

Mrs R Carney  
Rochdale Borough Council  
Number One Riverside  
Smith Street Rochdale  
OL16 1XU  
BY EMAIL

26 May 2023

Dear Rachel

**Additional Information – Bank Top Farm Littleborough – LPA ref 22/01216**

Further to our recent telephone conversation, the applicant has considered further your comments on the offered planning conditions (following our letter of 3 May).

**Servicing and Deliveries**

The applicant will agree to restrict HGV servicing and deliveries to the morning period only. This addresses your concern to potential overlap with any community events that occur in the evening period.

We would reiterate that the number of deliveries by HGVs will be very small, likely one per week (or less) as the scale of the farm shop proposal and the scope of likely associated suppliers using HGVs to make deliveries is very limited. Most suppliers will deliver via vans which can be accommodated in the car park area at any time.

We trust this agreement which can be secured via a planning condition and servicing management plan as was recommended by the Borough Highway Officer is acceptable and can be positively reported to Members of the Planning Committee.

As we have discussed and provided examples, servicing conditions and servicing management plans to retail outlets, including much larger supermarkets and comparison units, are a standard approach utilised by the Council.

In the case of supermarkets, many different staff can be required to ensure the delivery regimes are undertaken in line with the management plan. In the case of Bank Top Farm, as this will be a small family business with limited staff, the management of deliveries can be undertaken in line with the agreed details with ease.

**Farm Shop and Café**

From our calls (and the reference at the previous Committee meeting by Officers to a 'Costa' coffee shop) we are concerned that the purpose of the application (and by implication the applicants) appears to be questioned.

The submitted information to the application (statements and plans) clearly demonstrate the proposal is for a farm shop to diversify the farm operations and ensure its financial viability and to provide full time employment opportunities for the family (and others). The farm shop will sell extended ranges of meat products from the farm stock along with other locally sourced products. The public consultation and questionnaire responses confirm there is an existing customer base to the farm meat sales and demand for more products, and that many more people would like to become customers if the farm was to have a shop with extended opening hours.

The layout plan shows the ground floor area would for the farm shop via servery, cold room, butchery preparation and sales area to the front.

Whilst a café is also proposed, this is evidently an ancillary element to the farm shop to supplement the income potential and viability of the farm business and is a normal associated offering to farm shops. A request to provide a plan with the positioning of chairs and tables to the café element is considered excessive as the final internal layout with choice of shelving, fixtures and fittings is clearly not decided at this stage.

Members should be assured that the applicants are committed to developing a high-quality farm shop utilizing their farm products in combination with supporting and stocking other locally sourced products.

In this respect, the proposed condition for the sale of farm and local goods by percentage of goods which reflects the condition wording of other farm shops granted planning permission by other local planning authorities should be acceptable to the planning tests and Members should be advised of this mechanism in a positive way in the update report on the application.

Similarly, the applicants offer of a planning condition to relate the proposals and operation of the building to the farm holding number would also enable the building to be fully related to the farm.

#### **Education and Community Uses**

Following the submission of the email letter from Rochdale BC Early Years Education Officer outlining the scope of positive discussions that have been held with the applicants and the support of this section of the Council to the proposal as an education facility to the Borough (and wider area), please can you provide any update on Officer's feedback to this. I understand you were proposing to discuss it further with senior officers in the planning department.

This letter should be positively reported to Members of the planning committee in the update report on the application.

We further maintain that an education management plan pursuant to a planning condition is an appropriate mechanism to secure and maintain the education function at the site.

Again, throughout the planning application the applicant has confirmed the commitment to provide an education and wider community use element to the scheme and deliver clear local and Borough benefits.

The submission of the further information and education management plan option accords with the request for information by Members of the Planning Committee at the February meeting. The full scope of information provided since that meeting should now be fully advised to Members for their consideration and assessment of the wide-ranging benefits of the application and its support to the continuation of the farm business.

We understand the application is to be reported to the 29 June Planning Committee. We would kindly ask for confirmation of the agenda closing date and when the Officers Report would be available on the Council's website before this meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Jones

Associate Planning Consultant **For and behalf of Maybern Planning and Development**