

**7 DCSE2009/0901/F - CHANGE OF USE OF LAND (PART RETROSPECTIVE) FROM AGRICULTURAL TO SITE FOR SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION FOR UP TO 173 CARAVANS/MOBILE HOMES FOR PERMANENT RETENTION ON SITE, INCLUDING ASSOCIATED REGRADING OF THE SITE, LAYING OUT OF DRESSED HARDCORE ACCESS TRACKS AND OF ANCILLARY INFORMAL GRASSED RECREATIONAL SPACE AT LAND ADJACENT TO COLERAINE BUILDINGS, COUGHTON, ROSS-ON-WYE, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR9 5SG.**

**For: Cobrey Farms per Antony Aspbury Associates, 20 Park Lane Business Centre, Park Lane, Basford, Nottingham, NG6 0DW.**

**Date Received: 12 May 2009**

**Ward: Kerne Bridge**

**Grid Ref: 61340, 21739**

**Expiry Date: 11 August 2009**

Local Member: Councillor JG Jarvis

### **1. Site Description and Proposal**

- 1.1 Coleraine Farm buildings are located to the north of the C1275 Coughton Lane, which runs along the valley bottom from Coughton in the west to Pontshill in the east. Ross is 2km to the north. The application proposes the retention of the existing mobile homes on site together with the addition of further mobile homes as need dictates for a minimum period of 10 years, on land immediately to the west of the large modern farm complex, which includes the office headquarters. Cobrey Farms farm 983 hectares with 395 hectares owned within the vicinity of the application site. The need for seasonal labour is dictated by the comparatively recent diversification into asparagus production, with 209 hectares grown this year and an intended increase to 260 hectares by 2012. In addition 188 hectares of salad potatoes are grown and there has been recent diversification into rhubarb and blueberries.
- 1.2 The seasonal workers accommodation site extends to 3.56 hectares and comprises land to the west of the farm buildings. The site is bound by the road to the south and the Castle Brook to the north. The site lies just to the east of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, on the floor of a steep sided, narrow valley with Penyard Park ancient semi-natural woodland and unregistered parkland on the hill to the north and Hengrove Wood (Site of Importance to Nature Conservation) to the south.
- 1.3 125 mobile homes are already on the site without the benefit of planning permission. The current application seeks to regularise the situation and relocate the caravans on to lower-lying land in an attempt to mitigate the impact upon the landscape and visual amenity of the area. This will involve re-profiling of current ground levels together with extensive landscape planting.
- 1.4 680 seasonal staff were employed in 2008, of which 650 were field or packhouse operatives, typically recruited from overseas. With the envisaged increase in asparagus production the demand for seasonal labour is predicted to rise to 700 at its peak, which is in late April and May (harvest time). The applicant is involved in exploratory work aimed at increasing the length of

the growing season. This would not increase the labour requirement, but would extend the period of peak labour demand.

#### Planning History

- 1.5 The current application follows from the refusal of DCSE2008/2581/F, which was for the same development. The application was refused for the following reasons:
1. In the absence of a full ecological assessment, the submitted application fails to satisfactorily address the existence (or otherwise) of protected species and the protection/mitigation of their habitat(s). As such the proposal is contrary to the Central Government advice contained within paragraph 99 of Circular 06/2005, Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and Policies NC1, NC5, NC6, NC7, NC8 and NC9 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.
  2. By virtue of its proximity to the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and two unregistered Historic Parks and Gardens, the site is considered to form part of a sensitive rural landscape. In this context the local planning authority is not satisfied that the proposed landscape mitigation strategy adequately addresses the identified visual harm caused by this specific development. The proposal is thus considered contrary to Policies LA2 and LA4 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.
  3. The application site is in the open countryside, accessible by the public highway C1275. In the absence of a Transport Assessment, the local planning authority is unable to determine the extent of the impact of the development upon the local highway network, the measures undertaken to promote sustainable travel patterns amongst the workforce or the extent to which off-site works might be necessary. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies S6, DR3, T6 and T7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 and Central Government guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development and Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas and Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport.
- 1.6 In 2005 Members of the Southern Area Planning Sub-Committee were minded to approve an application for the permanent retention of 68 seasonal worker's caravans on the site, although this was conditional upon meeting the outstanding flood risk related objections of the Environment Agency. In the absence of confirmation that the Environment Agency concerns were met, the application was treated as deemed withdrawn.
- 1.7 The intention, as it was under the 2005 and 2008 applications, is to undertake substantial re-grading of existing levels, primarily to reduce the slab levels of the caravans. The resultant spoil would be used to increase the height of the adjoining field. As a consequence the caravans will become further removed from the lane than is the case at present. The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) includes additional mitigation measures, which include the following:
- Planting of a dense, mixed native tree and shrub belt along the southern side of the site and access road;
  - Painting or cladding the roofs of caravans in dark, non-reflective grey material to reduce glare and visual impact;
  - Reinforcing roadside hedges and allowing them to grow up to at least 2 metres;
  - Planting individual fruit trees between the caravans;
  - Planting of a mixed native woodland block, with shrub layer and conifer component between the public footpath and the western edge of the site;
  - The introduction of a fast growing riparian woodland belt along the northern edge of the site, within the field to the north of the brook.

- 1.8 It is evident that the demand for caravans has increased not only in line with the expansion of the asparagus enterprise, but also as a result of changing worker expectations. The application describes that seasonal workers would have typically comprised students 'housed' 6 to a caravan. Nowadays, older couples are forming part of the workforce and they have an understandable reluctance to share with teenagers. As a consequence the number of caravans has been derived using 4-sharing as the basis.

#### The 'fallback' position

- 1.9 An important aspect of the proposal is that it is intended to retain the caravans year-round for a period of ten years. This is the principal factor in determining that planning permission is required. Under Part 5, Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, planning permission is not required "for the use of a caravan site on agricultural land for accommodation during a particular season by a person or persons employed in farming operations on land in the same occupation." This 'right' is subject to a number of qualifications, not least the requirement that the caravans be removed at the end of the 'season'. Changing agricultural practices have blurred the traditional season. Case Law suggests even in the event of the removal of the caravans, the site, by virtue of the associated hardstandings and ancillary infrastructure, would still be a caravan site (i.e. a material change of use of the land had occurred and planning permission was required irrespective of whether the caravans were in situation or not). The weight that can be attached to the 'fallback' is therefore a subjective judgement. In any event, the application is for permanent retention. The applicant maintains that the cost and impracticality of removing those vans not required all year would be prohibitive and would, in all probability, present difficulties in excess of those experienced with permanent retention, particularly given the limitations of the local highway infrastructure.

#### Foul drainage

- 1.10 It is intended to utilise a 'bio-bubble' to deal with effluent. The waste would be pumped to existing holding lagoons, where it would be mixed with water abstracted under license from the brook and used as fertiliser. The Environment Agency has been consulted on this aspect and also the flood related implications and their comments are reported below.
- 1.11 The application is accompanied by a series of supporting documents:
- (i) Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (DLA Ltd. April 2009): This document evaluates the landscape and visual impact from a series of local vantage points and addresses the need for mitigation in the form of landscape planting and topographic re-profiling as identified above.
  - (ii) Transport Statement (Antony Aspbury Associates, May 2009): This document outlines the trip generation and travel patterns associated with the proposal, together with measures already undertaken to ensure that vehicular movements arising from the occupation of the caravan site are kept to the minimum practicable level.
  - (iii) A Flood Risk Assessment (JDIH Envireau, April 2009). This document evaluates the likely sources of flooding and assesses whether there would be any additional risk to localised flooding as a result of the development. It concludes that due to the current and recommended water management systems at the site, the accommodation area will remain operational and safe during times of flood; will result in no net loss of floodplain storage and will not impede water flows and thereby increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
  - (iv) A Phase 1 Ecology Habitat Survey (DLA Ltd. January 2009): This document evaluates the impact of the proposal upon the habitat of any protected species that may be present and proposes mitigation.
  - (v) A draft site management plan (Cobrey Farms, January 2009): This document is intended to inform management of the site and makes recommendations aimed at mitigating the impacts arising from the housing of up to 700 seasonal workers in an open countryside location. Measures relating to private car use, travel planning, litter disposal

and health and welfare issues are involved. As an example, private car use is only permitted under license and is restricted to full-time workers who have a need to move independently between Cobrey Farms sites.

1.12 The application has been screened in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 (As amended). It is concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required. The screening opinion is on the statutory register.

## 2. Policies

### 2.1 National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1	-	Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement 7	-	Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
Planning Policy Statement 9	-	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
Planning Policy Statement 25	-	Development and Flood Risk

### 2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007

Policy S1	-	Sustainable Development
Policy S2	-	Development Requirements
Policy S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
Policy DR1	-	Design
Policy DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
Policy DR4	-	Environment
Policy DR6	-	Water Resources
Policy DR7	-	Flood Risk
Policy DR13	-	Noise
Policy DR14	-	Lighting
Policy H7	-	Housing in the Countryside outside Settlements
Policy H8	-	Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings and Dwellings Associated with Rural Businesses
Policy H11	-	Residential Caravans
Policy E13	-	Agricultural and Forestry Development
Policy T6	-	Walking
Policy T7	-	Cycling
Policy LA2	-	Landscape Character and Areas least Resilient to Change
Policy LA4	-	Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens
Policy LA6	-	Landscaping Schemes
Policy NC1	-	Biodiversity and Development
Policy NC5	-	European and Nationally Protected Species
Policy NC6	-	Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and Species
Policy NC8	-	Habitat Creation, Restoration and Enhancement
Policy NC9	-	Management of Features of the Landscape

### 2.3 Supplementary Planning Document

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape Character Assessment (2004)

## 3. Planning History

3.1	DCSE2000/0387/F	Permanent retention of 7 caravans. 6 used to accommodate students working on farm seasonally May to November, 1 caravan contains washing machine, drier and deep freeze:	-	Approved with conditions. A temporary planning permission expiring on 31 December 2005 with occupation limited to
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between May and November of each calendar year.

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| DCSE2004/3102/F | Asparagus grading and packing facility together with associated lorry parking, staff amenities, access roads and hard standing:  | - Approved 17.11.04   |
| DCSE2005/0042/F | Relocation and extension of residential site for seasonal and casual workers together with land areas to be re-profiled.   | - (Deemed Withdrawn - Member resolved to approve the application subject to overcoming the Environment Agency's holding objection). |
| DCSE2008/2581/F | Change of use of land (part retrospective) from agricultural to site for seasonal agricultural workers accommodation for up to 173 caravans/mobile homes for permanent retention on site, laying out of dressed hardcore access tracks and of ancillary informal grassed recreational space on land adjacent to Coleraine Buildings, Coughton, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SG | - Refused 14.1.09   |
| DCSE2009/0944/F | Erection of fixed, permanent steel framed polythene skinned Spanish polytunnels as plant nursery/propagation houses.   | - Undetermined. See Agenda Item 8   |
| DCSE2009/0945/F | Erection of agricultural plant comprising irrigation water tank, pump house and banded liquid fertiliser store.  | - Undetermined. See Agenda Item 9   |

#### 4. Consultation Summary

##### Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Environment Agency: The Environment Agency (EA) has no objection to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of conditions.

The EA recommends the removal of an existing culvert, which would alleviate flood risk to the proposed caravan site from the overland flood flow route and improve conveyance of flows along the brook.

It is also considered that the foul drainage details to cater for the proposed development are generally acceptable in principle. Conditions are recommended to ensure that the holding lagoons are of sufficient size to cater for the effluent and wash water produced. Further conditions are recommended in relation to pollution prevention i.e. the treatment of surface water drainage prior to discharge into the watercourse and the storage of any associated oils, fuels or chemicals.

- 4.2 Natural England: No objection, although it is requested that the recommendations made in the submitted Phase 1 Habitat Survey be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions. Specifically, hedgerows should be managed in accordance with the recommendations, including the timing of cutting and filling in gaps with suggested native species and the watercourse (Castle Brook) should be buffered, including new planting of appropriate native species, allowing natural regeneration and appropriate future management for wildlife and drainage.

Impacts upon the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are restricted by topography and vegetation, particularly Chase Wood. Mitigation recommended by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be delivered through a detailed landscaping plan, secured through an appropriately worded condition and to be agreed with the Council within 6 months of planning permission being obtained.

#### Internal Council Advice

- 4.3 Conservation Manager (Landscapes): Objection. The landscapes officer accepts that the proposed landscaping scheme, including riparian woodland belt planting along the northern bank of Castle Brook, native shrub and tree belt above the grass bank south of the caravans, planting up of gaps in the hedgerow along Coughton Lane and fruit tree planting between the caravans to break up the large expanse, would, once matured, enhance and partially restore this degraded 'Principal Settled Farmlands' landscape. The proposed landscaping would also contribute towards mitigating the adverse visual effect of the extensive layout of caravans on the landscape in the longer term. The officer remains concerned, however, about the positioning of a large caravan site in this rural and historic landscape setting because of the de facto adverse impact on the landscape character.

The officer is also concerned that the 6 metre buffer strip between the mobile homes and the brook is insufficient and that the brook, as a priority habitat in the biodiversity action plan, will suffer as a consequence. The landscape scheme design has not included an effective landscape buffer on the southern side of the brook, to protect the corridor habitat and species from human activity.

- 4.4 Conservation Manager (Ecology): Recommends a condition requiring the submission of a biodiversity protection and enhancement strategy.
- 4.5 Traffic Manager: Recommends that the occupation of the mobile homes be conditioned to seasonal agricultural workers engaged in agricultural and associated activities upon land owned by Cobrey Farms. Some concern is expressed at the scope of the submitted Transport Statement, particularly in relation to a qualitative assessment of the existing highway network and the suitability of the public transport network to meet expressed demand.
- 4.6 County Land Agent: The asparagus picking is very labour intensive. The seasonal agricultural workers have to live somewhere and living on site is more practical than trying to find temporary accommodation in the locality, which for these numbers would be impossible. The alternative would be a permanent hostel type accommodation which would take up less room and could ensure good long-term accommodation, or there could be a mixture of the two (mobile home and a hostel). There is no agricultural necessity for workers to reside on site, although due to the number of people involved and the narrow roads in the area it is not practical for the employees to travel, in the required number, to and from work on a daily basis. It is concluded that a long-term demand for seasonal workers accommodation at the level proposed will continue. As such, bearing in mind the constraints of the local highway network and the absence of local low cost accommodation in the numbers required, there is a justification for accommodation for up to 700 seasonal agricultural workers on site.

- 4.7 Environmental Protection Manager: No objection

- 4.8 Land Drainage Engineer: No response, although the issues are covered by the Environment Agency consultation response.

## 5. Representations

- 5.1 Walford Parish Council: "This was a difficult observation to settle. We do recognise that a business enterprise such as this needs support as it cannot succeed without it. But we also recognise the depth of feeling in the community that the number of caravans has grown beyond an easily absorbable figure. It was decided to support consent for caravans to the year 2010. During this time the strictest conditions are to be complied with in relation to comprehensive landscaping, camouflage of caravans and the Code of Conduct Document (Draft Site Management Plan) for workers. Beyond 2010 the applicant would have to apply for extended consent."
- 5.2 Ross Town Council: Objection. "It is totally inappropriate to put this density of housing on this site. An approximate 6% rise in the population will strain the infrastructure of the town, but although there will be a part-time doctor at the site, it will affect hospital and health centres, policing and local services e.g. refuse collection."
- 5.3 Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council: The Parish Council defers to Walford Parish Council, but would make the following additional points. The lanes around the farm are very narrow and not designed for large transport vehicles. The Parish Council is concerned at both the size and number of large vehicles on the network and the consequence to other road users and walkers. Potential light pollution should be controlled through requiring all external lighting to be on timers with sensor devices.
- 5.4 Campaign to Protect Rural England: This large, part-retrospective development has already had a damaging impact on the visual aspects of this formerly attractive valley and also on the local residents and users of the narrow C1275 access road. The applicant has retained caravans on site without the benefit of planning permission and has added to their number. It is understood that some of the caravans are only occupied for 3 to 4 weeks. The CPRE disputes the view that the landscaping will adequately screen the site. Walkers on public footpath WA19/RR11, to the west of Coleraine Farm, have a clear view of the development, as do residents on high ground to the south. This site is in beautiful open countryside, close to the Wye Valley AONB and affects two unregistered historic parks and gardens. Accordingly the proposal appears to be contrary to Policies LA1, LA2 and LA4 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

Questions are also raised as regards the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment, particularly in the light of the nearby presence of the Castle Brook and the River Wye SAC and SSSI.

Concerns are also raised in relation to transport issues. The Transport Assessment was carried out outside of the peak season and litter on the public footpaths between the site and Ross is reported as an issue. The lane is considered unsuitable for the level of heavy goods traffic associated with "industrial farming."

- 5.5 Wye Valley Society: Objection. The proposal is contrary to H7, H8 and H11 of the Unitary Development Plan. The permanent presence of residential mobile homes should only be permitted if the development of permanent dwellings would also be acceptable. Clearly it would not. The applicant's willingness to accede to planning conditions restricting the occupancy to no more than 9 months in one calendar year and that the duration be limited to 10 years makes it clear that these [mobile homes] should be treated as permanent dwellings for planning purposes. The proposed development is out of scale to its surroundings and the application fails to deal adequately with potential adverse impacts upon the brook and River Wye SAC, SSSI. The negative visual impact of the caravans from Chase Hill, the Chase Wood camp and

deer park on Penyard Hill will be significant and the Wye Valley Society is concerned that screening from elevated viewpoints will be ineffective.

- 5.6 Walford Parish Residents' Association: The residents' association is very concerned with the applications at Coleraine Farm. It is understood that the caravans should have been moved on and off the site before and after the season; many caravans have remained on site all year round since 2005. Local people are concerned about the unsuitability of the narrow lane, the C1275, which passes Cobrey and Coleraine Farms. Two sizeable vehicles cannot pass each other and whilst the applicant encourages the workforce to utilise public footpaths as a means of accessing Ross, there is resultant litter. There is also concern at the frequency of mini-bus journeys to and from the supermarket. Even if the mitigation plans proposed are carried out, the site will always be evident in the valley landscape as it is surrounded by higher ground. Light and noise pollution is also a concern amongst some local residents.
- 5.7 Ross-on-Wye and District Civic Society: Objection. This seems a disproportionate response to a peak demand that only lasts from April into May. Conclude that the development must have a significant adverse impact upon the We Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.8 Pontshill Residents' Association: Objection. The application is, in large part retrospective. The proposed expansion will increase the number of HGV and LGV movements associated with the site. The expansion will also affect the natural environment as more fields go under plastic and pumping stations are required. The application has implications for the nature of local communities and landscapes as traditional farming methods are replaced by industrial scale farming practices. The countryside will turn into something akin to an industrial estate. The unstated priority is to make a profit. If one accepts that savings in food miles can be offset by upward of 800 individuals travelling to and from Eastern Europe, there are few tangible benefits to this area for anyone other than the farm owners. The proposal is to the detriment of local communities. If seasonal workers are only in the country to accumulate money, then the benefit to the local economy will be minimal. Asparagus is not a staple and there are concerns that produce grown on Cobrey's land on the east coast is driven to Coleraine for packaging, thus increasing food miles.

Permitted development rights for the siting of caravans on agricultural land for the duration of the season is dated and not fit for purpose when the intended occupation is for nine months. Arrangements for community involvement in monitoring the site should be strengthened, with residents working alongside parish and district council representatives. Assurance is sought that sub-contracting of labour between neighbouring farms does not occur. Pontshill Residents' Association hopes that the committee will find in favour of the greater good and protect the quality of life of the hundreds of families who have built a life in South Herefordshire.

- 5.9 The AONB Unit has no objection to the siting of some caravans in this location, but does have concerns over its scale and its potential impact on the surrounding landscape. Whilst we consider that the number of vans is very high for the site, the structural landscaping proposed is welcome and appears to address the issue of views from within the AONB along the footpath to the north and west through the proposed hedgerow and structural planting along the streamside. The planting adjacent to Coughton Lane and the removal of the caravans at the top of the slope near the site entrance would help to improve views towards Chase Wood from Coughton Lane. Distant views are still likely to be possible from the footpath up the valley to the north. The new shelterbelts and orchard trees proposed should help to reduce this impact.

Advice is given as to the composition of the planting itself, although the AONB is pleased that the applicant has addressed issue relating to the AONB as views in and out of the AONB are a key strategic objective of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2004-2009.

- 5.10 There have been a total of 26 letters of objection to the proposal. The main issues raised can be summarised as follows.



- Noise pollution - how can this be prevented effectively? Conditions would be difficult to enforce;
- The scale of the proposal is akin to introducing a sizeable village into the middle of attractive open countryside;
- What is the justification behind the provision of recreation facilities?
- Landscaping will not mitigate the harm - a lot of views into the site are from elevated ground, and trees in the immediacy of the site will not be effective. Moreover it would take years to mature;
- Light pollution will increase with the increase in numbers;
- Litter is a problem on the local highway network, particularly as workers use local footpaths to access the town;
- The submitted Transport Statement is unrepresentative as the traffic surveys were undertaken outside the peak season;
- The road is narrow, lacking forward visibility and passing places. There is already conflict between farm traffic and cars. This will extend to pedestrians, whose number will increase;
- The increase in length of the season will presumably increase the frequency of vehicle movements;
- The sustainability credentials are questionable. Workers have to be flown in, which negates the fact that locally produced food is notionally more sustainable. There is also concern that Cobrey Farms produce grown on the east coast is driven to Coleraine Farm, further negating the reduction in food miles argument;
- The damage to the landscape will have an impact upon tourism, which will also offset any perceived economic benefits;
- The 'need' for the accommodation derives from the farmer's 'choice' to plant asparagus, which is not a staple food. The applicant is not forced to plant labour intensive crops, rather it is his choice;
- The arguments against removing the caravans at the end of the season are not persuasive;
- It is alleged that some of the workers are employed on other holdings in the area;
- The influx of immigrant labour leads to problems of anti-social behaviour in Ross and 'clashes of culture.'
- The increase in the length of the season will encourage workers to use their own vehicles, which will increase the number of vehicles on an inadequate road;
- The workers should use existing housing stock, which is more suitable than the caravans;
- The length of the season is no justification for permanency. A significant proportion of the vans will be occupied for fewer than 10 weeks of any calendar year and will sit there vacant otherwise. Why should the local landscape suffer the visual impact when the mobile homes are not even occupied?
- The development is akin to introducing a new village into a rural village with the attendant problems of visual impact, traffic and pressure on infrastructure and services;
- Foul drainage arrangements have the potential to pollute Castle Brook - a tributary of the River Wye SAC, SSSI;
- In the current economic climate the demand for labour should be met by locals;
- The development is an example of the further industrialisation of 'farming' at the cost of the natural environment and the future tourism prospects of the Wye Valley;
- On past experience the applicant is unlikely to abide by conditions;
- Cobrey Farms could have undertaken measures to reduce the visual impact that the existing caravans cause, but has decided not to;
- Contribution to the local economy of seasonal, non-domicile workers is marginal, which contrasts with the documented inward investment that results from tourism;
- There is concern that diversification into blueberries and increasing the duration of the season will lead to an increase in polytunnel coverage;
- The argument that centralising the accommodation adjacent to Coleraine reduces vehicle movements is spurious owing to the number of journeys to outlying, rented ground.
- A ten year permission appears excessive.

5.11 26 letters of support have been received. The content can be summarised as follows:

- Cobrey Farm produces good quality, local food which reduces carbon emissions associated with importing Peruvian asparagus by 700 tonnes/year;
- The asparagus harvest is labour intensive, although the labour demand will probably reduce in time with advances in harvesting machinery, which Cobrey Farms is helping to develop;
- It is sensible to locate the workers adjacent to the main packing house and largest single part of the holding. This reduces vehicle movements associated with the commute to work.
- Wye Valley asparagus is used in local pubs and restaurants, which is good for trade. Last year Marks and Spencers sold £5 million worth of Wye Valley asparagus, which promotes the Wye Valley nationally;
- The local economy benefits from the expenditure of the seasonal workforce;
- British people will not take up employment opportunities, which forces the applicant to employ migrant labour;
- British workers would be more likely to use private vehicles for the commute to work, which would increase vehicle movements along Coughton Lane when compared with the current situation;
- Cobrey Farms supports 22 full-time, predominantly British employees;
- A large, diversified agricultural operation such as Cobrey Farms, underpins a lot of rural business. Without these operations, associated businesses, including community facilities would be threatened.

The full text of these letters can be inspected at Southern Planning Services, Garrick House, Widemarsh Street, Hereford and prior to the Sub-Committee meeting.

## 6. Officer's Appraisal

- 6.1 There is no policy absolutely specific to the provision of agricultural worker's caravans, although the Supplementary Planning Document: Polytunnels, advises that accommodation requirements should form part of, or be considered alongside applications for polytunnel development. The absence of a specific policy is understandable given the permitted development 'fallback' position offered under Part 5, Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995. However, in order to qualify for the right to station mobile homes on agricultural land without the benefit of planning permission it is clear that the mobile homes must be reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the holding in question and must be occupied by people engaged in agriculture. It is increasingly the case, however, that the traditional growing and harvesting seasons are being increased through what some may term artificial means, to such an extent that it is considered more practical to retain 'mobile' accommodation on site on a permanent basis. The alternative would be to remove and reintroduce the caravans as and when required. This application asserts that to do so would be costly, time consuming and would add unnecessarily to vehicle movements on the local, narrow road infrastructure. There is also the difficulty in securing suitable storage for the mobile homes when not in use. The argument to the contrary is to ask why mobile homes that are only occupied for comparatively short periods of the year should be allowed to remain on site year round, to the detriment of the local landscape?
- 6.2 Members will note from the representations received that there is no shortage of points both in favour and against the proposal and a number of these points require a subjective judgement.

### Policy Appraisal

- 6.3 Unitary Development Plan Policy H7 (Housing in the open countryside) allows for the principle of agricultural workers dwellings in the open countryside and the qualifications are given at Policy H8 (Agricultural and forestry dwellings). Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that a long-term genuine need for the development exists, although this policy is

more usually applied to single dwellings, not caravan sites. In any event, the basic theme of justifying the development by association with an agricultural 'need' is a consistent requirement.

- 6.4 Policy H11 (Residential Caravans) states that proposals for the use of caravans or mobile homes for permanent residential use will be subject to the same locational requirements as permanent residential development, although temporary permission may be granted for mobile homes to meet special identified short-term needs under policy H8. As the application states that permission is sought for an initial 10 year period, it is difficult to argue that the proposal is to meet a short-term need. However, in resolving to approve the 2005 application for the permanent siting of 68 mobile homes, the Council has comparatively recently accepted the need for the provision of seasonal workers accommodation on this holding. The County Land Agent has commented that asparagus is very labour intensive and would not contest the labour demand figures presented with the application. He does, however, note that it is envisaged that mechanisation might in time reduce demand. On this basis he considers it prudent to impose a temporary permission – this was recommended on the previous application. On this basis, it is not considered appropriate to apply Policy H11 rigidly and to the exclusion of other Unitary Development Plan policies.

#### Key issues

- 6.5 If the agricultural need for the development is accepted, the provision of a site immediately adjacent the office headquarters, the largest contiguous block of asparagus and the storage/grading facilities is considered appropriate. Policy E13 (Agricultural and Forestry Development) requires that new development be sited with existing groups of buildings where practical. In terms of landscape and visual impact, which will be discussed more fully below, the site is considered to represent the most suitable option. It then falls to consider the development against specific topic based policies of the development plan and determine whether it is consistent with their aims and objectives. The key issues are as follows. These broad sub-headings encapsulate most of the issue arising from consultation responses.

1. Landscape Impact
2. Ecological impact
3. Transport implications
4. Flooding and effluent
5. Economic considerations

- 6.6 These 'key' issues are identified having regard to both planning policy and the content of consultee responses. Several themes arising from the neighbour/notice letters are considered immaterial to the planning issues. For instance, the nationality of the worker's is immaterial. Although it is likely that the majority of the workforce will come from Eastern Europe, this is not material to the planning issues. Harm, in terms of the impact upon the local landscape or highway safety etc, derives from the presence of the caravans, not the nationality of the occupiers. Although the sustainability credentials of importing labour can be questioned, it is not considered ultimately that it is the role of the planning process to involve itself in the workings of the labour market. Likewise, the problems of litter and anti-social behaviour within Ross at weekends are considered immaterial insofar as they could not, legitimately, be used as a basis to refuse the application.

#### Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.7 The site is located upon agricultural land on the floor of a stream valley. The area is described as 'Principal Settled Farmlands' in the adopted Landscape Character Assessment. The upper slopes of the valley are steep and include a wooded hill to the north of the site, Penyard Park, which is an Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland. Hengrove Wood is a wooded hill to the south, designated as SWS. This higher ground is defined as principal wooded hills. The Wye Valley AONB lies to the west of the site (approximately 150m). Both Penyard Park and Cobrey Park, which borders the western edge of the site, are unregistered historic parklands.

- 6.8 The landscapes officer acknowledges the rationale behind siting the caravans on lower lying land and leaving a buffer strip between the site and the road. The officer also considers that the set of viewpoints assessed are representative of the views from publicly accessible areas into the site, that views of the site are contained within the valley, with the exception of the view from Goodrich Castle, and that the most significant view of the site would be from the west within a range of 1km.
- 6.9 However, the LVIA is not considered to sufficiently address the degradation of character of Principal Settled Farmlands that has already taken place within the stream valley, due to the intensification of agriculture and the introduction of industrial scale buildings. The LVIA also asserts that on the valley floor, "the fields are well hedged with a network of traditional mixed native features forming a dominant feature of the valley floor." What is evident, however, through comparison of pre-war maps with current aerial photography is that a lot of hedgerow has already been lost, which together with the introduction of large buildings referred to above is indicative of degradation of landscape character.
- 6.10 The landscapes officer notes the varied strategies for mitigating the adverse impact through landscaping. These include locating the caravans on low lying land, setting the site as far from Coughton Lane as possible, breaking the mass of caravans through orchard planting and painting or cladding the roofs a muted colour. It is suggested the combined effects would, over time, contribute to mitigating the adverse visual effect of the caravans in the long-term and would also act to partially restore the landscape character, which has been significantly degraded.
- 6.11 Concern remains, however, at the absence of planting between the caravan site and the southern side of the Castle Brook. This concern is also shared by Natural England, who recommends that a condition be imposed to require suitable landscaping along the riparian corridor in order to provide habitat enhancement and a buffer against the proximity of human activity. In relation to the specific impact upon the setting of the AONB, Natural England observes that impacts upon the AONB are restricted by topography and vegetation, particularly Chase Wood and therefore raises no objection.

### **Landscape and Visual Impact - Summary and Conclusion**

- 6.12 Both the rural and historic landscape character of the valley floor has been degraded by the fragmentation of the historic pattern of hedgerows and the introduction of industrial scale buildings. To an extent, the introduction of 173 caravans will compound this. However, it is recognised that the mitigation strategy will, over time, reduce the adverse visual impact of the proposal and the statutory body has no objection to the proposal as regards its specific impact upon the setting of the AONB. It is recommended that specific conditions be imposed to ensure that the mitigation strategy set out in the LVIA is delivered on site within the first available planting season following the grant of planning permission.

### **Ecological Impact**

- 6.13 The absence of an ecological survey was one of the reasons for refusal of the preceding application DCSE2008/2581/F. This has been remedied through the commissioning of a Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken in August 2008 and updated in January 2009. Subsequently, at the request of the Environment Agency, Coughton Brook was assessed. The desktop study using the National Biodiversity Network found that no protected species have been recorded either upon the site or within the immediate vicinity. However, with the 10 km square that includes Coleraine Farm, pipistrelle, lesser horseshoe and brown long-eared bats have been recorded, whilst otter and water vole have been recorded along the River Wye.
- 6.14 The survey concludes that although no evidence of bats was found, it is possible that they could be roosting in the woodlands surrounding the farm. Badger activity was recorded although it is concluded that the mobile home site will not impact upon any identified setts.

6.15 There is evidence that there is a large population of Great Crested Newts at Coughton and although records indicate the population is more than 500m from the site, it is indicative that they are in the area. However, an assessment of the ponds on the farm failed to find evidence of the presence of Great Crested Newts. However, the Council's ecological advisors recommend that due to the documented nearby presence of Great Crested Newts, further survey work should be undertaken, and thus recommend the imposition of a condition to require the submission of a biodiversity protection and enhancement strategy. As per the advice of the landscapes officer and Natural England, the ecological advisor also recommends that the southern side of the brook be planted so as to protect any protected species that as yet may have gone undetected.

### **Ecological Impact – Summary and Conclusion**

6.16 The concern regarding the impact upon the ecological value of the site focuses primarily upon the impact upon the Castle Brook and the habitat that it provides. Although the Phase I Habitat Survey identified no European Protected Species, it is recognised that the brook is capable of supporting Otters, Water Voles, Dormice and Great Crested Newts. As such, the Council's Ecologist and Natural England are still concerned that the scheme does not allow for a sufficiently wide buffer strip between the mobile home site and the southern edge of the brook. Natural England recommends that the strip should be 10 metres, it is presently 6 metres. The applicant has acknowledged the potential adverse impacts upon the riparian corridor and has agreed to introduce an appropriate fence and planting along the buffer strip, which will be submitted to the Council in consultation with Natural England and the Council's Ecologist. Comments on this particular issue will be reported verbally.

### **Transport Issues**

6.17 From the consultation responses on transport issues, it is clear that the scale of the operation at Coleraine Farm buildings results in heavy use of the Coughton Lane (C1275) at certain times during the year. Local residents have expressed concerns at the size and frequency of the agricultural and articulated vehicles associated with Cobrey Farms, and many have raised concern at the number of vehicle movements associated with the movement of the workforce between the various Cobrey Farm sites, and also journeys made into Ross for shopping and recreational purposes. Letters of objection identify the narrow and twisty nature of the lane as particularly hazardous and also suggest an impact upon residential amenity in relation to dwellings that are located close to the highway. The absence of passing places along the lane is a further issue, and many respondents have mentioned coming into conflict with farm vehicles. Concern has also been raised at the propensity for seasonal workers to walk the lane to the bus stop in Coughton or at Ryeford, thus creating further concern in relation to highway safety. Although it is acknowledged by many that Cobrey Farms actively encourages use of the public footpaths as a safer means of accessing Ross, concern has been raised at the concomitant impact upon the amenity of these footpaths, particularly the dropping of litter along well-used and scenic routes.

6.18 In response, the Transport Statement explains that it is a condition of employment, with a very limited number of exceptions that private motorcars are not allowed on site. As a consequence, virtually all of the vehicular traffic associated with the workers resident on site comprises the following:

- Transport of those workers harvesting fields not accessible on foot from the accommodation site. This involves 12 two-way trips by 15 seat mini-bus per day. It is stated that 120 workers will walk to fields within the valley to harvest crops and 240 will walk to work in the packhouse, which is immediately adjacent the accommodation site.
- Transport to shopping and leisure in Ross. This is undertaken by two minibuses offering a service to workers every afternoon/evening from Monday to Saturday. It is acknowledged

that the number of two-way trips each day is a function of demand, but 6 two-way trips per day (one an hour) is typical and rarely exceeded.

- Workers are free to hire taxis at their own expense. This is minimal, presumably owing to cost.
- Transport of individual workers to, for example, the doctor/dentist would equate to less than one trip per day. Such journeys would be undertaken in the welfare officer's car.

6.19 It is concluded that the sum total of the above equates to 20 two-way trips per day, of which 18 would be undertaken by a 15 seat mini-bus during off-peak hours. The Transport Statement contrasts the sum total of vehicular movements as identified above with the situation that would arise were the mobile homes removed and then reintroduced to the site. The Transport Statement also highlights that as a proportion of the total vehicular movements associated with Cobrey Farm's agricultural operations, the movement of the workforce accounts for a comparatively small percentage.

6.20 It is clear that Coughton Lane is less than ideal in terms of its capacity to accommodate large commercial and agricultural vehicles. However, it is unrealistic to suppose that a farm can exist without being accessed by articulated vehicles and tractors and in this regard the limitations of the Coughton Lane are not easily overcome. Letters of objection conclude that the choice of cropping has a direct impact upon vehicular movements and it is to the decision to grow asparagus, which is particularly labour intensive that a number of the objections relate. Although it might be desirable from a traffic generation perspective that Cobrey Farms maintained traditional farming methods, the fact remains that planning permission is not required for the diversification into asparagus. The local planning authority cannot, therefore, exercise any control over the decision to grow and expand the asparagus enterprise and cannot impose any control over associated vehicular movements.

6.21 It would also appear that the physical movement of the workforce, be it to their work destinations or for recreational or shopping purposes, accounts for a comparatively small proportion of total vehicular movements associated with the farming operation. The Transport Statement submitted with the application attempts to divorce the movements directly attributable to the workforce from those attributable to the farming operations e.g. dispatch of goods via articulated lorries.

6.22 If the decision is taken to refuse the application, then the applicants will have to consider how else to meet the accommodation requirements of the seasonal workforce. Although objectors would appear to favour traditional, less labour intensive forms of agriculture, as stated above the local planning authority can exercise no control over the decision to diversify into asparagus and blueberries. Moreover, if asparagus was removed in favour of potatoes, the application states that HGV movements would in fact increase by comparison with the current position. In this context it is considered appropriate to differentiate between the trip generation directly attributable to the workforce, as opposed to those attributable to farming operations. In essence, were the mobile homes removed from the application site, there is no assurance that the number of HGV or farm traffic movements would reduce to what local residents might describe as acceptable levels. Moreover, refusal of the application may lead the applicant to implement the 'fallback' position, whereby mobile homes would have to be removed from the site when not required. Although your officers are not necessarily persuaded by the applicant's arguments against removing the caravans in relation to cost and the difficulty of securing storage, it does seem reasonable to suppose that the constant removal and reintroduction of mobile homes would lead to increased HGV traffic on Coughton Lane and an increase in the number of journeys associated with the workforce commute.

### **Transport Issues – Summary and Conclusions**

6.23 Cobrey Farms is a very large agricultural operation with 395 hectares owned within the vicinity of the application site and a further 588 hectares owned or rented. Coleraine Farm is the operational headquarters. Your officers conclude that it is reasonable, for the purpose of

making a decision on this application, to draw a distinction between the traffic generated by the farming operation and those trips directly attributable to the seasonal workers accommodation.

- 6.24 Although it is acknowledged that Coughton Lane is not ideally suited to large vehicles, the farm traffic and goods vehicle movements associated with the farming operation would continue irrespective of the presence or otherwise of the seasonal worker accommodation. Furthermore, in locating the workforce in close proximity to the largest contiguous block of asparagus, the application takes advantage of arguably the most sustainable site in terms of trip generation.
- 6.25 The concerns expressed in the letters of objection are genuine and understood. However, the number of tractor and HGV movements cannot be controlled or influenced by this application and could in fact increase were the decision taken to revert to a larger acreage of potatoes for example. In this context, and based upon the information presented in the Transport Statement, your officers do not consider that refusal of the planning application on transport related grounds can be sustained. It is recommended that a condition be imposed restricting occupation of the mobile homes to seasonal workers engaged in agriculture upon land owned or farmed by Cobrey Farms. Sub-contracting of labour to farms not farmed in partnership by Cobrey Farms will not be permitted.

#### Flood Risk, pollution and foul drainage

- 6.26 The Environment Agency resolved to object to the 2005 application on the basis that there was a risk of overland flooding of the caravan site. The Environment Agency's position in respect of flood risk and drainage issues are summarised as follows.
1. Foul Drainage: The EA is now broadly satisfied with the proposed use of a bio-bubble treatment plant, from where treated effluent will be pumped to holding lagoons for re-use upon the land. Additional information is required regarding the volume of the lagoons and whether there is sufficient land upon which to use the treated effluent. A condition is recommended to ensure that the design and capacity of the lagoons if fit for purpose, with a requirement that the EA is engaged in further consultation.
  2. Flood Risk: The applicant has given assurance that a part of the planning application a culvert at crossing 3 will be removed and replaced with a bridge with a soffit level no lower than 48.8 AOD. Consent for this work has already been issued by the Environment Agency. By removing the culvert, the Environment Agency is satisfied that flood risk arising from overland flow would be alleviated by improving conveyance along the brook. It is recommended that a condition is imposed to secure the completion of this work within an appropriate timescale.
  3. Surface Water: Sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) are recommended to deal with surface water drainage. SuDs techniques can include soakaways, infiltration trenches, permeable pavements, swales, ponds and wetlands, aimed at reducing flood risk by attenuating the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from a site. A condition would be an appropriate means of securing the necessary surface water attenuation.
  4. Pollution: A condition is required to ensure that surface water run-off does not pollute watercourses, surface water sewers or the soakaway system.

#### Flood Risk, pollution and foul drainage – Summary and Conclusions

- 6.27 The previously stated concerns of the Environment Agency have been met, but are dependent upon the imposition of conditions to secure satisfactory outcomes in respect of flood risk, foul drainage, surface water drainage and pollution control.

#### Economic Considerations

- 6.28 The application does not make specific reference to any economic considerations to justify the presence of the mobile homes. However, a number of the letters in support of the application relate anecdotal evidence of the positive contribution that Cobrey Farms offers in terms of local

employment opportunities and the economic benefits that the seasonal workforce brings about through increased expenditure upon goods and services in Ross. The promotion of the area through the national sale of Wye Valley asparagus is put forward as a further benefit to the local area.

- 6.29 Letters of objection counter the above by arguing that the adverse visual impact created by the industrialised nature of the Cobrey Farms operation will dissuade tourists from visiting the area, with an associated negative and widespread impact upon the economic prosperity of the area. Frankly, the effects on the local economy, either negative or positive, are not easy to quantify with any accuracy and for that reason are not afforded significant weight in the determination of this application.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

- 6.30 The application is clearly highly contentious locally, with a quantity of opposition and support within the local community. The issues explored above are considered representative of the consultation responses received and are all material planning issues to be assessed against the planning policy framework. Applications for large-scale seasonal worker accommodation are increasingly commonplace in Herefordshire and are symptomatic of changing agricultural practices and the quantity of seasonal, typically migrant, labour required.
- 6.31 It is also clear that the industrialisation of farming has, in this case, had an adverse impact in absolute terms, upon the landscape character of the area. Industrial scale buildings and hedgerow removal are manifestations of this and the introduction of 173 mobile homes would add further to this adverse impact. However, the 'fallback' position allows farmers to site mobile homes on agricultural land for agricultural workers without the requirement for planning permission on the proviso that the mobile homes are removed from the site at the end of the season. In seeking permanent retention of the mobile homes, this application offers the opportunity to require the effective landscaping of the site in combination with other mitigation measures that would not otherwise be available.
- 6.32 Whilst officers are mindful of the representations on traffic grounds, the proportion of journeys directly attributable to the seasonal workers' site is considered inconsequential when considered against the overall number of trips associated with the agricultural operations as a whole.
- 6.33 It is also noted that the Environment Agency is now satisfied that flood risk is addressed and that the foul drainage arrangements are, subject to the agreement of additional detail, acceptable.
- 6.34 On balance, the application is recommended for conditional approval for a period not in excess of 10 years. This 10 year period will enable the Council to review the position as regards the permanent retention of the mobile homes, especially in the light of prevailing commercial circumstances and Cobrey Farms' future operational requirement for migrant seasonal agricultural workers. A condition is also recommended to ensure that the mobile homes are phased in their introduction as need dictates.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

- 1 This permission shall expire on 5th August 2019. The mobile homes hereby approved shall be removed from the site on or before that date and the land restored in accordance with details (including timescale) to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.**

**Reason: The local planning authority is not prepared to permit the permanent retention of the mobile homes in this location other than for the specified 10 year period, which is**



in recognition of the functional requirements of the holding and so as to comply with Policy H7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

- 2 For the duration of this planning permission the applicant shall, by no later than 1st February in each calendar year, submit the following information by way of notification to the local planning authority:
  - i) Including those already on site, the maximum number of mobile homes to be required on site over the course of the following 12 months, which shall not exceed a maximum of 173 units at any one time;
  - ii) A timetable for the introduction of any additional mobile homes and the removal of any already stationed on the site.

The introduction/removal of mobile homes shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted timetable.

**Reason:** To ensure that the mobile homes are introduced according to the functional need of the holding in accordance with Policy H7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 3 The occupation of the mobile homes hereby approved shall be limited to persons solely employed in agriculture and associated activities on land owned or farmed by Cobrey Farms Ltd.

**Reason:** It would be contrary to Policies H7 and H8 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 to grant planning permission for a mobile home in this location except to meet the expressed case of agricultural need.

- 4 The scheme for flood mitigation works shall be carried out in accordance with the details submitted with the Flood Risk Assessment (JDIH Envireau) and shall consist of the removal of the culvert at crossing 3 (as shown on figure 2, reference 37.438c87, dated September 2008) with a replacement bridge with a soffit level no lower than 48.8m AOD. The work shall be implemented by 30th August 2009, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

**Reason:** To protect the caravan site area from flood risk and ensure that future occupiers are not at risk so as to comply with Policy DR7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 and Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk.

- 5 Details of the flood mitigation measures indicated within sections 6.1 and 9 of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency. The measures shall be implemented in accordance with a timetable to be agreed with the local planning authority and shall be maintained accordingly.

**Reason:** To manage the residual impacts of flooding on the proposed mobile home site area and ensure that occupants are not at risk so as to comply with Policy DR7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

- 6 A scheme for the disposal of foul drainage effluent from the proposed development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority within 4 months from the date of this permission. The scheme shall include confirmation of the treatment plant, the design and volumes of the holding lagoons and management plan detailing disposal of treated effluent. Thereafter the scheme shall be implemented and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

**Reason:** To ensure a sustainable method of foul drainage disposal and prevent pollution of the water environment so as to comply with Policy DR6 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

- 7** Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from parking areas and associated hardstandings shall be passed through trapped gullies with an overall capacity compatible to the site being drained.

**Reason:** To prevent pollution of the water environment so as to comply with Policy DR6 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007.

- 8** I14 (Time restriction on music)

**Reason:** In order to protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties and to comply with Policy DR13 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 9** I02 (Scheme of measures for controlling noise)

**Reason:** In order to protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties so as to comply with Policy DR13 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 10** I21 (Scheme of surface water regulation)

**Reason:** To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to comply with Policy DR4 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 11** H13 (Access, turning area and parking)

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway and to conform with the requirements of Policy T11 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

- 12** H29 (Secure covered cycle parking provision)

**Reason:** To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy and to conform with the requirements of Policy DR3 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 13** H30 (Travel plans)

**Reason:** In order to ensure that the development is carried out in combination with a scheme aimed at promoting the use of a range of sustainable transport initiatives and to conform with the requirements of Policy DR3 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan

- 14** Within 3 months of the date of this planning permission, a biodiversity protection and enhancement strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be implemented and maintained thereafter for the lifetime of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

**Reason:** To comply with Policies NC5, NC6, NC8 and NC9 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan 2007 and fulfil the Council's obligation to Nature Conservation and Biodiversity imposed by the NERC Act 2006.

- 15 Within 3 months of the date of this planning permission a site management plan for the operation of the use (to include maintenance of common areas, letter collection and disposal, the control of amplified music, external lighting and car parking arrangements) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The operation and use of the site shall be in accordance with the management plan.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of nearby residents and to ensure compliance with Policy E3 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 16 G01 (Earthworks)

Reason: (Special Reason but to include - in order to ensure that the development conforms with Policies DR1 and LA5 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan).

- 17 G10 (Landscaping scheme)

Reason: In order to maintain the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy LA6 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

- 18 G11 (Landscaping scheme - implementation)

Reason: In order to maintain the visual amenities of the area and to comply with Policy LA6 of Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

**INFORMATIVES:**

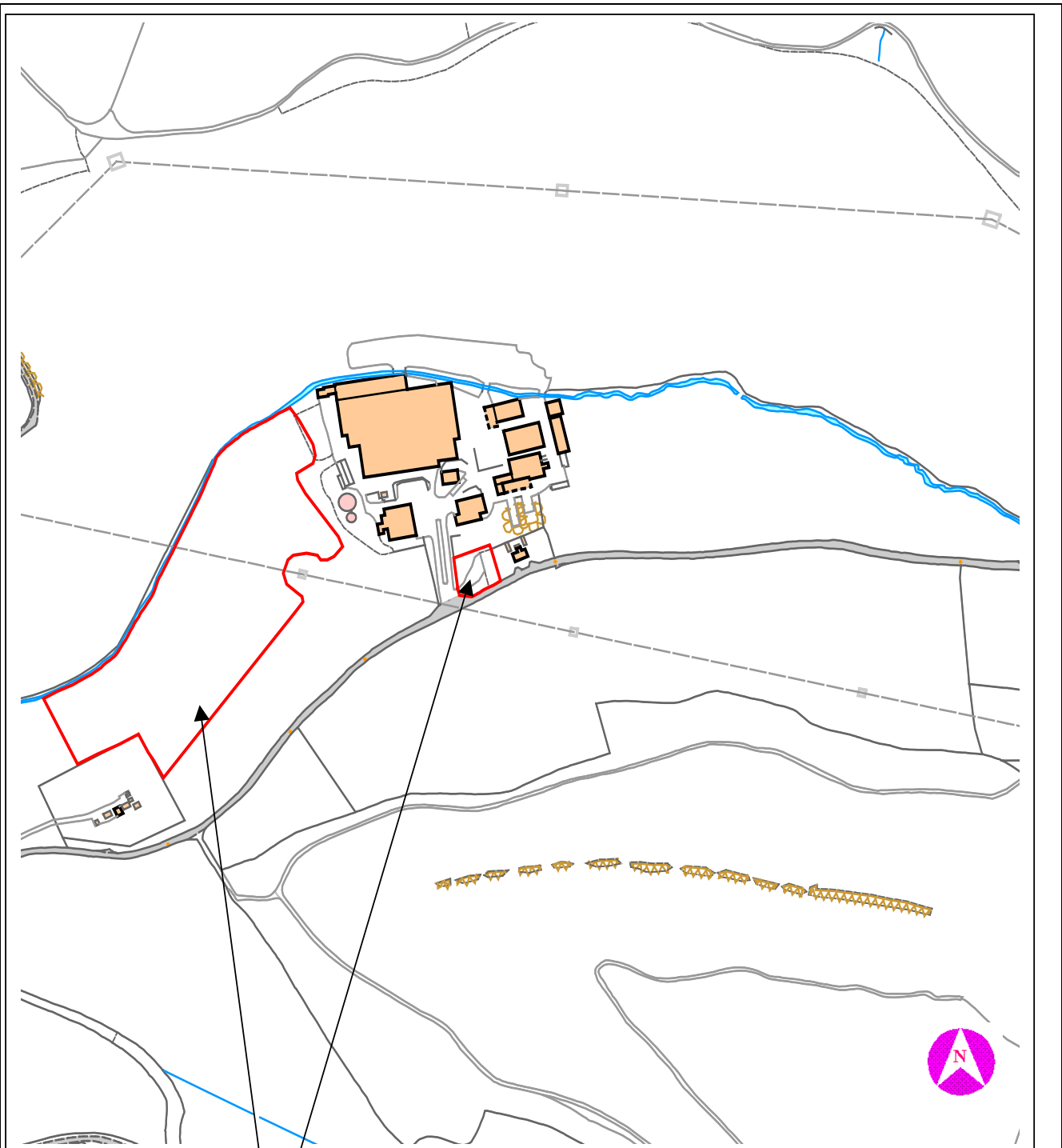
- 1 N19 - Avoidance of doubt - Approved Plans
- 2 N15 - Reason(s) for the Grant of Planning Permission
- 3 HN01 - Mud on highway
- 4 HN04 - Private apparatus within highway
- 5 HN05 - Works within the highway
- 6 HN10 - No drainage to discharge to highway
- 7 HN24 - Drainage other than via highway system
- 8 HN25 - Travel Plans
- 9 HN26 - Travel Plans
- 10 HN27 - Annual Travel Plan Reviews

Decision: .....

Notes: .....

**Background Papers**

Internal departmental consultation replies.



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**APPLICATION NO:** DCSE2009/0901/F

**SCALE :** 1 : 5000

**SITE ADDRESS :** Land adjacent to Coleraine Buildings, -, Coughton, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SG

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