Item 5 **10/00181/FULMAJ**

Case Officer **Mr David Stirzaker**

Ward **Euxton North**

Proposal **Erection of poultry building**

Location **Altcar Farm Altcar Lane Euxton LeylandPR25 1LE**

Applicant **Mr J Coulthurst**

Consultation expiry: 15 April 2010

Application expiry: 10 June 2010

Members will recall that this application was deferred from the previous Development Control Committee meeting on 22nd July 2010 in order for members to undertake a visit of the site. Members should also note that the comments added to the addendum reported to the above Development Control Committee meeting have now been incorporated into the body of this report.

Proposal

1. This resubmitted application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new hen cabin building on land at Altcar Farm, Altcar Lane, Euxton. The building to be erected would house 60,000 laying hens for egg production. A planning application (Ref No. 09/00406/FULMAJ) for the same size of building was refused planning permission last year.

2. The proposed building would be sited at a right angle to the last of the existing hen cabins on the site and measures 60.9m by 18.8m with an eaves height of 8m and a ridge height of 9.6m. The buildings elevations would be faced with brown coloured plastic coated steel sheets whilst the roof would be faced with grey colour plastic coloured steel sheets. The hen cabin would be used for the production of eggs.

3. The site can be accessed from either Altcar Lane or from Tithebarn Lane.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that planning permission be refused.

Main Issues

5. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
    - Principle of the development
    - Design and Appearance;
    - Impact on the open and rural character of the Green Belt;
    - The amenities of neighbours;
    - Highway safety and parking provision
    - Other matters

Representations

6. Representations have been received from 4 local residents, 2 of which specifically express support for the application. The contents of the representations can be summarised as follows: -
    - Loss of residential amenity including loss of privacy, noise, smells and outlook
    - Existing trees and landscaping should be sufficient to screen the building from Runshaw Lane
    - Assurance is sought that there will not be pollution from smells of waste matter stored at the site
    - The building is needed to ensure the continued success of the egg production business

- The applicant is prepared to undertake landscaping to screen the buildings and this will also benefit the local landscape and local residents
- The production of food locally is strongly supported and encouragement must be given to people who are willing to commit financially and continue to support local employment
- As an employee of the applicant, I know the proposed poultry building will mean continued employment for myself and the many other employees here, as well as providing much needed employment opportunities with further recruitment envisaged, which can only help our local area. As businesses are suffering with the credit crunch and recession, I can only feel grateful for the fact that I work for an employer still prepared to invest even in these hard times and I would like to hope the council will look favourably on this application

Consultations

7. The **Environment Agency** does not raise any objections to the application.

8. **LCC (Ecology)** advise that the proposals will not have a significant impact on biodiversity subject to adoption of a precautionary approach with regards to Great Crested Newts and breeding birds and the implementation of a landscaping/habitat enhancement scheme.

9. **LCC (Property Group)** advise that the building

10. **Euxton Parish Council** objects to the application. Concerns are expressed with regards to what will happen to chicken waste and if there are adequate controls in place for its safe and effective disposal to prevent smell, contamination and fly breeding.

11. **LCC (Highways)** have not made any comments on the application.

12. **The Director of People and Places** raises no objections to the application and states that there are no records of complaints being made in relation to noise, odour or flies at the application site.

13. **LCC (Countryside Service)** do not raise any objections to the application in relation to public footpaths.

Assessment

Principle of the development

14. The principle of the development is considered to be acceptable as LCC (Property Group) have advised that the building is necessary for the purposes of agriculture on the site thus its provision accords with PPG2 in principle.

Design & Appearance

15. The design of the building is typically utilitarian as are materials which are proposed to match those used to construct the adjacent buildings. However, the building, purely in design terms is agricultural in appearance given it is of a similar design and appearance to the other existing buildings to the north of the proposed site of the building.

16. However, the scale of the building by virtue of its height and length is such that it would be very dominant in the local landscape and unlike the existing buildings which are gable on the Tithebarn Lane, the proposed building would be side on to the road and dominate vistas from it. The scale of the building is considered to be unacceptable.

Impact on the open and rural character of the Green Belt

17. With regards to Green Belt impact, views of the site from the wider area are limited due to the topography of the land and the various areas of woodland around the site. However, the site is visible from the east from Runshaw Hall Lane and from the approaches to the site along Altcar Lane to the west and Tithe Barn Lane to the south. The site can also be seen from various points along Runshaw Lane to the west. The applicants submitted Landscape Appraisal and Proposals identifies Visual Receptor Sites as being Runshaw Lane, Runshaw Hall, Tithe Barn

Lane and Altcar Lane. These are basically sites where the building would be visible from. The sites identified are not disputed. The applicant proposes planting to screen the building from these visual receptor sites and it is asserted that such planting, by screening views of the building, would mitigate its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

18. These proposals are noted, however, when considering Green Belt impact, openness is the most important attribute and can be considered as meaning 'freedom from development' which in turn means that just because development is not readily visible as per the applicant's argument, it does not mean it is then acceptable. The existing buildings on the site have an eaves height of approx. 6.2m and a ridge height of approx. 8m. The last of these buildings to be granted planning permission was in 2002 (Ref No. 02/00387/FUL). The proposed building would be sited at a right angle to the most southern of the hen cabin buildings on the site at the moment and at an overall height of 9.6m, it would eclipse in height the existing building and become the prominent structure in terms of the various vistas of the site and from closer proximity to it. Moreover, with an eaves height of 8m, this is only just below the ridge heights of the adjacent buildings so with a height of 9.6m to the ridge and a length of 60m, this coupled with the 87m run of existing buildings adjacent to which the building will sit, the overall run of development would come to dominate the local landscape and have a harmful impact on its open and rural Green Belt character.

19. It is noted that the floor level of the building would be set below that of the adjacent buildings by excavating the site but this does not significantly mitigate the impact of the proposed building overall.

20. It is noted that there is an existing hedgerow along Altcar Lane but the building would dwarf this so the hedge does not serve to screen the building other than the lowest part of it. The applicants landscaping proposals are noted but they are not considered sufficient to mitigate the harm the building would have on the openness of the Green Belt as just because its visibility would be reduced from the identified visual receptor sites, this does not mitigate the harm the building would have on the openness of the Green Belt. Moreover, at closer points to the site, even a substantial scheme of landscaping, due to the overall height of the building, would not be sufficient to mitigate its impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

<u>The amenities of neighbours</u>

21. The Director of People and Places advises that there are no records of complaints being made in relation to the application site. The Environment Agency do not raise any objections either.

22. With regards to the neighbour comments, there have been no objections from the Environment Agency or the Director of People and Places and there are suitable controls on smells, noise and waste outside of the planning system that would control any potential detriment to the amenities of the nearest neighbours if problems arose, the nearest of which is m away from the site. Also, due to this, the visual impact of the proposed building would not cause harm to the amenities of the neighbours nearest to the site hence there are no objections to the application on residential amenity impact grounds.

23. On the above basis, it is not considered that the building would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents.

<u>Highway safety & parking provision</u>

24. LCC (Highways) have not made any comments on the application and as this is a well established site that has been producing eggs for some time, the additional building and egg production therein would be unlikely to detrimentally increase the levels of traffic. Moreover, none of the neighbours have raised concerns with regards to traffic impact.

<u>Other matters</u>

25. The letters of support are noted and the continued employment of the staff at the site is obviously an important consideration as is the support of a local business and local food production. The applicants agent has also asked that a request be forwarded to the Chair of the Development Control Committee for the application to be deferred for a site visit by Members to

assess the visual impact of the proposal. This request has therefore been brought to the attention of the Chair of the Development Control Committee. However, these reasons are not considered to be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt that would be caused by the building if it is granted planning permission.

Overall Conclusion

27. Taking into account all of the issues, it is considered that the application should be refused planning permission due to the detrimental impact the building would have on the openness of the Green Belt.

Planning Policies

28. National Planning Policies:
PPS1 / PPG2 / PPS4 / PPS7

29. Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review
Policies: DC1 / EP7 / TR4 / Design SPG

Planning History

30. The site has been the subject of the following planning applications: -

- 09/00406/FULMAJ - Erection of hen cabin – Refused Planning Permission
- 04/01276/FULMAJ - Erection of hen cabin and feed silos – Granted Planning Permission
- 02/00387/FUL - Erection of poultry house and silo – Granted Planning Permission

Recommendation: Refuse Planning Permission

Reason for Refusal

1. The proposed agricultural egg production building would be higher than the buildings adjacent to which it would be sited. These existing buildings taken together have a length of 87m and the proposed building has a length of 60m resulting in an overall run of development measuring 147m. The proposed building by virtue of its height, siting and length coupled with the existing buildings adjacent to which it is proposed results in a form of development that would dominate the local landscape and therefore detrimentally reduce the open and rural character of the Green Belt to an unacceptable level. The proposed agricultural building would therefore be contrary to Policy Nos. DC1 and EP7 of the Chorley Borough Local Plan Review and PPG2.