cevin Z who jumped on Nations Cup teams and is sire of Olympic progeny. This mare has passed on her beautiful easy temperament and exceptional paces, with her eldest progeny about to come out under saddle next year.

\*Tuna XXI registered and graded PRE (pure Spanish). She is a pure bred Carthusian Spanish, which is rare. Her  $\frac{3}{4}$  brother is a Grand Prix dressage stallion who was selected for the young horse potential Olympic Spanish team and then sold to the USA where he competes at top level.

\*Maryss Regalia, black 16hh PRE graded mare by Donado imported from USA dressage stallion out of national champion mare, a great asset for breeding dressage PREs.

### Youngstock

VLS Sprite, 3yo PRE (pure bred Spanish) by Oasis MAC out of Tuna, about to be started under saddle with aim of MCI and young horse classes in 2024

VLS Ember 2yo Warmblood x PRE future dressage prospect and potentially put in foal next year


VLS Valentina WB x PRE currently being started to either compete or sell or both or future broodmare

VLS Valencia WB x PRE same as above

Aztec Caramello PRE gelding, to be produced and sold, being started at the moment.



**Appendix 3**  
**Experience, Expertise and Letters of Support**



I grew up in a rural area and spent holidays and weekends helping out on a family friend's farm. They reared sheep and beef cattle and it is from this that my love of farm life began. I also did a lot of horsey stuff, including pony club and juniors as well as county showing on home produced ponies.

I have worked professionally with horses since leaving school, although while still at school I competed horse and ponies in national level showing and show jumping and broke in and produced horses and ponies, winning many trophies and prizes and qualifying for various finals. Which drove my ambition to work with horses.

When I left school I got a working pupil placement with International show jumper & British Show jumping team member, James Fisher. Whilst with James, I rode a variety of top quality show jumping horses and was taught stable management, given regular lessons and also tested horses for suitability for young riders.

I then moved on to working for Peter Charles, European Champion and Olympic gold medallist. Whilst there I was a working pupil and gained further experience of working with top class competition horse in their day to day care and also attending shows. I also competed my own horse whilst also working at the yard.

I worked at numerous yards working with horses in various scenarios from covering on a vets yard, looking after horses which worked on films, running the horse lines at various English Heritage events and riding in historical displays all over the UK. I have also ridden and schooled horses on well-known competition yards.

I competed in Affiliated Dressage, showing up to Championship level and show jumping. I have a wide range of experience and I am also a qualified UK CC sports coach and with the stud work I am very lucky to have had training and help from top studs and the support of Equibreed UK who are one of the UKs leading reproduction vets.

I have also broken in and produced horses to county and national level in showing and show jumping, including the summer championships of BSPS, RIHS and placing in HOYS & Olympia qualifiers and placings at the Spanish Horse society (BAPSH) national show as well as IPS and also participated in the Iberian Horse display team.

I also used to be Chairman for local riding club and I also look after horses that regularly qualify for HOYS and RIHS.

I have a broad range of experience with different types and breeds of horses from natives, to thoroughbreds and Iberians, and currently we stand our own Iberian stallion at stud, Oasis MAC, who has been previous national breed champion, national movement champion and performance champion, and feel lucky to have his unique genetics.

I am also a UKCC level 2 sports coach, gained through British Show jumping and have extensive experience in rehabilitation although no formal qualifications, I am lucky to work with some outstanding vets and professionals in this field and had excellent success rates by following vets programmes and having an eye for detail.

I have also trained with intelligent horsemanship, having done all the foundation courses as was looking to attain my Monty Roberts certificate, but decided it was not the path for me, having had help from Monty with one of my horses.

I have had help and training from some top trainers, and took a lot of inspiration from Manolo Mendez who I was very lucky to have been chosen to spend a week training with when he was in the UK and use his methods on a daily basis.

I also regularly trained with Peter Maddison-Greenwell who is a master of classical dressage and I am grateful for his input and along the way have been to many clinics run by TTT and I continue to train and learn where I can, with trainers that are advocates for the horse as I feel welfare in horse sports is of high importance.

We constantly try to evolve the yard and horse care one example of this is trying the horses on a grass track system summer time to keep their movement levels increased and reduce the risks of laminitis and metabolic issues, we found it worked well.

Currently there are huge changes going on in the equestrian world and as a horse owner and professional it is important that we all evolve to make sure horse welfare is high on the list of priorities and good management is key to happy, healthy horses, I spend a lot of time researching and talking to fellow professionals to keep up to date on best practice.

# Support Letter - Vicky Spicer

My name is [REDACTED]. Established in 2012, we are one of the longest-standing current breeders of pedigree Boer goats in the UK. I also hold a BSc (Hons) in Agricultural Management and have served as both a Trustee of the British Boer Goat Society and, most recently, as a Director and Board Member of the British Boer and Meat Goat Association.

I first met Vicky through online goat communities many years ago, not long after she first established her Boer goat herd, and since then, we have remained in touch regularly to discuss matters relating to the breeding and improvement of pedigree Boer goats.

Over the years, it has been a delight to have the opportunity to share my passion and love for agriculture and the Boer goat with someone as dedicated and enthusiastic as Vicky, who has demonstrated an unwavering determination to improving the Boer goat breed and developing a management system that works best for the health, welfare, and productivity of her animals. I specifically recall how, in the very early days, Vicky, through her own research and experiences, recognised and moved away from the flawed guidance she was given originally to build a herd of quality animals that are free from genetic faults and thrive on the system she has built to allow for future, sustainable growth and success, and through this knowledge that she has garnered, she has supported many other breeders in finding the right system for their needs and the health of their stock.

Furthermore, on a personal level, I have to thank Vicky for her invaluable support in 2020 and 2021, during which time our herd experienced severe food poisoning due to mycotoxin contamination in the bagged feed, which we likely never would have identified as a potential cause of the problem had it not been for Vicky's support and suggestions.

I strongly believe that Vicky is an asset to the Boer goat world, and in particular, her passion for agriculture and her knowledge of the Boer goat, her development of the optimal management and breeding system to maximise productivity within her herd, and her understanding of the many different lineages and genetics in the national herd firmly establishes her as an influential breeder who has, and who I am sure will continue to, encourage greater awareness of the Boer breed. As such, I have no doubt that Vicky will continue to develop her herd and, given her knowledge and exceptional genetics, has every chance of becoming one of the top herds in the country.

However, in order to achieve the growth that she desires, the need to live on site for both the productivity and welfare of the goats is paramount. Boer goats are a highly prolific and aseasnal breed, which makes them an excellent choice for viability thanks to their ability to kid year-round with litters often averaging around 200%. This, in turn, increases the kid crop per doe compared to other breeds and species, which means that fewer breeding does are required to achieve high production, thus helping promote the viability and environmental sustainability of a goat business over other livestock.

This does mean that kidding complications caused by multiple births can be more common, such as kids getting entangled during birth. Such situations require prompt intervention, and missing this by a matter of minutes can be the difference between life or death. Time is even more critical if the kid should be born within the bag, rather than the bag rupturing during the birth process, which can result in kids drowning within the sac, a fate that could be prevented by being present for the kidding. Naturally, this represents a very significant welfare threat, and as such, the need to be present on site during kidding is paramount.

Furthermore, since does can kid within a 10-day window, often with little to no warning, being able to check stock regularly throughout the night is highly important for welfare and, critically, to ensure that the birth progresses normally and that kids receive ample colostrum within the first few hours of birth. Not doing so can put kids at significant risk of not achieving early immunity to disease, predisposing them to ill health throughout their lives. Furthermore, any kids born weak (such as small kids in a large litter) may also require urgent assistance to feed, so as to prevent hypothermia, especially during colder kidding seasons.

Kidding cameras can assist in this goal of monitoring the groups, however, they are limited in their value, given that they cannot provide a clear line of vision at all angles, cannot demonstrate the subtle signs that a doe may be preparing for kidding, and cannot offer a crisp enough live image to quickly identify kidding does or complications in all cases. Thus, living on site is vital - alongside constant monitoring through kidding cameras - to achieve the best possible outcomes for welfare and productivity.

In addition to this, though, there are many other reasons that living on site is important for both welfare and productivity purposes. Crucially, goats can be prone to a number of conditions that require very prompt, early intervention and rigorous treatments, with little room for error, including polioencephalitis (goat polio) and listeriosis. This can result in the need for treatments every few hours, especially in the case of polioencephalitis, which thus requires the keeper to be present on site at all times to ensure this very strict treatment protocol is met. Failing to do so will often result in a very painful death for the animal.

Furthermore, with goats requiring additional management than other species, limiting the time spent travelling is not only crucial for minimising financial and environmental impacts but also for the ability to grow and scale the business. Not living on site can easily lead to in excess of an hour's travel every day just to feed and check the animals, a significant amount of wasted time that could be put to better use improving facilities for the farm.

Overall, living on site provides vital boosts to help support the development of the agricultural business and promote welfare overall.



To whom it may concern,

I was the vet for Vicky and Ash Spicer's goats for over 2 years from March 2021 until I moved to a different veterinary practice in August 2023. I also visited the premises regularly with vet students from the Royal Veterinary College as part of their final year farm rotation; Vicky and Ash were always very willing to allow me to use their premises to show the students an excellent example of a well kept goat herd, and to give the students the opportunity to practise handling goats and discussing goat diseases in a farm environment, rather than in a classroom. They continue to have students visiting since my departure from the practice.

Vicky and Ash are very knowledgeable, and always very willing to engage with vets, and listen and take on board any advice that is given. The goats are kept in great condition; the pens are clean and dry, with access to the outdoors when conditions allow. They are given chance to express their natural behaviour with apparatus to climb on, and the opportunity to browse the hay in the racks.

It would be great for Vicky and Ash to have the opportunity to expand their business, allowing it to be more profitable and therefore sustainable, increasing the supply of a healthy and tasty meat option from a small family run business where the need of each individual animal is paramount. The

high quality genetics of the herd also mean that they can be a source of breeding animals to other goat farmers looking to start/increase the size of their herd.

Having a dwelling on the premises would allow more frequent checks on the animals, particularly during kidding time which would be beneficial for animal welfare.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Kind Regards,

 BVM&S CertAVP MRCVS



03 November 2023

To Whom it may concern

Reference: Miss Vicky L Spicer

I was introduced to Vicky Spicer 12 years ago, in November 2011, when my husband and I moved to Kingswood in Beech. Vicky had been caring for the previous occupant's horses and through recommendation we agreed that she would continue to visit Kingswood to care for my horses for a few hours per week. I am delighted that she has done so ever since.

I have always found Vicky to be exceptionally conscientious and reliable in providing her services. She has a dedication for the care and wellbeing of her own and her client's horses which is beyond the standard best practice normally expected. Her knowledge, skill and experience when handling stallions and mares is excellent and requires very special abilities.

The VLS Stud website very well describes Vicky's personal attention to detail and practical way of working to achieve her goal of producing happy and healthy quality competition and non-competition horses (and goats). Her breeding programmes have been carefully designed over many years to achieve this.

I have no doubt in her ability to develop and run a horse and goat breeding and rearing business. Vicky already has a proven track record in this area and has also introduced selling specialist horse feed and bedding as a successful additional offering.

I have no doubt in recommending Vicky for her great character and work ethic and wish her every success.



Chair – British Horse Society Qualifications  
Non-Executive Director – British Equestrian Federation  
Vice-Chair – The Showing Council





18/10/23


To Whom It May Concern

I am a current board member of the British Boer and Meat Goat Association and was a Trustee for several years with the British Boer Goat Society. I have kept goats and shown at some of the major shows in England since 2012 and I met Vicky Spicer 5 years ago when she was looking to develop her goat herd.

I have visited Wield Boer Goats on several occasions over the years and am very impressed with the premises. Vicky has been committed to providing the best possible facilities in order to maintain a high level of welfare for her animals. Vicky's knowledge of genetics and requirements for breeding a better animal have come from years of breeding horses. I have watched her stock develop and improve each year as she strives to eradicate faults and focus on the good traits required to produce top quality goats and horses.

Vicky has managed to source an outlet for her meat goats along with having a good following of breeders waiting for stock. I sincerely hope she gets the support required to allow her to continue to grow her business

Yours faithfully



**Appendix 4**  
***Rightmove Information***

# Properties for Sale within 1 mile of Ox Drove Farm

13 March 2024



1/28

### 1 Pond Cottage, Upper Wield, Alesford

Cottage 2 1

0.97 miles

A delightful Grade II listed cottage located in an idyllic setting in the middle of this picturesque village. The cottage retains many period features including an inglenook fireplace and exposed beams. There is secure driveway parking, and a pretty cottage garden, which fronts onto the villag...

Added on 01/08/2023 by Hellards Estate Agents, Alesford

**£450,000**  
Guide Price

VILLAGE LOCATION

**Hellards** 01962 587340  
Local call rate

Contact

Save

# Properties for Rent within 1 mile of Ox Drove Farm


13 March 2024

SO24 9RX Clear + 1 mile Min Price to Max Price Min Beds to Max Beds

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8  
Properties matching your criteria

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