

**5f 3/12/0268/FP – Change of use of reservoir field to allow the siting of 5 static holiday caravans in the form of log cabins and of a reception building, together with reshaping an existing reservoir to allow for use for angling, associated ground works, landscaping and management of Dalmonds Wood (County Wildlife Site 71/018) at Dalmonds Wood Farm, Mangrove Lane, Nr Hertford, HERTS, SG13 8QJ for Eamon Bourke**

**Date of Receipt:** 20.02.2012

**Type:** Full – Major

**Parish:** BRICKENDON LIBERTY

**Ward:** HERTFORD HEATH

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. The application site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the East Hertfordshire Local Plan wherein permission will not be given except in very special circumstances for development for purposes other than those required for mineral extraction, agriculture, small scale facilities for participatory sport and recreation or other uses appropriate to a rural area. In this case, whilst the potential demand for the proposed development (including its business plan justification) and its particular operational characteristics have been considered, along with all other arguments advanced in its favour, it is not considered that these constitute very special circumstances which would clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Metropolitan Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness and other harm. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy GBC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and national planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

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**1.0 Background:**

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. It forms part of Dalmonds Wood Farm which lies to the south of Hertford close to the administrative boundary of Broxbourne Borough Council. It is accessed via a private driveway which leads onto Mangrove Lane to the west and Lord Street, Hoddesdon to the east.
- 1.2 The application site itself comprises an area of open land of approximately 2.3ha known as Reservoir field. As the name suggests, this contains a reservoir feeding to a lower, smaller pond. The reservoir was constructed some years ago and involved significant earthworks

and re-profiling of the land which resulted in the creation of an area of higher ground to the south of the pond. This has resulted in steep, unnatural slopes within this part of the site and in the banks that form the retaining earthworks along the southern edge of the reservoir. To the south of the site is semi mature woodland.

- 1.3 The reservoir is currently well stocked with carp but otherwise the applicants indicate that it is of no biodiversity interest.
- 1.4 Prior to being purchased as part of the wider Elbow Lane Farm holding, all the land was owned by a pharmaceutical company. The Bourke family purchased the wider farm holding in 2002 and established a successful Equestrian Centre. Members may also recall that a pig rearing business has been introduced at the Farm and in May of this year temporary permission was granted for a stockman's cabin at the site to allow the close monitoring of the pigs.
- 1.5 As reservoir field was no longer needed for agricultural purposes the applicant sought a license from the Caravan Club to site 5 holiday caravans on part of the filed utilising 'permitted development' rights pursuant to Class A to Part 5 of the Town and Country planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995. A licence was agreed in principle for a very small part of the site to be used in this way (0.5 to 0.75 of an acre - or up to 0.3ha).
- 1.6 However, in view of the set up costs associated with the caravan use, the applicant decided to consider an enhanced scheme, covering a wider area and including better facilities. The current proposal therefore is for five static wooden caravans on land to the north of the wood for use as self-contained residential tourist accommodation. A sixth, smaller, cabin would be constructed to serve as an office. Car parking and landscaping would be carried out on the site, including extensive remodeling of the reservoir.
- 1.7 Members are advised that, for the purposes of planning law, the cabins are 'caravans' by virtue of their size (6.8m x 20m x 3.05m internally) and mobility.
- 1.8 Each log cabin would measure 16.45m long and 6.8m wide with a height of 3.95m to the ridge. Each would have two double bedrooms with an en-suite facility; a living room/diner; kitchenette and sauna. Timber decking for sitting out would be provided along the front elevation and a hot tub would also be provided on the decked area. They would sit on timber railway sleepers rather than have any permanent foundations.
- 1.9 The cabins are proposed to be located around the reservoir which

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would be re-shaped to a more natural form. A bark mulch path would be created to provide a footpath link between the car park and the log cabins. The car park would be located at the entrance of the site.

### **2.0 Site History:**

2.1 Elbow Lane Farm has a long planning history, with many of the applications being determined by the committee. As the current application site is created by severance from Elbow Lane Farm, the history of the following applications at the site is considered to be of relevance to this application:

- 3/02/2645/FP – Change of use of land and buildings from commercial to equestrian and agricultural, construction of new stabling, equestrian managers house, manège, horsebox and car parking – Approved June 2003
- 3/02/2646/FP – Demolition of two commercial buildings and construction of new farmhouse – Approved June 2003
- 3/03/2082/FP – Construction of stabling and tack rooms and other works – Approved December 2003
- 3/05/0568/FP – Resiting of consented manager's house and substitution of existing equestrian tie with an agricultural tie – Withdrawn
- 3/05/2532/FP – Construction of cattle compound and loading area and re-siting of consented manager's house – Approved March 2006
- 3/06/1005/FP – Alterations to design of Manager's House and addition of basement (approved under consent Refs. 3/02/2645/FP and 3/05/2352/FP) – Approved August 2006
- 3/06/1850/FP – Equestrian lunge ring – Approved November 2006
- 3/06/1522/FP – Construction of barn – Approved June 2007
- 3/06/1523/FP – Conversion of cattle barn to 16 equestrian loose boxes – Withdrawn
- 3/07/1072/FP – Single storey outbuilding for machinery storage, temporary animal housing and kennel – Approved August 2007 (Manager's House)
- 3/08/0411/FP – Internal conversions to provide living accommodation for grooms – Approved May 2008
- 3/09/0678/FP – Retention and re-siting of feed store – Approved July 2009
- 3/10/0522/FP – Extensions, alterations, replacement roof, triple garage with office space above and rearrangement of access – Withdrawn (The Farmhouse)
- 3/10/1254/FP – Extensions, alterations, replacement roof, triple

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garage with office space above and rearrangement of access – Approved June 2011 (The Farmhouse)

- 3/11/0856/FP – Erection of storage barn (replacement for barn approved in June 2007, which could not be built due to the proximity of a gas main) – Approved October 2011

2.2 Dalmonds Wood Farm, has the following history:

- 3/11/0575/PA – Farm building to house pigs – Prior approval not required April 2011
- 3/11/1716/FP – Use of land for the siting of a residential mobile home in the form of a log cabin for a temporary 3 year period for occupation by a stockman – Refused December 2011
- 3/12/0355/FP – Use of land for the siting of a residential mobile home in the form of a log cabin for a temporary 3 year period for occupation by a stockman – Approved May 2012

### **3.0 Consultation Responses:**

- 3.1 Veolia Water has noted that the site falls within the Source Protection Zone of Musley Lane pumping station. In order to prevent risk of harm to groundwater, any development should be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices.
- 3.2 The Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England objects to the proposal as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. They have raised concerns relating to a number of the 'very special circumstances' put forward by the applicant in support of their case.
- 3.3 They comment that there is a responsibility on the landowner to manage the woodland and that this is not solely dependant on the implementation of this proposal but on the commitment of the landowner to woodland management.
- 3.4 In respect of farm diversification, they state that the Local Plan specifically states that farm diversification will only be permitted where the proposal would support the continuation of the farm enterprise as a whole and would not result in unsustainable subdivision of the farm unit. Diversification has already taken with the provision of the riding school on the farm and this proposal would further increase that subdivision.
- 3.5 The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust state that they have no objections to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions relating to compliance with the proposed

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woodland management plan, the provision of appropriate landscaping and the control of external lighting.

- 3.6 Natural England have referred to their standing advice and recommended that attention be given to the possibility of harm to bats and great crested newts from the development.
- 3.7 The County Council's Highways officers consider that the development is unlikely to generate substantial additional traffic during peak hours. They have recommended that a green travel plan be required be secured by condition.
- 3.8 The Environment Agency has no objections to the proposal.
- 3.9 Environmental Health has recommended a condition relating to the presence of any unsuspected contamination at the site.
- 3.10 The Council's Landscape Officer states that the proposal would have 'no direct adverse effect on existing trees / woodland'. He concurs with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust that the woodland management proposals are acceptable and if put in place 'offer (in theory at least) significant mitigation in favour of the proposed development'.
- 3.11 The Landscape Officer notes that views into the site are limited as a result of the surrounding woodland and the distance to the nearest road. The local area's landscape character is 'mainly wooded farmland, with farmed area mainly under pasture' although there are also recreational uses (horse riders and walkers) present. He considers that the proposal would have some impact on local tranquility, although 'this is not easy to quantify'. He assesses the site as being 'of low to moderate landscape sensitivity and moderate landscape capacity for the type of development proposed'.
- 3.12 He notes that detailed landscaping proposals have not been submitted. Practical considerations such as the installation of infrastructure for mains services and the collection and disposal of sewerage have not been addressed in this application.
- 3.13 He concludes that the proposed woodland planting 'has the potential to contribute to the local landscape' provided that the appropriate species mix is used. The proposed improvements to the Wildlife Site would provide 'net gains for nature' and provide strong mitigation. He recognises that the management plan requires long-term stewardship of Dalmonds Wood, and that harm has resulted from the current use of the Wood for grazing by the applicant's pigs.

3.14 The Council's Economic Development section has stated that the development is a 'unique project which will bring new visitors to East Herts that have a different interest'. They encourage the applicant to explore and promote links with Hertford and local attractions and businesses. Using local businesses 'during the build process and that beyond through to day to day operation of the facilities i.e. employment and businesses achieving ongoing contracts such as suppliers, would benefit the rural area and supports farm diversification'.

#### **4.0 Parish Council Representations:**

4.1 Brickendon Liberty Parish Council comments that they believe the development would be harmful to the landscape and Wildlife Site, and that this could not be offset by the proposed 'very special circumstances'.

4.2 The Parish Council also state that 'it does not follow that a holiday camp of some five log cabins and a reception building are suitable, appropriate or necessary to support' the pig farming business at the site.

#### **5.0 Other Representations:**

5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 The Broxbourne and Wormley Woods Area Conservation Society consider the development to be inappropriate in the Green Belt, and close to ancient woods (Broxbourne Woods Nature Reserve). They expressed concern regarding disturbance resulting from access to and egress from the site.

5.3 Ten letters of representation have been received comprising three letters of objection and seven of support.

5.4 The grounds of objection raised can be summarised as follows:

- The development would be inappropriate in the Green Belt and harmful to its openness
- There are existing tourist accommodation sites in the local area
- The financial information supplied appears to be inadequate for the project
- The works necessary to prepare the site and install the buildings

would be disruptive to the Wildlife Site

- The development represents the continued sprawl of the Elbow Lane Farm site
- The use of the reservoir would generate income on its own
- An application to diversify the Dalmonds Wood Farm business so early after permission has been granted for the cabin at the site is inappropriate
- The adjacent stables are for livery only, and are not riding stables open to the public or potential occupants of the proposed cabins
- The site would not be accessible

5.5 The grounds of support raised can be summarised as follows:

- The proposal would generate trade and contribute to the vitality of the local economy and local businesses

## **6.0 Policy:**

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

SD3	Renewable Energy
GBC1	Appropriate Development in the Green Belt
GBC8	Rural Diversification
GBC14	Landscape Character
TR2	Access to New Developments
TR7	Car Parking – Standards
TR20	Development Generating Traffic on Rural Roads
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV10	Planting New Trees
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
ENV14	Local Sites
ENV16	Protected Species
ENV17	Wildlife Habitats
LRC5	Countryside Recreation
LRC7	Water Based Recreation
LRC10	Tourism
OSV1	Category 1 Villages
IMP1	Planning Conditions and Obligations

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also of relevance to the determination of the application.

## **7.0 Considerations:**

- 7.1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The proposed development of the site for tourist accommodation is not one of the accepted uses recognised by policy GBC1 or in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is recognised by all parties as inappropriate development within the Green Belt which is, by definition, harmful to it.
- 7.2 The main planning issue to consider in the determination of this application is therefore whether this harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other identified harm is clearly outweighed by other material considerations to which such weight can be attached that they constitute 'very special circumstances' for permitting the inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Other harm

- 7.3 In addition to the harm caused by inappropriateness, Officers have identified that the proposal will cause other harm to the surrounding area and this is set out below.
- 7.4 Although secluded with substantial planting on most sides, the site is an open area of land between the Elbow Lane equestrian centre to the north, and Dalmonds Wood to the south. It occupies an elevated position, from which it is possible to see much of the surrounding area, particularly to the relatively open north-east. The proposed development would have a significant impact on the openness of the surrounding area and on the rural character of this part of the Green Belt. This would be contrary to Green Belt policy as set out in the adopted Local Plan and in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.5 Members may recall an application at Pallets Wood, Oaks Cross Farm, Hooks Cross (ref: 3/11/1492/FP) for nine cabins to be erected beneath the canopies of woodland trees. That application was refused by Members in November of last year. The decision was the subject of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, which was dismissed on the 13<sup>th</sup> June. In a similar way, the Inspector determined that the proposal was contrary to Green Belt policy and, even with the screening provided by the mature trees that effectively surrounded the site, the Inspector felt that the proposal would not maintain the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.6 In the current application, the visual impact of the development would be limited, as recognised by the Landscape Officer. The application site is in an elevated position and screened on most sides by dense planting. The cabins would be of timber construction, and arguably

visually more appropriate for this rural location than other forms of construction.

- 7.7 Nonetheless, the introduction of the proposed static cabins and the associated development would have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Even allowing for the limited visual impact of the cabins, the current open character of the paddock would be significantly altered by the proposed development. The impact of parked vehicles and refuse stores with hardstandings will itself result in additional harm to the open and rural character of the site. The Pallet Wood appeal decision was concerned that there would be continuing pressure to extend driveways and for parking to be located more convenient to the user – the same pressures would apply in this case, and this would only add to the harm to the surroundings.
- 7.8 Having identified the harm likely to result from the proposal, it is then necessary to determine whether there are any ‘very special circumstances’ that clearly outweigh this harm.

#### Very Special Circumstances

- 7.9 The applicant argues that the following considerations are sufficient to constitute the very special circumstances required to justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt:
1. The significant ecological enhancements which would result from implementation of the Woodland Management Plan which is otherwise most unlikely to be fundable and, important but of less weight, returning the redundant reservoir to beneficial use.
  2. The proximity of the site to outdoor recreation activities (horse riding, angling, walking, cycling) thus improving access to the countryside for urban populations.
  3. An identified need for this type of tourist accommodation in the district which the report by Tourism South East states is not currently provided anywhere in Hertfordshire.
  4. The characteristics of the proposed development mean that it is likely to meet the demands of responsible and more discerning guests who will be relatively high-spending independent travellers thus introducing increased spending into the rural economy without increased congestion or adverse environmental impact.
  5. The “knock on” benefits to the local economy from the

development.

6. The benefits to be derived from diversifying the economy of Dalmonds Wood Farm having regard to advice at paragraph 30 of PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas which recognises that *“where farm diversification proposals in the Green Belt would result in inappropriate development in terms of PPG2 any wider benefits of the diversification may contribute to the very special circumstances required by PPG2 for a development to be granted planning permission”*
  7. The fact that the applicant is prepared to enter into a legal agreement, inter alia, to remove the log cabins and associated engineering works in the event of the business failing thus removing any impact on the Green Belt.
- 7.10 With regard to point 1, the value of the proposed ecological enhancements is recognised by Officers. The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust have confirmed that the woodland management proposals would be ‘appropriate’. They are ‘supportive of parallel management proposals to help fund habitat management and make nature conservation sustainable’.
- 7.11 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 118 states that “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged”. The woodland management plan would be of recognised benefit to the adjacent Wildlife Site.
- 7.12 However, given the extent of woodland within the Green Belt, this type of supporting argument could be used in a great number of cases. It cannot therefore be considered ‘very special’ to this particular case. In general, woodland requires management and land owners are expected to undertake this work in the normal course of events. It does not, in Officers view, justify permitting inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Indeed, paragraph 14 of the NPPF makes it clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where other specific policies indicate that development should be restricted (such as in the Green Belt).
- 7.13 Furthermore, it is not clear from the financial projections submitted that the Woodland Management Plan could be implemented in full. The projected construction costs for the development amount to approximately £770,000. The prospective annual income (assuming a

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60% occupation rate of the five cabins) is approximately £21,500, using prices set by a comparable facility in Rutland. Tourism South East have assessed the projected occupation rate as 'ambitious but fair' given the current economic climate and achieved occupancy of tourist accommodation in the area (75% unit occupancy).

- 7.14 The £770,000 could be partly offset by grants that may be available to the development. A grant of up to approximately £161,000 could be applied for through the Council from the European Commission to fund tourist development, but could not be used to cover the cost of the woodland management. Other grants may be available, but the total maximum grant to which the development would be entitled would remain at approx £160,000 to be used within a three year period.
- 7.15 A grant of £23,480 would be available from the Forestry Commission for the works to the woodland, but again it appears that this would result in a reduction of the tourism grant noted in the preceding paragraph. This does not appear to have been accounted for in the applicant's calculations, in that the figures suggest that both grants would be awarded in full.
- 7.16 The applicant's figures provide for the first year of the proposed management plan as part of the construction costs. The approximate cost would be £50,000 offset by the grant of £23,480 and an anticipated income of around £7,000 from the sale of timber. Subsequent years would average around £6,000 woodland management costs per year. These costs are not addressed in the applicant's submissions for years 2-5, and would result in a substantial reduction in the projected profits.
- 7.17 Depending on grants, there appears therefore that there may be in the region of £46,000 less than the applicant shows in the financial projection. This equates to more than two years' profits from the proposed development. Officers are therefore not satisfied that the proposal is financially viable, or would generate the funds necessary to carry out all the works under the management plan. Therefore, limited weight can be given to this argument.
- 7.18 With regard to point 2, there are many visitor attractions in and around the local area of the application site. It should be noted that the adjacent equestrian centre is for livery purposes, and is not a riding school or stables.
- 7.19 The proposal includes provision for angling at the site, with the existing reservoir extensively remodelled and filled with fish. Tourism South

East note that around 4 million people a year went fishing in 2005, and that there is a large potential market available for fishing holidays. Tourism South East state that “The reservoir at Dalmonds Wood Farm can act as a driver for holidaying in this picturesque location but can also be used to add value and appeal as an additional onsite activity for visitors”.

- 7.20 The site lies adjacent to a public Right of Way providing access to the County’s extensive network of footpaths and bridlepaths. Tourism South East note that activity holidays are currently a growing market, with the site also offering access to bird watching and golf at local courses.
- 7.21 Officers consider that the site is well-placed to serve as a base for holidays in the District. However, the same could be said of many other sites in the District. It is not considered that it represents a particularly exceptional site, as many locations will offer similar activities in their vicinity. Similar arguments were raised in the Pallets Wood appeal and the inspector in that case stated that “it would not be hard to find other woodland in close proximity to London... where visitors might ‘experience nature and enhance their health and well being’”. It is considered therefore that only very limited weight can be attached to this argument.
- 7.22 With regard to point 3, the Tourism South East report suggests that there is a shortage of this type of self-catering accommodation in Hertfordshire. Occupancy levels of existing comparable facilities are the highest in the region, and the East of England region was the “fastest growing region in terms of volume of trips”.
- 7.23 Officers consider that there is evidence of a need for additional self-catering accommodation in the District. However, the development would involve the creation of a number of new buildings on site (albeit that technically they fall within the definition of ‘caravans’) together with other associated development. Policy LRC10 supports suitable tourist proposals but in the light of the recent appeal decision at Pallets Wood, it seems unlikely that this can include isolated new development in the Green Belt. More suitable proposals would involve the conversion of existing buildings.
- 7.24 The site is also located in a relatively isolated location with no public transport links. Guests would be likely to be dependent on private transport for any trips beyond the site. The development is not considered by officers to be particularly sustainable therefore and it is considered that only limited weight can be given to its suitability for

- meeting an identified need for tourist accommodation.
- 7.25 Points 4 and 5 are considered together. Based on a survey of available prices for self-catering accommodation in the area, the suggested prices appear to be at the top end of the price range. The sample of pricing available for officer review is limited (4 local sites offering self-catering accommodation in similar locations) but suggests that the development would be advertised as a more premium destination.
- 7.26 Officers acknowledge that the proposal would contribute to the local economy. However, the overall impact would be slight, and officers consider that significant weight cannot be attached to this argument.
- 7.27 With regard to point 6, Dalmonds Wood Farm is a new entity created by the separation of land from Elbow Lane Farm. A temporary permission has recently been granted for a stockman's cabin at the site to allow the viability of the business to be assessed.
- 7.28 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that "planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development". It encourages sustainable tourist development including where it involves "well designed new buildings". It states that policies should promote the diversification of rural businesses, but emphasises that these should "respect the character of the countryside". One of the NPPF's core planning principles at paragraph 17, is to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Furthermore, the general support for tourism does not override the protection of the Green Belt from inappropriate development (para. 14 NPPF). The Pallets Wood appeal decision was taken having regard to the provisions of the NPPF and the inspector only felt able to attach minimal weight to the other considerations put forward in that case (which are similar to those raised here) including the need for tourism/diversification.
- 7.29 The future of Dalmonds Wood Farm is uncertain at this time. Although this can be said of any business, the rearing of pigs on the land is a new enterprise. Its ongoing success is projected rather than being founded on a successful extended history. The recent approval of a stockman's cabin at the site reflected this uncertainty, as permission was only granted for a three year period subject to the success of the business.
- 7.30 As the future of the business remains uncertain at this stage, Officers are not convinced that diversification of the enterprise would be appropriate. In the event that the rearing of pigs was to prove unprofitable, the cabins could potentially remain on site following the

closure of the business they were intended to support.

- 7.31 There are many examples in the District where current or former farms have created tourist accommodation within their grounds. However, these have typically involved the conversion of redundant buildings rather than the creation of new buildings on open land.
- 7.32 Officers are therefore not satisfied that the proposal represents an appropriate diversification of the sort encouraged in the NPPF. In addition, as noted with regard to point 1, the financial viability of the development remains in question. The creation of the cabins may result in a drain on the resources of the existing farm, leading to the failure of both.
- 7.33 With regard to point 7, officers have sought legal advice on whether a legal agreement could be put in place to require the cabins' removal in the event of the enterprise failing. The legal advice is that an appropriate amount of money could be set aside as part of a Section 106 agreement to ensure the removal of the cabins. The money could be released in the event that the business were to fail.
- 7.34 Such an agreement would, in officers' opinions, be appropriate if the proposal were to fail, but it is not considered to carry significant weight in favour of permission being granted, given the harmful impact of the development.
- 7.35 Overall, officers do not consider that very special circumstances have been shown to exist that would clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt caused by the proposed development.

#### Other matters

- 7.36 It is possible, in certain circumstances, to use land for camping and caravanning purposes without planning permission – for up to 5 caravans with an appropriate certificate from the Camping and Caravan Club. However, those sites are generally small in size and do not include the range of associated built development (which requires planning permission) as in this case. It is not considered therefore that there is any 'fallback' position in this case which would be of such significance as to constitute very special circumstances for justifying the development.

#### **8.0 Conclusion:**

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- 8.1 The proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt which, by definition is harmful to it. Furthermore, additional harm would be caused to the openness, character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 8.2 Officers acknowledge the benefits that would accrue to the local economy, as well as improving tourist accommodation within the District, but these considerations are not, in Officers view, unique to this particular site or area. They cannot, therefore, be regarded as unusual or very special.
- 8.3 Furthermore, there are concerns relating to the viability of the development, and whether the development could be said to support the newly established farming enterprise on the site. It is also unclear that the proposed restoration of the woodland could be delivered.
- 8.4 Officers consider that the harm caused by inappropriateness and the proposal's impact on openness and the character and appearance of the area carry substantial weight. In contrast, the other considerations carry minimal weight and do not clearly outweigh the harm identified. There are, therefore, no very special circumstances in this case to justify the inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 8.5 It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for the reason set out at the head of this report.