

ADVOCO —PLANNING

SWEETCORN EXTENSION
SEFTER FARM,
PAGHAM,
PO21 3PX

DESIGN ACCESS
AND PLANNING STATEMENT

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OCTOBER 2017

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared by Advoco Planning on behalf of Barfoots of Botley Limited and is to explain and support a detailed planning application for the construction of an extension to an existing building used for the packaging, preparation and distribution of sweetcorn. The application follows a previous approval (ref: P/134/08) for a substantially similar extension in 2009 which was renewed in 2012 under reference P/5/12 but was not implemented and has since lapsed.
- 1.2 In the interests of submitting clear and concise information, the national and local requirements for both a Design and Access Statement and Planning Supporting Statement have been combined on this occasion, although care has been taken to ensure that the formal requirements for both documents are met in this single submission. The site also contains a Listed Building (Sefter Farmhouse) and therefore a Heritage Statement is included within the report to address any impact on that heritage asset.
- 1.3 This statement will comprise the following:
- Section 2 – Site and Surroundings
 - Section 3 – Planning History
 - Section 4 – Proposed Development
 - Section 5 – Planning Policy Context
 - Section 6 – Community Involvement
 - Section 7 – Examination of the Principal Issues
 - Section 8 – Conclusion and Summary
- 1.4 The design of the proposed development is largely a product of its function. For this reason the Design and Access (DAS) Issues, as identified in DCLG Guidance published in March 2010 entitled 'Guidance on information requirements and validation', will be limited and will appear in Section 7.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 Sefter Farm is a large and long established horticultural enterprise, and is the operational base for Barfoots who are involved in the cultivation, harvesting, preparation and packaging of vegetables and salad products. The site is located within the fertile coastal plain, which is an area of open countryside used extensively for large scale agriculture and horticulture located to the south of Chichester. The application site is located about 10 km to the south of Chichester and is between the smaller settlements of Runcton to the north and Pagham to the south.
- 2.2 The application site itself measures 0.1 ha. and relates to a small yard area adjoining an existing building group which includes the original Sefter Farmhouse (Listed) alongside a large industrial type building used for the cleaning, preparation, packaging and distribution of vegetable and salad products, along with ancillary office and other accommodation. The site also contains an anaerobic digester (AD) waste to energy plant, and significant areas of hardstanding for the parking and circulation of cars and commercial vehicles, along with areas for the storage of pallets and crates. The site also has a series of bunds, reservoirs and balancing ponds and is surrounded by open arable land used for horticultural production.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 The application site has a long planning history of permissions for new buildings and extensions to existing buildings, many of which have lapsed without being implemented. The planning history provided is therefore restricted to the original permission to extend the main building (which this submission seeks to revive in a slightly different configuration) and the two most recent extent permissions.

P/134/08 Extension to Agricultural Building. Approved 14/09/2009 and now lapsed

P/5/12 Renewal of P/134/08. Approved 12/03/2012 and now lapsed.

P/68/15/PL Glasshouse, balancing pond/irrigation storage, staff facilities, water tanks, security fence & access road. Approved 21/10/2015

P/76/16/PL Construction of a building for the packaging, preparation and distribution of fresh foods with ancillary accommodation associated with the existing horticultural business, revisions to internal access road, car parking and hardstanding areas and landscaping and provision of a wetland. Approved 09/06/2017.

4.0 Proposed Development

- 4.1 This is a detailed planning application for the extension of a section of the main production building at Sefter Farm to provide an additional 513.6 sq.m. of additional floorspace. The proposals are substantially similar to those approved under references P/134/08 and P/5/12 (see above) but have been shifted slightly west and therefore connect to the existing building in a slightly different position, and the currently proposal is marginally smaller than previously approved.



The above photograph shows the existing building, with the gable end where the extension is proposed to be added appearing on the right hand side of the photograph.

- 4.2 The additional accommodation is required in connection with Barfoots existing sweetcorn operation and an explanation for the additional floorspace is provided in the following statement which has been provided by Barfoots.

'Sweetcorn on the cob needs to be kept cold to maximise quality and

freshness. Due to the bulky nature of the product significant air flow is required around the stored product to ensure temperature control is maintained. This additional space will allow an increased spacing between the bins of product which will enhance product quality, deliver a fresher product to consumers, and ultimately reduce waste as a colder product that has been stored prior to use in the optimum conditions is fresher and longer lasting.

In addition as part of the Company's ongoing focus on the Safety of its' staff in the workplace an increase in operating space for mechanical handling equipment is required at the front end of the production process which will help ensure effective segregation between machinery movement zones and areas where other operatives are completing their work.'

- 4.3 The proposed space is therefore not to increase output but to improve the quality of existing output and the safety of the operation. The building has also been designed not to interfere with the circulation arrangements proposed in association with recent approval P/76/16/PL.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the proposals will be assessed against the saved policies of the adopted Arun District Local Plan 2003 and other related local supplementary planning policy documents. Also of relevance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which provides a broad national planning policy framework for both planning decision making and policy formulation. The emerging policies are not considered as they are not considered to be a sufficiently advanced stage towards adoption.

The Development Plan

- 5.2 The policies deemed to be of most significance to this proposal are policies GEN3, GEN7, DEV3, DEV6 and AREA10 and these are included in full below:-

POLICY GEN3 Protection of the Countryside

Outside the Built-Up Area, as defined on the Proposals Map, the countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake. Development will not be permitted unless:

- (i) it meets the operational needs of agriculture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the deposit of waste; or
- (ii) for quiet, informal recreation; or
- (iii) for the diversification of the rural economy; or
- (iv) for essential road schemes; or
- (v) it is in accordance with a policy in Sections 2 and 3 of the plan referring to a specific use or type of development.

Permission will not be given for the extension of isolated groups of buildings or the consolidation of linear or sporadic development unless the proposal accords with criteria (i) to (iii) or (v).

POLICY GEN7 The Form of New Development

Planning permission will only be granted for schemes displaying high quality design and layout. Development proposals involving new buildings or significant extensions or alterations must be accompanied by an illustrated written analysis of the site and its immediate setting, together with its relationship with the relevant townscape, landscape, wildlife and movement characteristics of the

wider area.

Development will be permitted provided it:

- (i) makes efficient use of land or buildings and, in the case of new residential development, achieves net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare;
- (ii) demonstrates that it responds positively to the identified characteristics and resources of the site and the area to create attractive places and spaces with the needs of people in mind and respects and enhances local distinctiveness;
- (iii) promotes sustainable development, including the effective use and conservation of energy and reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car;
- (iv) does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses or property and, where relevant, facilitates the development of adjoining sites;
- (v) takes account of any unacceptable adverse impacts that may arise from adjoining land uses or property;
- (vi) retains significant open or wooded areas which, in their own right, make a material contribution to the local environment;
- (vii) allows for the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles, giving priority to pedestrians;
- (viii) provides for vehicle parking in accordance with Policy GEN12 and Appendix 2 and open space in accordance with Policy GEN20.

In all cases, the District Council will expect a high standard of design and layout and all applicants will be encouraged to improve the visual amenities of the particular locality in scale, external appearance, hard and soft landscaping and materials.

POLICY DEV3 Horticulture

New glasshouse and polytunnel development will usually be permitted provided that:-

- (i) there is no adverse impact on the surrounding environment and landscape;
- (ii) long views across substantially open land are retained;
- (iii) adequate water resources are available; and
- (iv) adequate surface water drainage capacity exists or can be provided as part of the development.

POLICY DEV6 Agricultural Buildings

Agricultural buildings will be permitted provided that:

- (i) their scale, siting, design and materials minimise the visual impact on the landscape; and
- (ii) new buildings are grouped with any existing buildings in order to minimise impact on the landscape. Isolated buildings will be permitted where their location is essential to the agricultural activity being undertaken and that they are not situated in a prominent location.

POLICY AREA10 Strategic Gaps

Strategic Gaps, as identified on the Proposals Map will be maintained and protected between the following settlements:

- (i) Worthing and Ferring
- (ii) East Preston and Ferring
- (iii) Littlehampton and Middleton-on-Sea
- (iv) Pagham and Selsey
- (v) Bognor Regis and Chichester
- (vi) Arundel and Littlehampton

Proposals for development within a Strategic Gap will be subject to the most rigorous examination.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3 The NPPF confirms and clarifies the Government's presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14 specifically). The NPPF states the following:

7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- ***an economic role*** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- ***a social role*** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- ***an environmental role*** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 5.4 Paragraph 56 of NPPF states (inter alia) that:-

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”

- 5.5 Building a strong and competitive economy is also a key theme of the NPPF. Specifically the framework goes on to say:-

“3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

28. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order

to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;"*

6.0 Community Involvement

- 6.1 It is also anticipated that the applicant will fully engage with the Parish Council through the determination of the planning application. This will include attendance at the relevant Parish Council meeting and presenting the proposals or making available any additional information which might assist the Parish in their consideration of the proposals as required.
- 6.2 In addition, the submission of this planning application does not signal the end of any potential dialogue between the applicant and the other stakeholders including the Arun District Council and neighbours, and therefore the applicant will be happy to consider any reasonable request for amendments should these arise through the determination process.

7.0 Examination of the Principal Issues

- 7.1 The following section will comprise two parts namely the analysis which would otherwise be contained within a freestanding Design and Access Statement and a section which addresses other planning issues and compliance with the policies cited in Section 5, notably the specific policies cited in para. 5.2 above. The proposals are a minor development in DCLG classification terms and therefore the issues and impacts which arise are similarly modest. That said significant supporting information was submitted as part of the previous application P/76/16/PL, reflecting the magnitude of that earlier submission. Given the limited scale of development currently proposed there is no formal requirement for much of this previously submitted technical information and justification. However where that previous analysis adds to the wider context in terms of the applicant's operation this information has been edited and resubmitted to suit. This includes both the Heritage and Economic Statements.

Design and Access Issues

Principles

- 7.2 Local and Government planning policy is broadly supportive of new buildings for agriculture and horticulture as they are central to the rural economy. In this case, the principle of significant additional floor area has already been established through a number of previous approvals including P/134/08 and P/5/12 which are substantially similar to this current proposal and were approved under essentially the same local planning policies as apply now.
- 7.3 The design principles have been to provide a building which meets the applicant's brief in terms of their operational needs, which are explained in para 4.2 above. Furthermore the design and siting of the building is guided by policy and the objective of minimising its visual impact. Specifically LP Policy DEV6 seeks to ensure that buildings are grouped together as far as possible and that objection has been a key design principle for this proposal.

Use

- 7.4 The use of the site for the preparation and packaging of the vegetables and salad products has long been established. In addition, the agricultural/horticultural emphasis has endured despite widespread changes to consumer demand and lifestyle changes which impact on the way food is purchased and the diversity of products the consumer now demands.

Amount

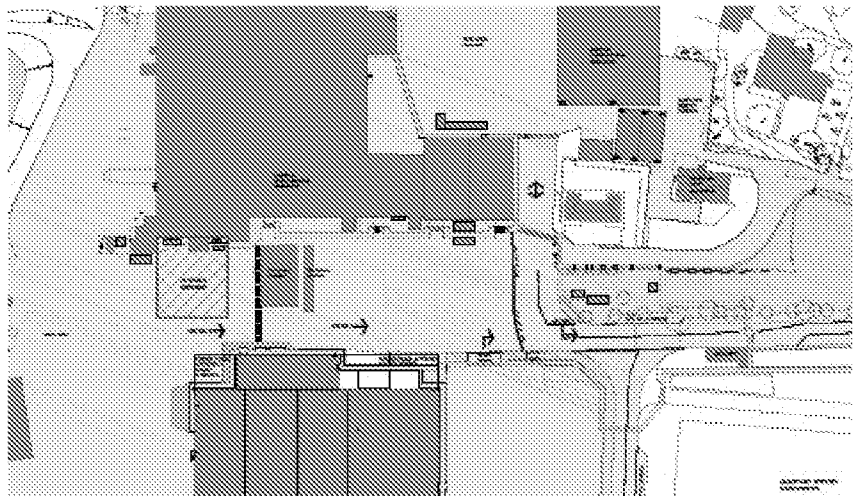
- 7.5 The total floor area proposed is circa 514 sq.m., which is considered modest in the context of existing and approved accommodation on the site. .

Layout

- 7.6 As highlighted in para. 7.3 above, the layout of the development is a product of its function and the need to provide better and safer accommodation without hindering the implementation of approval P/76/16/PL.

Scale

- 7.7 The issue of scale is largely addressed under the earlier 'Amount' heading. The building height is largely standardised for industrial type buildings where fork lifts operate within and stacking systems are used. The building height is also the same as existing buildings for this same reason. The footprint of the building has also been minimised.



The above plan extract shows the area of the proposed extension (hatched in red) alongside existing buildings and the building approved under ref P/76/16/PL shown below the proposed extension. The main site access is to the right of the image.

Landscaping

- 7.8 The site currently benefits from good levels of screening when viewed from most vantage points. A well-established hedge runs along the Pagham Road frontage and close to the building there are bunds and reservoir enclosures which also add to the overall screening. Significant landscaping is secured via approval reference P/76/16/PL and no further landscaping is proposed in relation to this modest proposal. If for any reason approval reference P/76/16/PL was not implemented it is contended that the limited scale of the proposed building and its position relative to existing buildings does not warrant specific landscaping associated with this scheme alone and none is proposed.

Appearance

- 7.9 The buildings are modern steel framed building clad in profiled steel to match those adjoining it. The existing dark bluey grey colour scheme appears to be relatively inconspicuous within its setting and therefore a similar approach it is assumed for the proposed new build. That said, should other colours be preferred that could be secured via planning conditions.

Accessibility

- 7.10 All proposed buildings are located on a flat site and benefit from level thresholds. It is therefore highly accessible. All new works will be fully building regulations compliant and will provide suitable access for all user groups.

Other Planning Issues

- 7.11 The following sections address the other planning issues which fall outside the scope of the Design and Access related issues detailed above. They principally relate to compliance with Local Plan policies cited in para. 5.2 above.

Principle of Development

- 7.12 As previously stated a similar scale of development has previously been consented on this site in 2009 and 2012. This was for a similar scale building in a similar location and those planning permissions have since lapsed. The earlier planning approval goes some way to establishing the principle of the proposed development, particularly as it was assessed against essentially the same local planning policies. That said, in the interests of completeness it is useful to assess whether there have been any material change in circumstances which might now resist the principle of previously consented development.
- 7.13 In this regard the three main changes are firstly the introduction of the NPPF. The effect of this is to provide clear national policy guidance and where old policies might not be consistent with its objectives, reduce or remove the weight which might be afforded to such policies. In this regard the effect of the NPPF is not deemed to be significant as the local policies are not in any obvious conflict with its purposes. That said, the importance of economic development and the rural economy is reinforced and therefore if anything the NPPF adds only further support to the proposed development and in no way provides policies which might now seek to resist it.
- 7.14 Secondly, since the 2009 approval, consent has been granted under various permissions as set out in section 3 above. Whilst these consents are capable of implementation and will be implemented it is not considered to materially change the situation inasmuch as the output of the site is primarily a product of the land available and the floorspace proposed is modest.
- 7.15 In light of the above the principle of the proposed development is considered to be broadly established and the acceptability of the scheme therefore hinges on its details and specific impacts.

Highways, Transport and Parking

- 7.16 The proposed development does not add to production and therefore no additional traffic is directly or indirectly attributable to the proposed development. It should also be noted that the accommodation to be provided will also some of the previously external operations to be carried out internally and therefore the building changes improves processes and production rather than increasing the latter.
- 7.17 A technical note relating to all Transport issues associated with the proposed development has been prepared by Paul Basham Associates and is submitted in

support of this planning application. This assesses the proposed development in light of its traffic implication alongside those of previously approved development on the site and concludes no material traffic impact. In light of the above it is contended that the overall traffic and transport implications if the development are acceptable and can readily and safely be accommodated within the existing road network.

Light Pollution

- 7.18 As a rural site within an area of open countryside lighting is clearly a sensitive issue. Equally the site is already a large scale operational site and is required to provide safe working areas, many of which are used in low light conditions, particularly during the winter months. Accordingly, the site has large areas of illuminated outside spaces and further areas will be required as part of the proposed development.
- 7.19 The proposed development area is an existing illuminated yard area and the level of illumination required is no greater than existing, and applies to areas already illuminated. In these circumstances no material increase in illumination would arise and if necessary, details of any external lighting can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.20 The proposed extension is modest in size and its location is well into the site. The upshot of this is that views from any public or neighbouring property vantage point are limited. Of the limited views into the site, those of the application site will be largely screened by the existing building or viewed with a backdrop of the existing building. Accordingly views where the proposed building might be visible against the skyline are highly restricted. In addition once permission reference P/76/16/PL is implemented views of the application site and the proposed building would be very restricted and only really visible from close quarters.
- 7.21 Given the above landscape impacts are considered both modest and acceptable.

Noise

- 7.22 Any plant and mechanical equipment associated with the proposed extension would be similar in specification and performance to the plant used for the existing sweetcorn operation. This is enclosed and has not appreciable noise impact and certainly not from any off site receptors which are some distance. In these terms a planning condition requiring details of any plant including any enclosure and manufacturer's specification (including noise output) could readily be imposed.

Amenity

- 7.23 Given the scale of the proposed development, the distance from other properties and uses, and the absence of additional traffic directly associated with the development itself; no adverse amenity impacts are anticipated.

Flooding/Drainage

- 7.24 The application site falls outside any area identified as having any specific flood risk and the proposed development falls below all thresholds which might require a Flood Risk Assessment for sites outside any flood zone. Accordingly no Flood Risk Assessment is required and no flood risk is identified. In addition it should be noted that the application site is currently a yard area and therefore is subject to surface water run-off. The roof area of the proposed building is not considered to be appreciable larger than the existing area if hardstanding and therefore the proposed development would not materially add to or change current run off levels. The site also benefits from significant water holding

capacity and therefore the proposals would not add to flood risk in any other off-site location.

Sustainable Construction

- 7.25 The applicants own and operate an Anaerobic Digester (AD) on the site which produces waste from energy and is fuelled by vegetable waste, most notably sweetcorn husks. As a result of this, the proposed development will be powered entirely from this renewable source.
- 7.26 The processes involved at Sefter Farm are potentially energy and water intensive which in turn introduces a significant cost and incentive to operate as efficiently as possible. Furthermore the surplus energy produced by the AD plant is sold back to the grid and therefore although the energy is notionally free, its profligate use has revenue implications as it reduces the surplus available to sell, which further incentivises energy efficiency.
- 7.27 Accordingly, and consistent with the company ethos, the proposed extension and processes will be highly energy and water efficient. The production areas would be chilled and therefore highly insulated to allow a lower temperature to be maintained with minimal cost. In addition, high efficiency compressors and low energy led lighting (T5) will be used through the new extension. A sub-metering system is also in place for both power and water use to micro-manage consumption and increase efficiency.

Sustainability

- 7.28 Sustainable agricultural practices underpin the entire Barfoots farming operation, and are pursued for both environmental and commercial reasons. Specifically, in the long term, unsustainable practices over time will always become economically unsustainable as waste and inefficiency will ultimately lead to higher costs and undermine competitiveness. Barfoots have therefore produced the following statement which is also available on their website:-

'As well as meeting our customer quality and due diligence audits, we recognise that our results must be achieved in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable way. For this, we set ourselves targets. Our waste levels are monitored monthly. As part of our Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste Regulations 1997), we are obliged to recover and recycle our packaging materials to agreed set targets. This is fulfilled through membership of the Valpak scheme.

We measure our impact on the local wildlife population. Members of the local ornithological society regularly carry out bird surveys, and the results are recorded on a database. Last summer, Barn Owls continued to patrol the immediate site, and Buzzards have paired and set up a territory within our farm boundaries. We recognise that we are only part of the environmental answer but we will continue to strive to be an environmental "sink", encouraging biodiversity wherever possible and appropriate.

Precision farming techniques ensure that inputs of chemicals, fertilizers and water are kept to the absolute minimum to meet a crop's needs. Wherever possible, beneficial insects rather than chemicals are used to control pests. If control is required by chemical means, then careful selection of pesticides are made by BASIS qualified staff and advisors, and by careful use we aim to minimize their environmental impact; maximize their effectiveness and lastly minimize risk of residues on any of our products. Qualified personnel carry out the process with modern machinery. This process ensures our produce is of the right quality, remains wholesome and has the provenance of being grown with minimum impact on the environment.

Through regularly reviewing our Farm Conservation Plans, we aim to continue to sustain and enhance the beauty of our landscape. To continue to improve and extend wildlife habitats whilst creating new habitats, landscapes and improved opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside'

Heritage Statement

- 7.29 The previous approval ref. P/76/16/PL was deemed acceptable in Heritage terms and in particular the impact of a significant new building on the setting of Sefter Farmhouse. This currently proposed building is less than 10% of the size of that previous approval and is further from the listed building. In these circumstances there is a strong case for not submitting a Heritage Statement as any impact would appear to be negligible or neutral. That said, and in the interests of completeness, the original Heritage Statement is resubmitted in the same form as was submitted for application P/76/16/PL.

'The wider Barfoots site contains a Grade II listed building in the form of Sefter Farmhouse and Granary, although this sits outside the formal red line area. Notwithstanding this point, it is a Heritage Asset and therefore the impact of the proposed development on it needs to be properly considered. Specifically, para. 128 of the NPPF suggests that applicants should properly assess the heritage implications of development in a way which is commensurate with the value of the asset and the nature of works proposed. In this regard the heritage assets have been identified and categorised above.

The listing description is short and as follows:-

One building. C18. Two storeys. Four windows. Stuccoed. Tiled roof. Vertical glazing bars only intact. C19 castellated porch. Modern addition behind.

The listed building was originally a traditional farmhouse and continues to be used for residential purposes. Its setting is however compromised to a degree by existing buildings, most notably the main production building which is about 15 metres from the listed building and is of modern appearance and is significantly larger in scale.

The proposed new building is some 100m from the farmhouse and there is a pair of more modern farm cottages, car park and internal access road in the intervening space. As a result of this there are no obvious viewpoints where the listed building and the new build would be viewed together in a way which might impact upon its setting. Accordingly, the proposed development is not considered to materially impact on the setting of the listed building and therefore no harm arises. In light of this conclusion, the requirements of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 have also been met.

- 7.30 The conclusion reached in relation to application P/76/16/PL must be equally if not more applicable to this proposals, and therefore any heritage impacts are considered acceptable.

Economic Statement

- 7.31 The following statement is short summary which shows the importance of horticulture within the wider economy and the implications of the proposed development in the local context. The evidence base is largely drawn from DEFRA statistics, the applicants own data and some LPA derived information.
- 7.32 Contextually a total of 24.4m hectares of UK land is in agricultural use which is notionally used to feed a current population of 64.6m people. Of this total land area 4.9m ha. are used for crops and horticulture, generating £1,277m of income from fresh vegetables alone. The situation is of course complicated by

imports and exports, the former dominating, with only 55% of vegetables home produced (2013 figures). Accordingly, feeding the nation whilst minimising exports and food miles is a significant challenge and requires innovation, investment and efficient production which inevitably can only be achieved where economies of scale are provided. Intensive agriculture and horticultural is therefore a crucial component of UK food production and without it production would be lower and imports higher.

- 7.33 Agriculture (including horticulture) is however in decline. Between 2014 and 2015 UK agricultural income dropped by 19.3% (DEFRA). Whilst that is only a snapshot and may be influenced by other factors including poor weather the overall trend is of decline. Horticulture is particularly vulnerable as it is labour intensive and therefore is subject to high cost and therefore most at risk from exports from countries with both better climates and cheaper labour.
- 7.34 Barfoots and their competitors have responded to these market pressures by increasing efficiency in both growing and processes at all levels including packaging, washing and transportation of produce. Significant Barfoots have also diversified in terms of the food preparation and producing consumer led products which involve less effort for the end user and add value for the producer.
- 7.35 Against this national context the role of Barfoots needs to be explained at a local level. In this regard up to date and industry specific data at the local level is scarce. However there is anecdotal evidence including commentary made within the emerging Arun DC Horticulture Local Development Order (LDO). This recognises the importance of horticulture within the local economy and states:-

2.1 Horticulture is identified in the Arun Local Plan (publication version)(2011-2031) as a key employment sector in the Arun District and the associated built environment is particularly concentrated in a number of localities. Horticultural activities included protected cropping associated with glasshouses and polytunnels, open field production, and ancillary produce packing and distribution and water management facilities.

2.2 The Council's Economic Strategy to 2016 identifies the Horticulture Sector as one of four key sectors which are particularly strong in the local economy with good opportunities for economic development and job creation. While the sector has significant potential for growth, it faces issues in relation to economies of scale, the quality of existing infrastructure, and production costs. In responding to these issues, the sector has experienced some locational rationalisation, and external development, mainly residential, pressures on some traditional horticultural locations.

2.3 The Council is committed to assisting the Horticulture Sector to respond effectively to these issues through the policies in its development plan and the proposed LDO.

- 7.36 Notwithstanding Barfoots is a UK success story, but more importantly is an Arun District success story. Barfoots success has been driven by innovation, customer focus, and a focus on sustainability and a major local employer with 300 full time employees and more than 1,000 Full time equivalents (FTE) depending on the time of year.
- 7.37 In light of the above it is clear that Barfoots make a significant contribution to the local economy and the proposed development is entirely consistent with the continuation and increase in this contribution through significant investment and innovation.

8.0 Conclusions and Summary

- 8.1 The above analysis shows that the proposed development fully accords with Local Plan policy. Specifically, Policy DEV3 supports growth of horticulture and related development in the countryside, which in turn provides a justification for development in countryside terms by virtue of Policy GEN3.
- 8.2 The development will help support jobs and opportunities for both the applicants and other local industries and suppliers. Horticulture is recognised as one of 4 key sectors locally and its growth is supported in acknowledgement of its importance within the local economy.
- 8.3 The proposed development is also substantially similar to previously approved and now lapsed planning permissions granted in 2009 and 2012. These were assessed against essentially the same local planning policies and the only significant material change in circumstances at a policy level is the introduction of the NPPF, which serves to add support to developments of this nature.
- 8.4 The proposals are therefore considered to be fully policy compliant at all levels and as such should be supported.