

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>23 NOVEMBER 2022</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>212514 - PROPOSED CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT RURAL BUILDINGS TO CONFERENCE HALL AND OFFICES FOR CHARITY USE AT LOWER MOSEWICK FARM, BIRCHWOOD LANE, STORRIDGE, HEREFORDSHIRE, WR6 5DU</b>  <b>For: Mr Deuchar per Mr Owen Fry, Shiretown House, 41-43 Broad Street, Hereford, HR4 9AR</b>
<b>WEBSITE LINK:</b>	<a href="https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=212514">https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=212514</a>
<b>Reason Application submitted to Committee – Contrary to provisions of the development plan</b>	

**Date Received: 24 June 2021**

**Ward: Bishops Frome & Cradley**      **Grid Ref: 373594,250351**

**Target Date: 30 September 2022**

Local Member: Cllr Ellie Chowns

## 1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site is approximately 0.2 miles south-east of Longley Green, close to the county border between Herefordshire and Worcestershire, within the Malvern Hills AONB. The site is accessed via a private stone track directly off Birchwood Lane (C1142). All land within the application site has an Agricultural Land Classification of Grade 3 (Good to Moderate). Surrounding area and land uses consists predominantly of agricultural grazing land and associated buildings, with the settlement of Cradley approximately 3.2 miles south-west.
- 1.2 The site comprises a brickwork cottage (Harp Cottage), and a traditional timber frame threshing barn, located near the centre of the holding and both redundant. Harp Cottage and the threshing barn are not listed although both are viewed to have heritage significance and make a positive contribution to the immediate area.
- 1.3 The buildings are accessed via a recently upgraded stone track (approved under P194117/PA7) from Mosewick Farm. Parking is available immediately adjacent to the existing agricultural buildings at Mosewick Farm, approximately 0.15 miles north, although additional parking can be achieved directly adjacent the buildings under consideration.
- 1.4 The application seeks full planning permission for the proposed conversion of Harp Cottage and the adjoining threshing barn for use by a mental wellbeing charity. The applicant, along with support from a wider team at the University of Worcester, is establishing a mental wellbeing charity, to provide support to emergency services and military personnel.

## **2. Policies**

### **2.1 Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy**

SS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
SS4 – Movement and transportation  
SS5 – Employment provision  
SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness  
SS7 – Addressing climate change  
RA5 – Re-use of rural buildings  
RA6 – Rural economy  
SC1 – Social and community facilities  
MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel  
    E1 – Employment provision  
LD1 – Landscape and townscape  
LD2 – Biodiversity and geodiversity  
LD3 – Green infrastructure  
LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets  
SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency  
SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources  
SD4 – Waste water treatment and river water quality

The Core Strategy policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local\\_plan/137/adopted\\_core\\_strategy](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/137/adopted_core_strategy)

### **2.2 Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan (made on 21 August 2017)**

CNDP5 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
CNDP9 – Design

The Cradley NDP policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory-record/3047/cradley-neighbourhood-development-plan>

### **2.3 National Planning Policy Framework (revised July 2021)**

2 – Achieving sustainable development  
4 – Decision-making  
6 – Building a strong, competitive economy  
8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities  
9 – Promoting sustainable transport  
11 – Making effective use of land  
12 – Achieving well-designed places  
14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF can be viewed through the following link:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

## 2.4 Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance can be viewed through the following link:-  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

## 2.5 Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

Chapter 1 – Landscape (Policies LP1, LP2, LP3 and LP4)  
Chapter 3 – Biodiversity (Policies BP1, BP2, BP3, BP4 and BP5)  
Chapter 4 – Historic Environment (HP1, HP2 and HP3)  
Chapter 7 – Built Development (BDP2, BDP4, BDP5, BDP11, BDP13)  
Chapter 9 – Transport and Accessibility (Policies TRP1, TRP2)  
Chapter 10 – Recreation and Access (Policies RP1, RP2, RP5, RP6)

The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan can be viewed through the following link:-  
<http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/19-24-MHAONB-Management-Plan.pdf>

## 3. Planning History

- 3.1 P194117/PA7 – Application for prior notification of agricultural or forestry development – proposed road – prior approval not required

## 4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

### 4.1 Severn Trent – No objection

*“As the proposal has minimal impact on the public sewerage system I can advise we have no objections to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.”*

### 4.2 Welsh Water – No objection

*“It appears the application does not propose to connect to the public sewer, and therefore Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has no further comments. However, should circumstances change and a connection to the public sewerage system/public sewage treatment works is preferred we must be re-consulted on this application.”*

### 4.3 The Ramblers – No objection

*“No objection: CD68 passes close to the buildings to be converted and appears to be unobstructed. CD72 which runs along the edge of the carpark appears to be unobstructed and must remain accessible at all times.”*

### 4.4 Herefordshire Ramblers – No objection

*“Public Footpath CD68 runs very close to the rural buildings being converted but does not appear to be obstructed. Public footpath CD72 runs along the edge of the proposed car park but looking at the plans does not appear to be obstructed by possible parked cars. Footpath CD72 must be clearly way marked around the car park and must be accessible at all times”.*

### 4.5 Forestry Commission – No adverse comments to offer

### 4.6 Malvern Hills AONB Unit – Support

*“This application lies within the boundaries of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), an area designated for its national landscape importance. The Malvern Hills AONB Unit seeks to encourage high quality developments and to protect and enhance the local landscape.”*

*This is a protected landscape and national and local planning policies require 'great weight' to be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. In addition, the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan (2019 - 24) is a material consideration in relation to planning and states the following (policy BD2) 'Development in the AONB and its setting should be in accordance with good practice guidance, including that produced by the AONB Partnership'*

*The application site lies within the Principle Wooded Hills character area of the AONB, a very tranquil and rural part of the protected landscape. We note that this application is for the re-development of existing buildings and that great effort has been taken to make sure that the site does not lose its tranquil and rural character, both in terms of design and in its practical operation as a wellbeing centre. The applicant has taken into consideration pre-application advice and has referenced both the MHAONB management plan and guidance documents. We also welcome the production of an LVA which indicates that there should be little impact upon views. This is particularly important given the number of well used public footpaths nearby.*

*We particularly welcome the decision to make the development a 'walk in' site but would ask that plans are submitted for the parking arrangements at the nearby farm. Although the farm area is more suitable than the open field site there is the possibility that car parking here could impact upon the farm setting.*

*The re-building of the cottage using original materials is to be welcomed and we feel that the relatively modest re-development and extension of the barn is appropriate to both the site and the wider landscape setting. The use of the courtyard formed by the extension as an outside seating area and use of minimal hard landscaping also reduces the impact of using the site, although we do have concerns as to where activities such as lathe work, ironmongery, pottery, basket work and glass work, mentioned in the Design and Access statement will take place, since there is limited outdoor / covered space.*

*We are content with the building's rural design, scale and material selection, which takes inspiration from the existing buildings but provides a contemporary twist. The building will retain its historic footprint and the new materials should be sympathetic and complementary to the existing building. Although the drawings and D and A statement imply a close match with existing materials we would like to be re-assured that the 'natural stone' and 'red brick', for example, will match existing materials in all respects, including colour and texture, to ensure that the finished buildings do not look too 'new'. We would also suggest that windows, doors, fascia and bargeboards are finished in dark grey rather than light grey, to avoid a 'domestic' appearance. We note that consideration has been given to minimising the effects of lighting but would suggest that further details should be provided to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to reduce light pollution from both within and outside the development. We are also encouraged by the statement that the wider farm area will benefit from this development and the activities carried out there. There is considerable opportunity for the biodiversity overall to be improved and we welcome the opportunities which this development should bring to the farm environment. In summary, the proposal appears to offer a way of restoring existing rural buildings which have fallen into disrepair and making a positive contribution to community wellbeing, whilst having relatively low impact upon the AONB landscape. We therefore support this application."*

#### **4.7 Malvern Hills District Council – No objections**

*"The Council has no immediate concerns in respect of the proposed development. Two listed buildings located nearby, Bridge Cottage and Ripple, which are within Malvern Hills District however we would recommend the following matters are carefully considered as part of this development proposal:*

- The extent of glazing and its visibility from higher slopes.*
- The use of non-reflective glazing.*
- The recessing of new areas of glazing.*
- The use of local, natural materials which integrate within the local palette.*

- *How the development fits within the AONB and fulfils the requirements of the AONB management plan, AONB Building Design guide and the AONB guidance on the selection and use of colours in development.*
- *The limiting of a new external lighting in line with guidance issued by the AONB partnership. In addition, it is recommended that comments are sought from the AONB partnership as well as your landscape officer and ecologist. Please also see the Malvern Hills AONB Guidance on Building Design document (<https://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/managing-the-aonb/guidance-documents/>).*”

**4.8 Natural England – No objection/condition recommended**

*“SUMMARY OF NATURAL ENGLAND’S ADVICE: NO OBJECTION - SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE MITIGATION BEING SECURED*

*We consider that without appropriate mitigation the application would damage or destroy the interest features for which both Halesend Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest and Leigh Brook Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest have been notified. In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required / or the following mitigation options should be secured:*

- *Surface water strategy*

*We advise that an appropriate planning condition or obligation is attached to any planning permission to secure these measures.“*

**4.9 Worcester City Council – No comments to offer**

**4.10 Open Spaces Society – No response**

**4.11 Herefordshire Wildlife Trust – No response**

Internal Council Consultations

**4.12 Building Conservation Officer – No objections/conditions recommended**

*“I am happy to accept these amendments to the cottage. If minded to approve the application I suggest we condition details of the reconstruction of the cottage as follows:*

- *Roof coverings to be handmade plain clay tiles to approved sample.*
- *Rainwater goods to be cast iron or aluminium.*
- *Timber frame drawings to be submitted at 1:20 scale.*
- *Bricks to be handmade to an approved sample and a sample panel of brickwork to be prepared and approved to agree mortar mix, colour, joint profile and brick bond.*
- *Joinery details at 1:2 scale – windows to be hardwood casements with metal opening lights”*

**4.13 Landscape – No objections/conditions recommended**

*“I have reviewed the latest information. The drainage proposal around the main site is now shown on the landscape mitigation drawing and does avoid the planting areas. The car park drawing is welcome and clearly shows areas of vegetation to the boundaries that will be retained and enhanced.*

- *If the application is to be approved then a condition should be added for tree protection, hard and soft landscape details around the car park to be provided and agreed by the local authority prior to commencement of construction.*
- *An implementation condition should be added for Figures 2 and 3 of the LVA, which show the landscape mitigation, plant schedules and specifications for the main site.*
- *A further condition should be added for a landscape maintenance and management plan to be provided.*

*This is requested in order to maintain the amenity of the area in accordance with Core Strategy Policies LD1 and LD3.”*

**4.14 Transportation – No objection/condition recommended**

*“The local highway authority has no objection to the application, however, due to the proximity of the boundary with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) it would be prudent to also consult the local highway authority at WCC. Conditions: CB2 (Cycle storage)”*

**4.15 Ecology – No objection/conditions recommended**

*“It is noted that the council’s drainage consultants have raised an objection as currently there is no certainty of how foul water can be managed. A scheme that demonstrates it has capacity and clearly comply with all relevant regulations and Core Strategy SD4-LD2 should be submitted and approved by the council’s technical drainage consultants PRIOR to a final permission being granted. This will ensure that all potential effects from foul water on Leigh Valley SSSI and local watercourses and associated habitats/species are not affected by additional nutrient loading/pathways. Subject to the final foul water scheme proposed being approved by the LPA drainage consultants there are no further Ecology comments or objection raised.*

*The updated surface water management scheme is noted utilising flow attenuation crated systems. These must include all relevant features to ensure that all potential pollutants including silts-particulates and discharges from vehicles are removed prior to final discharge to the local watercourse. Confirmation the proposed system can technically achieve this is requested through final approval from the council’s drainage consultants. Subject to the final surface water scheme proposed demonstrating pollutant-contaminant and silt/particulate removal being confirmed by the LPA drainage consultants there are no further Ecology comments or objection raised.*

Other ecology comments

*The amended Ecology Report by Turnstone Ecology dated March 2022 is noted and refers.*

*The phrase “and the more common Myotis species are uncommon in the United Kingdom” is confusing and not substantiated with a significant number of bat records in the county including “common Myotis species” such as Natterer’s, Daubenton’s, and Whiskered or Brandt’s (the latter two often called ‘small Myotis species’ as potentially hard to differentiate in the field).*

*The need for further optimal period bat surveys to inform actual use of the existing buildings and surrounding habitats (Core Sustenance Zone that would support any bat roosting) and actual mitigation and compensation requirements to support any Protected Species Licence triggered is identified within the supplied report. The LPA has no reason to consider that the final works approved would not be able to accommodate the required mitigation and compensation – although these may require further amended plans (eg bat loft and access) to be approved by the LPA as part of the planning process.*

*A copy of the final optimal period bat survey completed should be submitted to the LPA to provide clarity and record of the final bats found at the site for future reference. This is not required prior to any appropriate protected species licence being applied for which is secured under a separate condition securing the recommendations in the updated ecology report supplied.*

*Ecological Protection and Biodiversity Net Gain*

*The ecological protection, mitigation, compensation and working methods scheme, including the biodiversity net gain enhancements and management of all lighting features, as recommended in the ecology report by Turnstone Ecology dated March 2022 shall be fully implemented and hereafter maintained in full as stated unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

*Reason: To ensure that all species are protected and habitats enhanced having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019’ (the ‘Habitats Regulations’), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, National Planning Policy Framework (2021),*

NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1, LD2 and LD3 and the council's declared Climate Change & Ecological Emergency.

#### *Protected Species Records and Ecological Emergency*

To record and inform knowledge of protected species at the site and presence in the wider locality – Malvern Hills AONB and adjacent woodland SSSI, within 5 months of completion, a copy of the final optimal period bat survey report and full records of species identified, shall be supplied in writing to the local planning authority and Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.

Reason: To ensure that all species are recorded and protected having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, National Planning Policy Framework (2021), NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1, LD2 and LD3 and the council's declared Climate Change & Ecological Emergency."

#### 4.16 Land Drainage – No objections

"Our knowledge of the development proposals has been obtained from the following additional sources since our previous comments in September 2021:

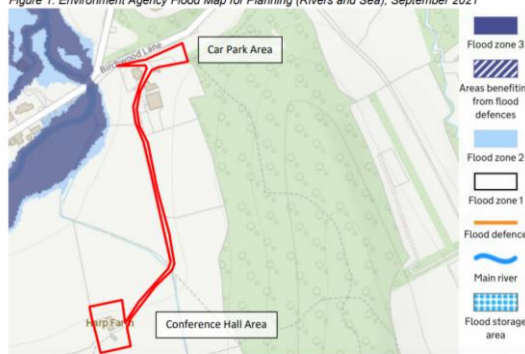
- Amended Location Plan 14.6.22 (Ref: HA38690\_PL\_02\_B);
- Amended Proposed Site Layout 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/001);
- Land Registry Ownership Boundary 001 14.6.22;
- Land Registry Ownership Boundary 002 14.6.22;
- Amended Proposed Drainage Strategy 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/002 Rev A);
- Amended Proposed Car Park Drainage Strategy 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/003 Rev A);
- Amended Drainage Construction Details 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/004 Rev A);
- Response to LLFA Comments 14.6.22;
- Drainage Calculations 14.6.22;
- Drainage Calculations 2 14.6.22;
- Photos from Agent 14.6.22.

#### Overview of the Proposal

The Applicant proposes the conversion of Harp Cottage and an adjoining barn for commercial/charity purposes. The site covers an area of approx. 0.39Ha and is currently a brownfield site. An unnamed watercourse (tributary of Cradley Brook), referred to within the report as a drainage ditch, flows through the Harp Farm access and joins with Cradley Brook which is located approx. 70m from the Conference Hall carpark. The topography of the site slopes down from the south of the site towards the north of the site by approximately 5m.

#### Site Location

Figure 1: Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea), September 2021



#### Flood Risk



## Fluvial Flood Risk

Review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (Figure 1) indicates that the site is located within the low risk Flood Zone 1. As the proposed development is less than 1ha and is located within Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Environment Agency standing advice, the planning application does not need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Scenarios requiring a FRA

	Within Flood Zone 3	Within Flood Zone 2	Within Flood Zone 1
Site area less than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA not required*
Site area greater than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA required

\*except for changes of use to a more vulnerable class, or where they could be affected by other sources of flooding

## Surface Water Flood Risk

Review of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that the site is not at risk of surface water flooding. There is a surface water flow route associated with a watercourse which appears to flow under the access road for the proposed development site.

## Other Considerations

Review of the EA's Groundwater map indicates that the site is not located within a designated Source Protection Zone or Principal Aquifer.

## Surface Water Drainage

Infiltration testing has been undertaken at the site whereby 2 trial holes were excavated to 1.6mBGL. Both tests failed to drain due to poor infiltration and were abandoned. Groundwater was encountered in Trial Hole B and was measured to a depth of 1.4mBGL. Drainage Layout drawings have been provided for the Conference Hall and the Car Park.  
Conference Hall Area

For the Conference Hall area, we note proposals for the surface water to be attenuated by crates designed for a 1 in 100yr + 40% CC event. The proposed crate volume is 7m<sup>3</sup> with the dimensions 2m x 7m x 0.5m (W x L x D). The crates will have a controlled discharge of 2l/s (HydroBrake orifice size of 75mm) to a combined outfall, which is proposed to discharge to the north into an existing mapped drainage ditch. Further details regarding the proposed outfall ditch are found within the Foul Water Drainage section. It appears that the combined outfall pipe is to cross the middle of an agricultural field. All pipework is confirmed to be laid within the land ownership boundary; this includes the proposed outfall locations. We recommend that the discharge pipe is laid close to the field boundary, in order to prevent future damage from agricultural practices, such as ploughing. We understand that the existing access track will remain as existing. The courtyard area has been included within the surface water drainage system.

## Car Park Area

For the proposed car park, the surface water is proposed to also be attenuated within crates designed for a 1 in 100yr + 40% CC event. The Drainage Calculations state that there is a required attenuation volume of 19m<sup>3</sup>. The Drainage Layout drawing states that the proposed attenuation crate volume is 19m<sup>3</sup> however the proposed dimensions are 4m x 5m x 0.5m (W x L x D) which only provides a volume of 10m<sup>3</sup>. We assume this is an error, however the dimensions should be amended on the Drainage Layout for construction purposes.

The crates will have a controlled discharge of 2l/s to the Cradley Brook. The proposed HydroBrake orifice size is now stated to be 75mm, in line with our previous recommendation. A headwall is proposed to be constructed to achieve this discharge to Cradley Brook. A headwall construction detail drawing has now been provided. A 25mm kerb is proposed along the car park boundary to

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Josh Bailey on 01432 261903



direct the surface water to a proposed gully which will reduce the runoff onto the existing highway. This will connect to the surface water drainage system which discharges to Cradley Brook. It has been confirmed that all proposed pipework and outfall locations are within the landowner boundary.

#### Foul Water Drainage

Percolation testing has been undertaken at the site whereby 1 trial pit was excavated to 800mmBGL. Again, the pit failed to drain and was abandoned. A detailed foul water drainage strategy has not been provided. The Drainage Layout drawing for the Conference Hall suggests that the foul water will drain to a Package Treatment plant, the capacity of which is not specified. This must be sized in accordance with the British Flows and Loads guidance. The treated foul water is then proposed to discharge to a combined outfall (with surface water runoff) to an existing drainage ditch located to the north. This is acceptable in principle, providing the receiving watercourse has a non-seasonal base flow. A headwall construction detail drawing has been submitted. Photographs of the ditch have been submitted and show water within the ditch, reportedly on all occasions. It is stated to have a depth of 2m and a width of 4m at the top of the bank. It has been confirmed that all proposed pipework and outfall locations are within the landowner boundary.

#### Overall Comment

*We hold no objections to the proposed development.”*

#### 4.17 **Trees – No objection/condition recommended**

*“As stated in my previous comments, I don’t think the application has considerable arboreal constraints and would only ask that a Tree Protection Plan is submitted prior to any commencement of work should the application be approved. This is to ensure the requirements of policy LD1 are met. CKB - Protection during Construction”*

#### 4.18 **Environmental Health (Noise and Nuisance) – No objection**

*“From a noise and nuisance perspective our department has no objections to this proposal”*

#### 4.19 **Environmental Health (Housing) – No comments to offer**

#### 4.20 **PROW Officer – No objection**

*“Providing public footpath CD68 remains unobstructed PROW do not object to the conversion.”*

#### 4.21 **Economic Development – No response**

#### 4.22 **Waste Management – No response**

### **5. Representations**

#### 5.1 **Cradley and Storrige Parish Council – Support**

*“CSPC supports the proposal as it complies with CNDP 3, 4, 5, 6 & 9, and makes a welcome use of derelict farm buildings, however, CSPC would like to raise concerns over the safety of walkers using PROW CD72, the route of which runs through the proposed car parking area for 16 cars.”*

5.2 One other letter of representation has been made, submitted on behalf of the Ledbury Area Cycle Forum, and raising a query in respect of further details of cycle storage.

5.3 All consultation responses can be viewed on the Council’s website by using the following link:-  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning\\_services/planning\\_application\\_search/details?id=212514](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=212514)

5.4 Internet access is available at the Council’s Customer Service Centres:-

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/customer-services-enquiries/contact-details?q=customer&type=suggestedpage>

## 6. Officer's Appraisal

### *Policy context*

- 6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states as follows: “*If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*” In this instance, the adopted development plan comprises the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy (CS) and the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Cradley NDP). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a significant material consideration.
- 6.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (the 2012 Regulations) and paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires a review of local plans be undertaken at least every five years in order to determine whether the plan policies and spatial development strategy are in need of updating, and should then be updated as necessary. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted on 15 October 2015 and a review was required to be completed before 15 October 2020. The decision to review the Core Strategy was taken on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The level of consistency of the policies in the local plan with the NPPF will be taken into account by the Council in deciding any application. From reviewing those policies within the CS applicable to the determination of the application, they are viewed to be entirely consistent with the guidance contained within the NPPF. As such, significant weighting can be afforded.

### *Background*

- 6.3 The applicant has established a mental wellbeing charity, to provide support to emergency services (particularly the Ambulance service), and also military personnel. The site will be used as a base for this charity. The charity would operate a retreat programme from the buildings, with the focus of sessions run being on combating burnout and mental health resilience. The charity ('Reset') is registered with the Charity Commission (charity number 1188488). The charity is being developed in association with the University of Worcester, who will provide oversight of the project and evaluations of support being offered, paired with advice on the development and implementation of the programme operated by the charity.
- 6.4 Given the programme outlined within supporting documents, only small numbers of people will be on site at any one time. It is important to the charity that the buildings and activities associated are low-key and compatible with the on-going functioning of the farm and the rural setting it sits in. Both the farm and wider rural setting is why this site has been chosen.

### *Principle of development*

- 6.5 In assessing the principle of development, members are directed to Policy RA5 of the CS, which relates to the re-use of rural buildings. It is noted that there are no specific national policies, except in relation to residential development, although making the effective use of land is enshrined at Section 11 of the NPPF. Whilst there is no policy of relevance in principle within the made Cradley NDP, at paragraph 10.2 (Re-use of land and buildings), the parish council identifies that it will work with residents, owners of land and buildings, and other stakeholders to bring back into economic use any brownfield sites and vacant properties, especially those which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.
- 6.6 The sustainable re-use of individual and groups of redundant or disused buildings, including farmsteads in rural areas, which make a positive contribution to rural businesses and enterprise and support the local economy (including live work units), or are essential to the social well-being of the countryside, will be permitted where:

1. *design proposals respect the character and significance of any redundant or disused building and demonstrate that it represents the most viable option for the long term conservation and enhancement of any heritage asset affected, together with its setting;*
2. *design proposals make adequate provision for protected and priority species and associated habitats;*
3. *the proposal is compatible with neighbouring uses, including any continued agricultural operations and does not cause undue environmental impacts and;*
4. *the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and*
5. *the building is capable of accommodating the proposed new use without the need for substantial alteration or extension, ancillary buildings, areas of hard standing or development which individually or taken together would adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or have a detrimental impact on its surroundings and landscape setting. (Taken from Policy RA5 of the CS directly)*

- 6.7 The threshing barn is in reasonable condition and structurally sound. Works to this building include an extension on the footprint of a part of the barn which has been previously demolished. It is clear from the western elevation, historic mapping and from some remaining walls on site that there was once a structure at this location. The converted barn will provide the main base for the charity, providing a conference room, meeting rooms and break-out space for activities, toilets, as well as a kitchen facility.
- 6.8 Since Harp Cottage was last occupied as a residential dwelling in the 1960s, it has been unmaintained and has become dilapidated, to the point where the building has experienced a significant collapse in August 2022. Proposed works will involve Harp Cottage being taken down and rebuilt utilising the existing timber members and brickwork to ensure that it is visually consistent with the site and would be utilised for offices, and staff break room/toilet facilities.
- 6.9 Whilst the threshing barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion, Harp Cottage clearly necessitates re-building works to facilitate this part of the proposal. In this instance, your officers note that the proposal would not be compliant with the development plan as the building would not be capable of conversion unless a considerable amount of re-building to Harp Cottage is undertaken, establishing tension with Policy RA5(4) of the CS.
- 6.10 However, this needs be balanced against the clearly identifiable social benefits, including onsite delivery and wider public assistance and why this application has been brought forward. The building will provide a base for a mental wellbeing charity for ambulance service and military personnel. Members will note that Herefordshire Council is a signatory of the Herefordshire Armed Forces Community and coordinates a cross sector Civilian Military Task Group (CMTG), whose role is to deliver aims of the covenant. This includes addressing the needs of the armed forces community across the county. The need to provide accommodation and other services to ex-service personnel is recognised nationally and reflected in the Armed Services Covenant.
- 6.11 The application site, in terms of its context and surroundings, is ideal to accommodate the use in terms of useable space and its tranquil rural setting. Careful consideration has been given to how the proposal relates to the surrounding area geographically and historically, and how it sits within its wider setting. The massing of the proposed development is designed to best suit the character of the area, minimising visual and landscape impact.
- 6.12 The scale of the proposed development is consistent with the existing building, and massing and layout have been designed to reflect the appearance of traditional agricultural buildings. Both Harp Cottage and the adjacent threshing barn are relatively small in scale and the design of the buildings has considered the scale for the adaptive reuse of these buildings. To maximise the benefits of these buildings and location, it is essential to the charity that the buildings are well integrated into the wider landscape setting and that the proposed conversions make the most of the heritage value of the existing buildings.

- 6.13 The proposed use will continue operate alongside farming activities at nearby Lower Mosewick Farm. The continued agricultural use of the wider site will ensure the character of the area is conserved through on-going maintenance and management of the holding. It is considered that the proposal is compatible with adjoining, neighbouring uses, according with Policy RA5(3).
- 6.14 Integrated within the courtyard created by the barn and cottage, will be a formalised seating area surrounded by proposed soft landscaping. This area is ideally located as it is south facing, benefiting from direct sunlight. The wider setting and surrounding landscape is characterised by trees, hedgerows, and permanent pasture fields. There is significant existing soft landscaping in the surrounding area which would be enhanced as part of the proposed. In order to ensure that the buildings are viewed as part of the landscape, additional planting in the surrounding area will be focused on established hedgerows and clusters of trees.
- 6.15 Car parking will be located within the main cluster of buildings at Lower Mosewick Farm, with the buildings themselves capable of being reached on foot, noting the PROW which runs directly from Birchwood Lane to the immediate south of the buildings, providing genuine active travel measures. This minimises the landscape impact further, as it ensures parking is directed to areas best screened to ensure no urbanising elements are introduced into this rural setting. There is an existing access track leading from the farmyard at Mosewick Farm and additional parking area at Harp Cottage for any participants in the project, to transport anyone with limited mobility. This conserves the landscape character of the area by limiting areas of hardstanding around Harp Cottage and the barn which are attractive landscape features. The proposal, taken together, would reinforce the agricultural character of the buildings and provide a modest enhancement to landscape setting, according with Policy RA5(5).
- 6.16 The proposed would provide easy and safe access to external secure cycle storage, in addition to an external bin storage which will be situated on the farmyard at Lower Mosewick Farm. The buildings and their location provides an appropriate site to accommodate the proposed use in creating a useable space and given the tranquil rural setting of this site. There are clear social and economic benefits of the scheme as a whole, which are appreciated and have considerable weighting, unique to this location. In considering the tranquil nature of the application site to be appropriate and reflecting on policies SS4 and MT1 of the Core Strategy, whilst it does not provide the connectivity in terms of choices of transport that are required by policies SS4 and MT1 of the Core Strategy, it would be favourable to acknowledge that remoteness and tranquillity would be required for such a proposal of this nature.
- 6.17 From a policy perspective, the vision for Herefordshire set out within Chapter 3 of the CS states that opportunities and benefits from leisure, heritage, learning, and health, amongst other things, will be maximised to support an improved quality of life for all. The proposal wholly encompasses this vision which will allow the mental wellbeing clarity to establish itself, providing opportunities for emergency service and military personal to receive support and training in mental resilience through a programme that encourages the learning of new skills and hobbies to benefit participants in the long-term. Furthermore, the proposed utilised existing building of heritage and landscape, value in a way that enhances the rural character of the area, whilst not adversely affecting continued agricultural operations, with significant ecological and environmental benefits.
- 6.18 The design of the proposal respects and in some ways, enhances the landscape character of the locality, retaining the heritage value of the buildings. The buildings in their current state are not able to be utilised for any practical use and thus the proposed represents the most viable option for the long term conservation and enhancement of this heritage and landscape asset. The proposed incorporates appropriate provision for protected and priority species which is incorporated into the submitted ecology report. The proposed is compatible with the surrounding agricultural use and would have no adverse effects on the agricultural operation of Mosewick Farm. The threshing barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion; however, Harp Cottage requires structural work as part of the proposed development. Further to this, an extension is

proposed to the threshing barn, in the place of a historic section of the building, however this is not a significant extension and would enhance the character of the site. It is therefore considered that the proposal would accord with Policies RA5 (1, 2, 3 and 5).

- 6.19 As clarified above, the proposal requires significant work to Harp Cottage, which would conflict with Policy RA5(4), and this needs to be considered in the planning balance, and with reflection on other policies within the development plan and if there are significant social, environmental, and economic benefits of the scheme, as a result of material considerations, as a whole, which have considerable clout in the planning balance, to make an informed assessment and recommendation.

#### *Design, Appearance and Sustainability*

- 6.20 As part of the proposed development, Harp Cottage will be carefully taken down and rebuilt using the existing timber members and brickwork. The adjoining threshing barn will be converted to be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and environment and will be of a traditional timber frame, whilst incorporating a modern finish, which will enhance the building's visual appearance. An extension is proposed to the barn which would provide a kitchen, seating area, and toilets for the main building. This extension has been designed to recreate the massing of a previous part of the barn which has been removed.
- 6.21 The proposed design reflects the agricultural character of both buildings and their scheduled setting, and will retain a number of the original timber framing, stonework, and brickwork and stone plinth and brick adjacent materials to the barn. The new materials which will form part of the proposed development of which are sympathetic and complementary to the existing buildings and surrounding area. The building's rural design, scale and material selection, takes inspiration from the existing buildings but provides a contemporary twist. The threshing barn will re-establish its historic footprint and the new materials should be sympathetic and complementary to the existing building.
- 6.22 The windows to the proposed buildings will comprise of timber frame and double-glazed units. The buildings would be refurbished sympathetically so that they retain their historic appearance. The proposed development picks up on the important features and characteristics of the surrounding area. The density and scale of the proposed had been designed to be consistent with the other agricultural buildings within the locality of the property. The materiality reflects that of the local area through the use of timber boarding which will soften the appearance of the building and provide a connection with the natural tones created by the surrounding trees.
- 6.23 Sustainability measures will also be achieved by converting it into a low energy building, taking a fabric first approach utilising high performance insulation. In addition, it is proposed to use renewable heat sources including a ground source heat pump. This will be done sympathetically, including the reuse of existing materials to ensure that the character of the traditional barn and cottage is retained. The proposed design, appearance and sustainability consideration is viewed to be consistent with the relevant requirements of policies SS7, SD1, RA5, LD1 and LD4 of the CS, which is consistent with Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF, as well as Policy CNDP9 of the Cradley NDP.

#### *Landscape*

- 6.24 The application site, aside from the two redundant buildings, sits within an isolated setting, approximately 0.15 miles south of Longley Green. A stone track to the buildings has been constructed and aside from this, the setting of the site is very tranquil, with outlook over the open countryside. There are a number of public footpaths surrounding the site, where the amenity value for walkers is considered to be very high. The site also falls within the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In assessing the proposed, coherence has been given to the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan. Members will also be mindful of paragraph 176 of the

NPPF, which advises that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, particularly in AONBs, which has the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

- 6.25 The landscape character type is Principle Wooded Hills. Bearswood Common to the south is identified as a provisional local geological site. Halesend Wood to the east is a designated Ancient replanted woodland. Cradley Brook runs to the east of the site. Mosewick Farm is situated close to the roadside, which is typical of the Longley Green village character.
- 6.26 This application has been supported by a landscape and visual impact assessment. This assessment describes the site as being a well-established farmstead that is an important component of an attractive and historic landscape. The assessment concludes that the proposed will fulfil recognised management objectives for this landscape character area, providing visual, cultural, and biodiversity benefits. Further to this, the report finds the proposed will result in positive change.
- 6.27 The tranquil, rural, isolated nature of the site has been respected in the site plan by restricting the external space to a small paved seating area and communal garden sited between the two buildings. The open field setting to the north is therefore retained without the introduction of fencing, signs or other paraphernalia. The existing hedgerows around the site will be retained and enhanced and the existing trees to the south are to be retained. It is noted that there will be very limited vehicle access to this remote location. The very implication of bringing the site back into use, after so long abandoned and left to nature, will of course alter the character of the site, however, the intended use as a “wellbeing centre” would not likely have a negative impact on the wider landscape character.
- 6.28 Views from adjoining PROWs were taken into account within the landscape and visual impact assessment, which finds that the positive refurbishment of the derelict farm buildings and the strengthening and enrichment of the landscape, support recognised management objectives and that the proposed development would result in benefits the wider area. The external landscape changes will therefore be very limited. The buildings themselves, however, will be restored and rebuilt, and both structures will appear larger than the remains that are present now. The LVA has considered suitable viewpoints and it is accepted that there are public locations where the new buildings will be seen.
- 6.29 The Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan recognises that small changes such as a gradual deterioration in hedgerow condition and the loss, without replacement of trees in fields and hedgerows, are a cumulative threat to the health of the AONB landscape. For a number of years, the site has been poorly managed from an agricultural perspective and also from a natural capital perspective. The proposed development seeks to address this through the improvement of existing hedgerows and planting of new trees. The proposed also helps to secure the proper management of the site for the long term as ongoing operations and activities run, in addition to the existing agricultural business, will allow the land to be properly managed.
- 6.30 The development is considered to have a very low landscape impact and the impact is further mitigated through utilisation of the farmyard as the main car park. Overall, an in concurring with the views of the Council’s Landscape Officer, it is considered that the application and development proposals are in accordance with CS Policy LD1, which is consistent with Section 15 of the NPPF and Policy CNDP5 of the Cradley NDP. While there will be some change to the landscape character and alterations to views of the site, the use and appearance can be suitably integrated and will not detract from the wider setting. Conditions will be recommended securing tree protection (as also raised by the Council’s Tree Officer), hard and soft landscaping details to be agreed and implemented, to incorporate the landscape mitigation, plant schedules and specifications for the site, and a landscape maintenance and management plan to be provided, to maintain the amenity of the area and conserve the Malvern Hills AONB.



## Heritage

- 6.31 Members will be aware of their statutory duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 6.32 There is a Grade II Listed Building within proximity of the site, located within Lower Mosewick Farmyard, known as the barn, east of Mosewick Farmhouse (UID: 1177246). The building is a small late 17th century barn with a timber frame and plaster panels. The barn has a stone plinth and a tiled roof with gable ends.
- 6.33 As raised earlier in the report, the buildings are considered to have some historic value as they are early buildings of a traditional construction, particularly the stone threshing barn with its timber frame indicating a probable 17th century date and the site appears on late 19th century mapping.
- 6.34 A Heritage Impact Assessment accompanies the submission. The layout of site will essentially remain unaltered, with the key characteristics – that of working relationship between the former working barns, courtyard and cottage, being retained. The site has been vacant since the early 1990s and there is a risk of further decline and potential complete loss, as encountered through the recent collapse experienced to Harp Cottage.
- 6.35 Development to and within the setting of heritage assets should look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance. It is considered the proposal supports the long-term conservation of the heritage assets, reducing the risk of their loss entirely. The element of re-building in relation to both buildings of course is noted and would not be compliant with Policy RA5(4), although this is returned to in the Planning Balance.
- 6.36 The barn is of a vernacular character with timber framing and horizontal weather boarding and the design has worked with the existing structure and taken the approach of minimal intervention. The ‘extension’ which reinstates the experience of the courtyard and brings back to life the working farmstead to be experienced in a new way takes cues from the historic materials and traditional form but with a contemporary twist to ensure there is a still a visual legibility between ‘old’ and ‘new’.
- 6.37 PPG affirms that if it is not deliberate: “*Disrepair and damage and their impact on viability can be a material consideration in deciding an application*”. In assessing heritage impacts, the proposal is an example of a small, traditional farmstead which through conversion, can make a contribution to the rural economy, whilst retaining local distinctiveness. Having no economic use, adaption to the base of a mental wellbeing charity, is deemed to be of the optimum viable use, ensuring long-term survival. The building will retain its historic footprint and the new materials should be sympathetic and complementary to the existing building and conditions are recommended in respect of samples of materials, at the request of the Malvern Hills AONB Unit and Building Conservation Officer, as well as more detailed design elements including timber frame and joinery detailing.
- 6.38 Through amendments between the applicant, your officers and the Council’s Building Conservation Officer, the proposed designs are sensitive and retain traditional characteristics of the agricultural barns and the historic farmstead. The extension which is essential for the re-use of the non-designated heritage asset reflects the historic footprint whilst not replicating a pastiche design and respects the balance of a contemporary and sensitive intervention.
- 6.39 The proposed development is considered to have no significant adverse effects on any listed heritage assets and would considerably improve the quality of the rural landscape and historic environment. The development would transform a redundant, overgrown, and unsightly site into

one that is abundant in high quality and provide a new development of huge community value. The application is viewed to conserve the heritage assets identified, according with Policy LD4 of the CS, consistent with Section 16 of the NPPF. In the absence of harm being identified, the paragraph 202 test of the NPPF need not be undertaken.

### *Transportation*

- 6.40 Access arrangements are to unalter. There is an existing established access onto the public highway and a range of footpaths within the local area connecting the site to surrounding settlements. Whilst access to site via a range of modes of transport is limited, locating the Charity in a more urban or built-up location would lose the benefits of the tranquil location of Harp Farm in addition to losing the benefit of having access to such a wide range of public rights of way. The proposed is therefore in an appropriate location for this use and does provide participants in the mental well-being programme access to the countryside in a way that could not be achieved in a more built-up area with more bus links or train access. For the reasons identified, the significant benefits provided by the location of the proposed outweigh a need for greater connectivity and as such, is appropriately located and complies with Policy SS4.
- 6.41 The site of the buildings is accessed via an existing track (approved under P194117/PA7) from Lower Mosewick Farm. Parking would be provided adjacent to existing agricultural buildings at Lower Mosewick Farm, approximately 0.15 miles to the north. The track to the building will receive minimal use by vehicles which will almost exclusively be used by those with limited mobility who require transport to the buildings via car. The proposed would also make available, easy, and safe access to external secure cycle storage in addition to an external bin storage which will be situated on the farmyard at Mosewick Farm.
- 6.42 The proposals will result in additional traffic movements to the site, however, this will not adversely affect the local highway network given parking can be provided on site. The Council's highways area engineer has raised no objections, subject to conditioning the implementation of cycle storage and as such, the proposal provides the most appropriate strategy in terms of vehicle movements, and is in accordance with the requirements of policy MT1 of the CS. Officers do not consider there to be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would not amount to severe and that the proposal accords with the principles of Section 9 of the NPPF. It is noted that there is not a specific highway policy within the Cradley NDP.

### *Ecology/Biodiversity*

- 6.43 The proposed development strengthens existing biodiversity features and encourages a broader range of flora and fauna within the site and wider area. Policy BP4 of the Malvern Hills AONB Management Plan does acknowledge that visitor pressures have had the effect of some damage to sensitive habitat. The proposed use is small scale, overseen as part of wellbeing courses, and ensures ongoing management of site. The proposals will not therefore, result in any adverse damage due to an increase in visitor numbers and will actually result in an enhancement. The proposed planting maintains and expands upon ecological networks.
- 6.44 A detailed ecological assessment has been conducted. The assessment finds that neither of the buildings are listed as priority habitats in this area. The extent and quality of these habitats are of limited ecological importance and the loss of these habitats does not require any specific mitigation. Further to this, the surveys found that construction works will be within an area of botanically poor improved grassland and will remove small areas of scrub and ruderal plants and therefore no specific habitat mitigation is required to negate this loss. Additional hedgerow and tree planting is proposed, which will enhance and improve connectivity around the site. New planting will be a mix of native broadleaved species and be of a similar diversity to that present within existing hedgerows surrounding the site.

- 6.45 The assessment finds that the application site is of limited suitability for use by foraging bats and that suitable foraging and commuting habitat in the wider area is very unlikely to be negatively impacted by the proposed development. The assessment recognises that the buildings have some features suitable for use by roosting bats, however, it states that the suitability is sub-optimal due to both buildings being in poor condition and open to the elements.
- 6.46 Some habitat has been identified which is suitable for dormouse. The report finds that works are very unlikely to have any impact on Dormice and therefore no mitigation is required. Furthermore, there will be no lighting that illuminates the hedgerow during, and post development and the proposed landscaping will enhance the site for use by Dormice as well as improve connectivity along the hedgerow networks. The survey found potential to support a limited range of common nesting birds, but the size of the site makes the presence of large or important breeding bird assemblages unlikely. Works will take place outside of bird nesting season or after a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 6.47 The ecology report advises that the habitats on site have some limited suitability for use by Great Crested Newts and reptiles, however, reports that considering the lack of ponds around the site and low number of records of Great Crested Newts and reptiles in the wider area, it is very unlikely that Great Crested Newt or reptiles would be present on site. They find that no specific mitigation is required for these species, however, advise that a precautionary approach should be undertaken to ensure that if reptiles are present there is no impact.
- 6.48 The enhancements and recommendations set out within the Ecology report will be implemented in full and will be conditioned, at the request of the Council's Ecologist, whom raises no objections subject to drainage arrangements being clarified, although subject to no objections being raised by Land Drainage. It is clear from the Ecology Report and Landscape and Visual Assessment that the proposed would provide significant betterment to the site in ecological terms. The proposed is compliant with policy LD2, biodiversity and geodiversity, and LD3, green infrastructure, of the CS. Enhancements to the land would be seen in the short term through the works proposed within this application, but also in the long term as in addition to maintenance carried out by the farm, the mental wellbeing charity has a focus on the natural world and will teach traditional skills. The proposed will conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape in this part of the AONB and ensure that it is sustainably managed in the long term, which is in accordance with objectives LO1 and LO2, and policies LP1, LP2, LP3, LP4 of the Management Plan.

### *Drainage*

- 6.49 Analysis of flooding from fluvial and tidal sources shows that the proposed development site is in Flood Zone 1 and hence is at low risk of flooding from events less than 1 in 1000 (0.1%) year events. The development site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore not susceptible to flooding. Foul drainage would be served by a package treatment plant. Surface water will be dealt with via an appropriately designed soakaway system. Foul and surface water drainage arrangements are considered to be in line and accord with Policies SD3 and SD4 of the CS. Members will note that the land drainage engineer has confirmed no objections to the proposed development, following further information being submitted.

### *Other considerations*

- 6.50 The proposal is considered to not adversely impact residential amenity of adjoining properties, which can be safeguarded to an acceptable degree, in line with Policy SD1 of the CS, consistent with Paragraphs 130 and 185 of the NPPF, having regard for cumulative impacts.
- 6.51 Comments raised by PROW and the Ramblers groups can be attached as informatives.

- 6.52 Comments raised by Natural England are noted. Members are referred to the comments of the Council's Ecologist and Land Drainage Engineer, whom confirm an acceptable surface water drainage strategy can be secured and appropriately implemented through condition.

#### *Planning Balance*

- 6.53 The scheme represents a sustainable form of development, and is acceptable in all other respects aside from the rebuilding of Harp Cottage, which is not compliant with the development plan, as the proposal would not be capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction, which would conflict with Policy RA5(4) of the adopted CS.
- 6.54 This should be balanced against the intended use of this site. It is acknowledged that Herefordshire Council is a signatory of the Herefordshire Armed Forces Community and coordinates a cross sector Civilian Military Task Group (CMTG), whose role is to deliver aims of the covenant. This includes addressing the needs of the armed forces community in the county. The need to provide accommodation and other services to ex-service personnel is now recognised nationally and reflected in the Armed Services Covenant.
- 6.55 Paragraph 92 of the NPPF identifies that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. Paragraph 93 identifies that in order to provide the facilities and services the community needs, policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community. Heritage assets also bring economic benefits as Herefordshire's well preserved historic environment is a major factor in the county's quality of life. The sustainable re-use of Harp Cottage and the threshing barn and the desirability of enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, without leading to total loss should be afforded weight in the planning balance.
- 6.56 The NPPF emphasises a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sustainable development proposals that accord with the relevant local development plan should be approved without delay (paragraph 11c of NPPF). Paragraph 8 states that there are three different dimensions to "sustainable" development: economic, social, and environmental. In the context of this application, these three dimensions are considered below:

*Economic* – The conversion of buildings creates the opportunity for new jobs in this area for administrative and management staff in addition to qualified professionals and consultants. The proposed development will provide some employment provision of full time staff to coordinate the operations of the charity and qualified staff to operate the courses offered. This provides a diversification of employment opportunities in this rural area which is supported and encouraged by policy SS5 – employment provision, as well as during the conversion stage.

*Social* – The development offers a newly formed charity to establish a base. The NPPF positively encourages the conversion of redundant rural buildings where it will help support and retain services and enhance the vitality of rural communities. The rural and tranquil location of the proposed is ideal for the proposed charity use which is focused on promoting the well-being of emergency service and military personnel. The quality of the environment is an integral part of this application and a key reason why the charity has selected this location. It provides characterful buildings in a picturesque and tranquil location, surrounded by countryside and woodland which is ideal for the courses being run at the site. A core element of this design, in order to maximise the benefits of this location for the charity, is to ensure that the environmental quality and local distinctiveness as preserved and enhanced through the proposed development. This is in line with Policy SS6 of the Core Strategy which requires that development proposals conserve and enhance environmental assets which contribute positively to the county's distinctiveness. This proposal achieves this through the restoration and conversion of buildings

with heritage and landscape value, and through the sympathetic and considered layout and landscaping incorporated into the proposed.

*Environmental* – The proposed utilises two existing buildings which whilst are unlisted, have heritage value and positively enhance the character of the rural area. The proposal will have no adverse impact on wildlife and will contribute significantly to the ecological value of the site. It can be demonstrated that it will have no adverse environmental impacts, and that suitable water attenuation can be achieved onsite.

- 6.57 Members are drawn to Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which states as follows: *“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”*
- 6.58 For these reasons, the requirements of Policy RA5 of the CS should be given less weight in the planning balance. There are material considerations presented weighing in favour of the scheme, which should tip the balance in supporting the scheme as a whole. Whilst this would mean taking a decision which represents a departure from the development plan, it would reiterate this Council’s continued commitment to addressing the needs of the armed forces across Herefordshire and support opportunities for such personnel and emergency services personnel, and conserve heritage assets of local value, which is considered to outweigh the policy tension with Policy RA5(4) of the CS. The scheme is acceptable in all other respects, which aside from the policy tension above, would be compliant with the development plan. The application is recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any other further conditions (amendments) considered necessary by officers named in the scheme of delegation to officers:**

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

**Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.**

- 2. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission. The following constitutes the approved plans:**

- **HA38690\_PL\_02\_B (Location Plan);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_03\_D (Block Plan);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_10\_B (Site Plan);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_11\_B (Proposed GF Plan - CONFERENCE HALL);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_12\_D (Proposed FF Plan - CONFERENCE HALL);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_13\_D (Proposed Floor Plans – Office);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_15\_C (Conference Hall Elevations);**
- **HA38690\_PL\_16\_E (Office Building Elevations); and**
- **22-OP-1211 A1/001 (Proposed Site Layout);**

**Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development and to comply with Policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, Policy CNDP9 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.**

3. This permission shall enure for the benefit of the charity 'Reset' only and not for the benefit of the land or any other persons interested in the land.

Reason: The nature of the development is such that it is only considered acceptable in this location having regard to the applicant's special circumstances having regard to Policy RA5 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework and that the application represents a departure from the adopted development plan.

4. During the construction phase no machinery shall be operated, no process shall be carried out and no deliveries taken at or despatched from the site outside the following times: Monday-Friday 7.00 am-6.00 pm, Saturday 8.00 am-1.00 pm nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents and to comply with Policy SD1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, Policy CNDP9 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a landscape scheme shall be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include a scaled plan identifying:

- a) Trees and hedgerow to be protected and retained, setting out measures for their protection during construction, in accordance with BS5837:2012.
- b) Trees and hedgerow to be removed.
- c) All proposed planting, accompanied by a written specification setting out; species, size, quantity, density with cultivation details.
- d) All proposed hardstanding and boundary treatment.

All planting, seeding or turf laying in the approved landscaping scheme (insert drawing no if appropriate) shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees or plants which die, are removed or become severely damaged or diseased within 5 years of planting will be replaced in accordance with the approved plans.

All hard landscaping shall be completed prior to first use of the approved development.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the character and amenity of the area and implementation of landscaping in order to conform with policies SS6, LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy, Policies CNDP5 and CNDP9 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Before any other works hereby approved are commenced, visibility splays, and any associated set back splays at 45 degree angles shall be provided from a point 0.6 metres above ground level at the centre of the access to the application site and 2.4 metres back from the nearside edge of the adjoining carriageway (measured perpendicularly) for a distance of 43 metres in each direction along the nearside edge of the adjoining carriageway, in accordance with drawing number HA38690\_PL\_03\_D. Nothing shall be planted, erected and/or allowed to grow on the triangular area of land so formed which would obstruct the visibility described above.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.



7. Prior to relevant works commencing, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
- A sample of the roof covering, which shall be of handmade plain clay tile;
  - A sample of the rainwater goods, to be either finished in cast iron or aluminium;
  - A sample of the brick, which shall be handmade;
  - A sample panel of brickwork, to include mortar mix, colour, joint profile and brick bond;
  - Timber frame drawings, to be submitted at 1:20 scale;
  - Joinery details at 1:2 scale, to which windows will be hardwood casements with metal opening lights; and
  - Details of the proposed glazing, which shall be non-reflective glazing and recessing of all new areas of Glazing.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development and to comply with Policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, Policy CNDP9 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. With the exception of conditions below, none of the buildings shall be occupied until the drainage works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans and supporting information, namely in accordance with:
- Amended Location Plan 14.6.22 (Ref: HA38690\_PL\_02\_B);
  - Amended Proposed Site Layout 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/001);
  - Land Registry Ownership Boundary 001 14.6.22;
  - Land Registry Ownership Boundary 002 14.6.22;
  - Amended Proposed Drainage Strategy 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/002 Rev A);
  - Amended Proposed Car Park Drainage Strategy 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/003 Rev A);
  - Amended Drainage Construction Details 14.6.22 (Ref: A1/004 Rev A);
  - Response to LLFA Comments 14.6.22;
  - Drainage Calculations 14.6.22;
  - Drainage Calculations 2 14.6.22; and
  - Photos from Agent 14.6.22

Reason: In order to ensure that satisfactory drainage arrangements are provided and to comply with Policy SD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Before the development is first occupied or brought into use, a schedule of landscape maintenance for a period of 10 years shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Maintenance shall be carried out in accordance with this approved schedule.

Reason: To ensure the future establishment of the approved scheme, in order to conform with policies SS6, LD1 and LD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, Policy CNDP5 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted full details of a scheme for the provision of covered and secure cycle parking facilities within the application site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their written approval. The covered and secure cycle parking facilities shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details and available for use prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted. Thereafter these facilities shall be maintained.

**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 to the requirements of Policies SD1 and MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.**

- 11. Prior to first occupation, written and illustrative details of the number, type/specification and location of at least one electric vehicle charging point, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The electric vehicle charging point shall be installed within six months of written approval and be maintained and kept in good working order thereafter as specified by the manufacturer.**

**Reason: To address the requirements policies in relation to climate change SS7, MT1 and SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, to assist in redressing the Climate Emergency declared by Herefordshire Council and to accord with the provisions at paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**

- 12. The ecological protection, mitigation, compensation and working methods scheme, including the biodiversity net gain enhancements and management of all lighting features, as recommended in the ecology report by Turnstone Ecology dated August 2022 shall be fully implemented and hereafter maintained in full as stated unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.**

**Reason: To ensure that all species are protected and habitats enhanced having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, National Planning Policy Framework (2021), NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1, LD2 and LD3 and the council's declared Climate Change & Ecological Emergency.**

- 13. To record and inform knowledge of protected species at the site and presence in the wider locality – Malvern Hills AONB and adjacent woodland SSSI, within 5 months of completion, a copy of the final optimal period bat survey report and full records of species identified, shall be supplied in writing to the local planning authority and Herefordshire Biological Records Centre.**

**Reason: To ensure that all species are recorded and protected having regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, National Planning Policy Framework (2021), NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1, LD2 and LD3 and the council's declared Climate Change & Ecological Emergency.**

- 14. Any external lighting proposed to illuminate the development, other than lighting shown on the approved plans, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before installation.**

**Reason: To safeguard local and visual amenities and to comply with Policies SD1 and LD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, Policies CNDP5 and CNDP9 of the Cradley Neighbourhood Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework**

## **Informatives**

- 1. IP2 – The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against planning policy and any other material**

considerations. Negotiations in respect of matters of concern with the application (as originally submitted) have resulted in amendments to the proposal. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. **INS – A I applicants are reminded that attaining planning consent does not constitute permission to work in the highway. Any applicant wishing to carry out works in the highway should see the various guidance on Herefordshire Council’s website: [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/1992/street\\_works\\_licence](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory_record/1992/street_works_licence) and <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/707/highways>**
3. **INS – The proposed development may not have access to mains water and be reliant on a private water supply. The applicant is advised that the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 (as amended) and the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulation 2016 are likely to apply. In accordance with these Regulations and the Building Regulations 1984 the water must be of a potable and safe standard. If the supply is to be used for shared or commercial purposes including renting, the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 specify that the water supply cannot be used until it has been risk assessed by the local authority’s private water supplies team (01432 261761) and found compliant. Applicants that are connecting to existing private water supplies or accessing sources of water on land over which they have no control are advised to give careful and specific attention to contractual/civil arrangements including rights of access, maintenance arrangements, provision of alternative water supply are agreed in writing at the outset.**
4. **I06 – A public right of way crosses the site of this permission. The permission does not authorise the stopping up or diversion of the right of way. The right of way may be stopped up or diverted by Order under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provided that the Order is made before the development is carried out. If the right of way is obstructed before the Order is made, the Order cannot proceed until the obstruction is removed.**
5. **I10 – Access to the site is via a public right of way and the applicant’s attention is drawn to the restrictions imposed by Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 regarding the prohibition of driving motor vehicles elsewhere than on roads.**
6. **I11 – It is an offence under Section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to allow mud or other debris to be transmitted onto the public highway. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the need to keep the highway free from any mud or other material emanating from the application site or any works pertaining thereto.**
7. **I50 – The development hereby approved may result in vehicles being driven across or along a Public Right of Way. As a result, notification should be given to the Highway Authority before the permission is implemented. In addition, where public and private rights co-exist, permission should be sought from the landowner in order to obtain lawful authority to drive on the Public Right of Way. For further information, contact Balfour Beatty (Managing Agent for Herefordshire Council) Public Rights of Way Services, Unit 3 Thorn Business Park, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6JT (Tel: 01432 261800).**

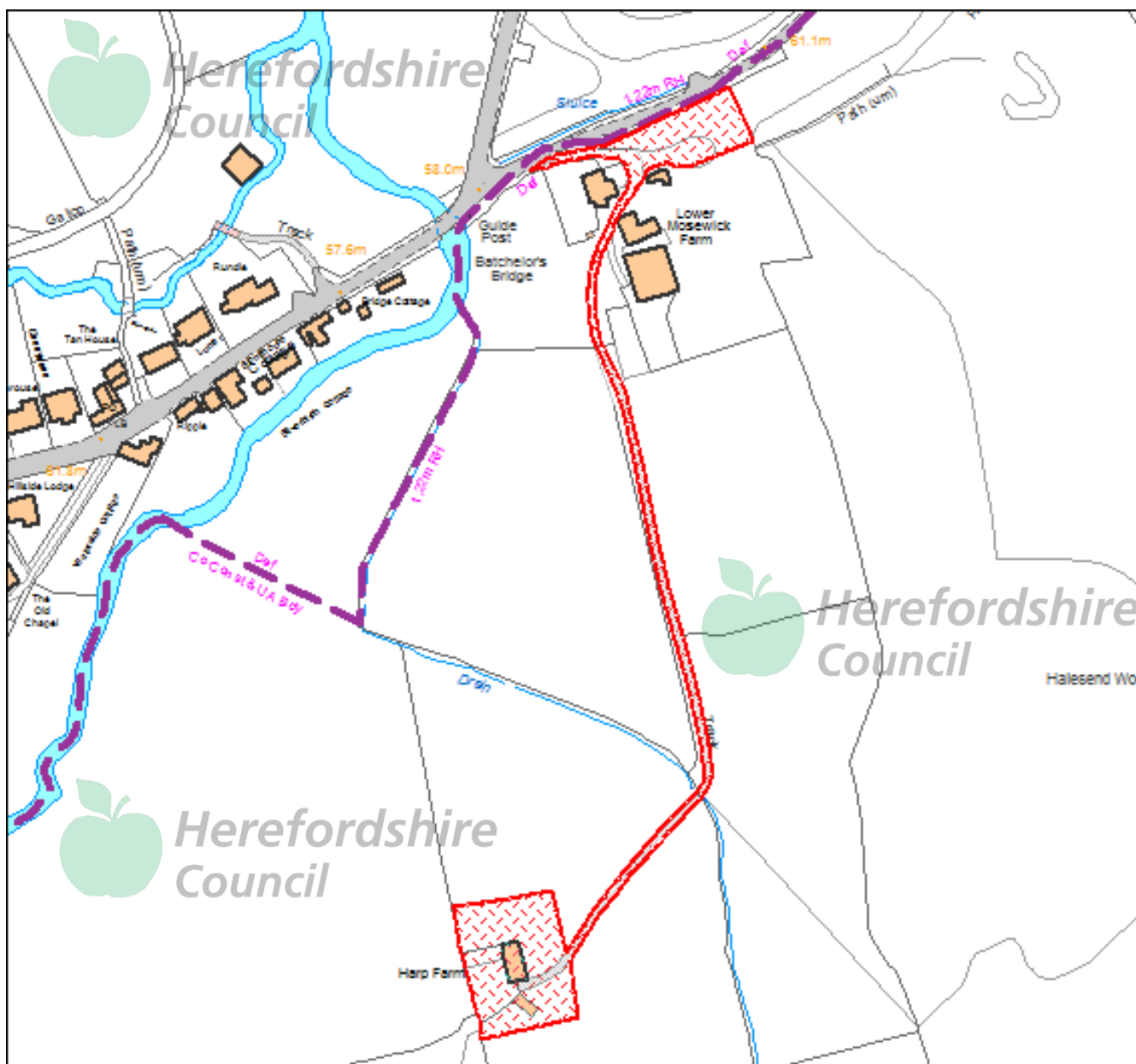
Decision: .....

Notes: .....

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## Background Papers

None identified.



Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr Josh Bailey on 01432 261903

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**APPLICATION NO:** 212514

**SITE ADDRESS :** LOWER MOSEWICK FARM, BIRCHWOOD LANE, STORRIDGE, HEREFORDSHIRE,  
WR6 5DU

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