

Sequential Assessment Note - To Support Farm-Shop and Café Proposal at Bank Top Farm

LPA ref 23/01016/FUL

This Note is submitted to the on-going planning application for a 'true' farm shop and café to directly support on-farm diversification and the viability of the family run farm of Bank Top Farm.

Information on the proposal and the on-farm requirement for the farm shop has been provided in the Planning Statement and further submissions to the application.

However Officers now reference that the site is not considered to be in a rural location relative to paragraph 93 of the NPPF and that a sequential assessment is required.

The applicants remain of the view that the proposal as a 'true' farm shop can only be located on the farm site to enable customers the linked functions of viewing the farm context, experiencing interactions and events with farm animals the and site e.g. at lambing/ shearing time and viewing chicks and other animals and having the ability to walk around the site's landscaped surroundings when purchasing goods and visiting the cafe, and to achieve close alliance with and direct knowledge from the farming family. True farm shops are also a specialist rural business that have a joint specialist/ limited offer retail and tourism function, they are not a general convenience retail shop. As such, the rural nature and location of the farm accords with NPPF paragraph 93 that small rural businesses can be located in a rural area without requirement for sequential assessment.

Para 93 Assessment

NPPF does not define small scale or rural.

At 213 sq m gross external area the proposal is considered small scale; it is below the threshold for retail assessment in NPPF and below 280 sq m size for small shops relative to Sunday trading laws that is a parametre widely used for assessing smaller development proposals¹.

In respect of the location, the site lies outside of a settlement boundary and urban location and is therefore considered to be a rural location.

It is also relevant that NPPF at paragraph 92 states that when considering out of centre proposals preference should be given to 'accessible' sites. In this respect the planning application submission outlines that the farm shop proposal is not in an 'isolated' rural location, but is accessible via the adjacent bus stop and location on the main road between Littleborough and Smithy Bridge/Hollingworth and being within a relatively short distance of the settlements and the residential development sites now being taken forward in the immediate vicinity to enable accessibility via public transport, foot and cycle as well as by car.

Notwithstanding this, a wider sequential assessment has now been considered.

This Note therefore enables Officers to confirm that a sequential assessment has been undertaken.

¹ It is also significantly smaller than other farm shops in the north- west that are referenced in previous submissions to the application

Policy and Case Law Considerations for Sequential Assessment

NPPF outlines that sequential assessment is required in relation to ‘main town centre uses’, including general retail stores, which are not proposed in an existing centre or in accordance with an up to date plan to demonstrate that *suitable* town centre or edge of centre sites are not *available* or expected to become available within a reasonable period such that out of centre sites can be accepted.

In assessing suitable sites, NPPF, NPPG and case law establish that whilst applicants should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale² there is no requirement to undertake disaggregation or materially reconfigure their proposal. Paragraph 12 of NPPG also recognises that “*certain main town centre uses have particular market and locational requirements which mean that they may only be accommodated in specific locations*”. Also, in exploring suitable town centre or edge of centre sites, an assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the proposal e.g. in respect of catchment area to be considered and the type of sites. In line with guidance, assessment of sites should be based on defined retail centres and primary frontages with edge of centre sites being within 350m of such defined primary areas.

The Proposal and Parametres

As outlined in the application submission, the proposal is for a small farm shop that will predominantly sell farm produced meat products and goods; the proposed condition now uplifts to 50% of goods to be from the farm (with 30 % from locally based food producers and 20% from elsewhere), alongside an associated café also selling a large range of meals and goods utilising farm products. To support the shop, a butchery, chill/freezer area and preparation area are required as well, setting the general floorspace requirement of 230sq m. Disaggregation of the elements or a multi-level building is not relevant for the proposal operations as a co-ordinated true farm shop and farm based food offer.

Given the proposal and product range there is need for an immediately accessible space for unloading products direct into the preparation and storage areas from vans and small HGVs. Also, a need for immediately adjacent parking spaces for customers, for those who choose to order significantly sized meat products (e.g. half lamb, half pork etc), and relative to the size and joint use of the proposal (farm shop and café) such that on-site adjacent parking spaces are required.

As an associated element to the proposal, and reflecting the ‘true’ farm shop aim, there is also a requirement to enable a space for farm animals to be penned/ fielded next to the proposal for viewing and seasonal views of new lambs, chicks and calves as well as the passing on of knowledge and information on the source of the products. As such, a field or connecting greenspace area is required.

As the family currently own the site on which the farm shop is proposed, they have long term plans for the farm shop to pass to the sons (and future generations), and given investment in the facility will be significant to achieve the layout and operational aims, a purchase site is required rather than leasehold premises.

² Tesco Stores Limited v Dundee City Council [2012]

Additionally, a location close to the farm is required for product sourcing and also for the family to return to the farm quickly if an animal issue was to occur (e.g. health issue, birthing issue etc). The farm is set in the Littleborough and Smithy Bridge/ Hollingworth area and thus an approximate 1 mile catchment area from the farm for the identification of retail areas has been considered as a relevant area for the assessment; within this context, the retail centres of Littleborough and Smithy Bridge are present only.

It is widely accepted across the country that ‘true’ farm shops require an on-farm location and that an element of produce sales from local farms and businesses and of other goods can be associated with such farm shop operations; they do not form a ‘general’ shop outlet. However without assessing non-farm locations, the sequential assessment as required by the Officers cannot be undertaken.

Assessment

Following examination of the Development Plan, and any retail allocations in the settlements of Littleborough and Smithy Bridge/Hollingworth, secondary source information has been reviewed including commercial property search websites.

The following property sources have been reviewed:

- Right Move
- Zoopla
- Prime Location
- Box Pod

The recently adopted GM wide ‘Places For Everyone’ Plan does not contain retail allocations or sites. From the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) based on the Rochdale UDP (2006) proposals maps there are no sites allocated for retail uses within the defined retail frontages or town centre areas. A regeneration area in Littleborough, ref R4a (identified for tourism and complementary retail), located on the edge of the town centre inset map is currently in occupation by a variety of businesses and has flood risk areas. It is not considered to be suitable or available³.

From assessment of the commercial property agency websites, only 1 commercial property is listed as available within the defined town centre inset map area of Littleborough, but lies beyond the primary retail frontages. 7 other properties are listed as available to the market within 1 mile of the two centres (or immediately beyond this distance). (See map at Appendix 1).

Marketing details of these properties are assessed in the Table below. The online marketing particulars of each of these properties is enclosed at Appendix 2.

³ This is a longstanding constrained site that was also included in the initial Rochdale UDP from 1999

Site location	Site/Unit Size	Other Considerations	Conclusion
Cherry Tree Café Littleborough	-104 sq m -2 floor configuration	-Leasehold -Within listed building -No directly adjacent parking or servicing -Edge of centre	The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable due to the unit size and configuration.
Duke Street Business Centre Littleborough	-244 sq m	- Out of centre -Office use -Insufficient direct parking and servicing -Leasehold	The unit is out of centre and not sequentially preferable to the application site. The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable due to the established use and lack of parking/direct servicing.
52 Church Street Littleborough	-95 sq m	-Office use -Integral unit within building -No direct parking or servicing -Edge of centre	The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable due to the unit size and configuration and lack of parking/direct servicing.
Mayfield Parade	-107 sq m	-Out of centre -Leasehold	The unit is out of centre and not sequentially preferable to the application site. The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable due to the unit size.
Hare Hill Road	- 85 sqm	- Office Use - Integral unit within building -No direct parking or servicing -Edge of centre	The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable due to the unit size.
Sladen Wood Mill Littleborough	-2,820 sq m	- Out of centre -Leasehold - Commercial / industrial use	The unit is out of centre and not sequentially preferable to the application site. The unit is concluded to be Not Suitable as too large.
Moorcock Inn Littleborough	-Two storey public house and hotel	-Out of centre -£2,000,000 price	The site is out of centre and not sequentially

	accommodation/ wedding venue	-Too large/inappropriate configuration for proposal	preferable to the application site. Also concluded to be Not Suitable as too large and given the wide-ranging uses on site is outside of the investment opportunities.
Rake Inn Blackstone Edge	-376 sq m - Two storey public house and hotel accommodation	- Out of centre -£1,000,000 price -Too large for proposal -Limited adjacent parking and servicing	The site is out of centre and not sequentially preferable to the application site. Also concluded to be Not Suitable as too large and given the wide-ranging uses on site is outside of the investment opportunities.

Conclusion

Having regard to the above, it has been concluded that there are no sequentially preferable sites which are suitable or available for the proposal.

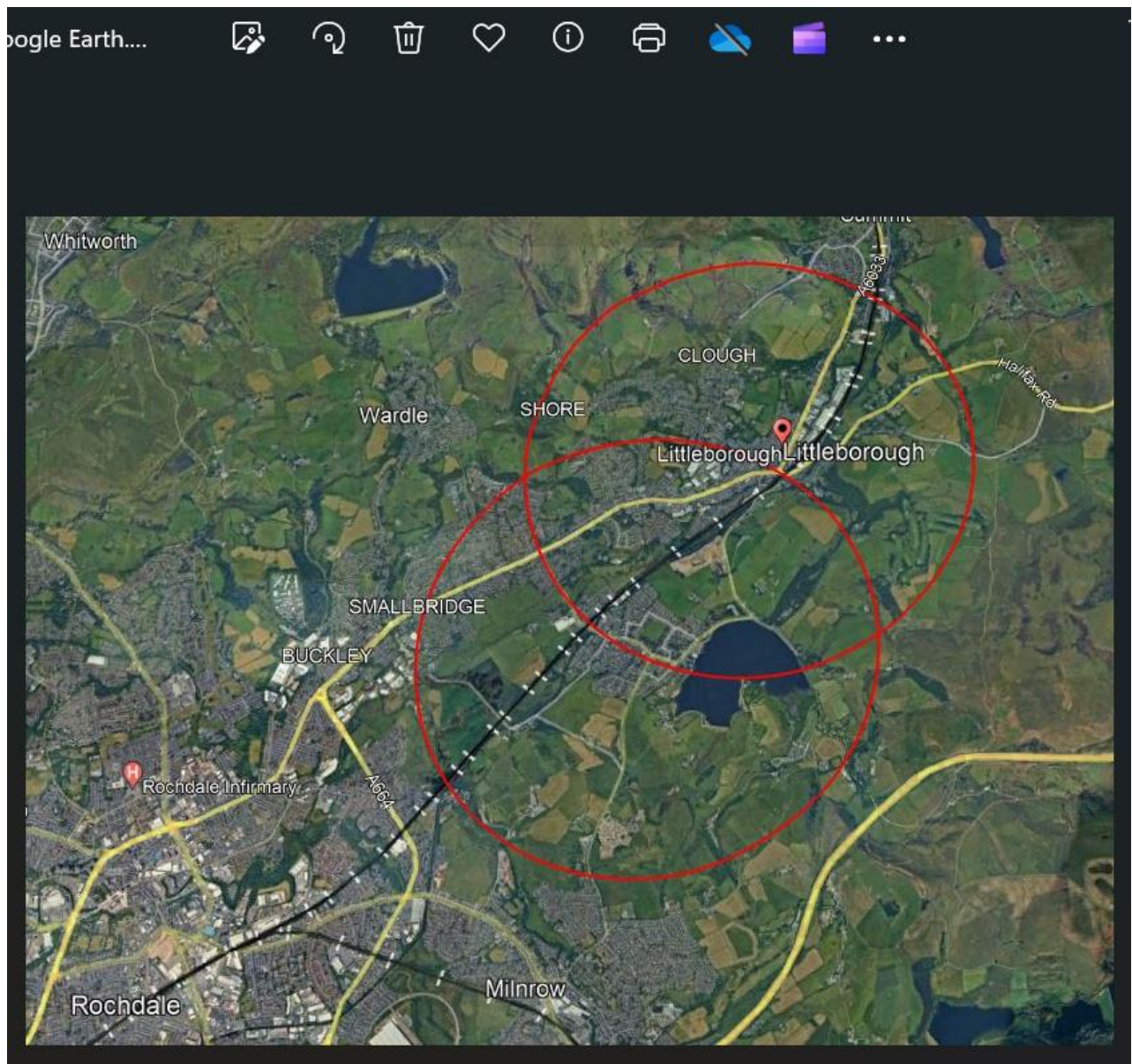
The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of the sequential assessment.

22 April 2024

MAYBERN
PLANNING + DEVELOPMENT

Hurstwood Court Business Centre
New Hall Hey Road
Rawtenstall
Rossendale
BB4 6HR
0161 791 2944
www.maybern.co.uk
hello@maybern.co.uk

Appendix 1



Radius – 1 mile Littleborough retail centre/ 1 mile Smithy Bridge retail frontage

Appendix 2 – Marketing Details of Units

Primelocation

https://www.primelocation.com/for-sale/commercial/property/greater-manchester/littleborough/?floor_area_units=sq_feet...

PrimeLocation Find your dream home

littleborough Within 3 miles Filters and keywords



Offers in region of
£425,000 (£161.66/sq. ft)

Commercial property for sale
Duke Street Business Centre, Duke Street,
Littleborough, ...

2,629 sq. ft*

Breakey Nuttall

Breakey & Nuttall



Offers in region of
£350,000 (£341.46/sq. ft)

Commercial property for sale
52-54 Church Street, Littleborough, Lancashire OL15

1,025 sq. ft*

The property comprises landmark, dressed stone fronted, former bank premises, fully renovated, in 2017, by our client to provide a contemporary building of 8 individual business units ... [read more >](#)

Breakey Nuttall

Breakey & Nuttall

https://www.primelocation.com/for-sale/commercial/details/66118773/?search_identifier=f0cdcf70c601b68b17f5e106927ab81 business units ... [read more >](#)

PrimeLocation Find your dream home

littleborough Within 3 miles Filters and keywords



£49,995

Restaurant/cafe for sale
Littleborough, England, United Kingdom OL15

Business Please quote reference B07865 CoGoGo are delighted to welcome to the market a highly rated Café in Littleborough. The Cherry Tree Café has been under our client's careful ownership ... [read more >](#)

 **Hilton Smythe**
Business Sales

We also found these nearby properties that meet your search criteria:

https://www.onthemarket.com/details/12939939/#/floorplans/1

Photos (22) Floorplan Map Arrange viewing 01706 408679

Ground Floor
Approx. 84.7 sq. metres (892.3 sq. feet)

Seating Area
8.00m x 5.01m
(26'3" x 16'5")

Prep Area
2.80m x 1.50m
(9'3" x 4'11")

Washup Area
1.20m x 1.50m
(3'11" x 4'11")

Kitchen
4.40m x 3.00m
(14'5" x 11'9")

First Floor
Approx. 26.3 sq. metres (283.3 sq. feet)

Bar
2.00m x 3.07m
(6'6" x 9'9")

Washup Area
2.00m x 1.50m
(6'6" x 4'11")

Seating Area
5.00m x 5.18m
(16'5" x 17'1")

Total area: approx. 103.7 sq. metres (1115.8 sq. feet)

1 of 1

PrimeLocation Find your dream home littleborough Within 3 miles Filters and keywords

£2,000,000

Pub/bar for sale
Littleborough, England, United Kingdom OL15

Blacks Brokers are pleased to bring to the market this freehold pub, hotel and restaurant located in a stunning rural area of Greater Manchester. Business & Property: £2,000,000. Please quote ... [read more](#)

blacks
Blacks Business Brokers

£1,000,000

Restaurant/cafe for sale
Blackstone Edge Old Road, Littleborough OL15

Gourmet Coaching Inn, South Pennines The Rake, Littleborough £1.1m • Opportunity The Rake is a very successful well-established coaching inn Beautifully restored throughout, this historic ... [read more](#)

NBS
Nationwide Business Sales

on.com/for-sale/commercial/details/66396792/?search_identifier=f0cdcfe70c601b68b17f5e106927ab81

[←](#)
[↺](#)
[https://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-sale/find.html?searchType=SALE&locationIdentifier=REGION%5E811... ↗](#)
[🏠](#)
[🔖](#)
[📁](#)
[🔍](#)

Littleborough

Clear

+ 1 mile

sq. ft.

Min Size

to

Max Size

Min Price

to

Max Price

Property Type

Filters

📷 1/9

Freehold Pub Hotel & Restaurant - Gtr Manchester [OL15 0LD]

9 bedroom pub for sale

We are pleased to bring to the market this freehold pub, hotel and restaurant located in a stunning rural area of Greater Manchester.

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Blacks Business Brokers, Bury

£2,000,000

📞 blacks

0161 524 5830

Local call rate

📧 Contact

📌 Save

📷 1/47

Blackstone Edge Old Road, Littleborough, OL15

Restaurant for sale

Beautiful Award-Winning Grade II Listed 16th Century four-bedroom gourmet coaching inn at the foothills of the South Pennines Three revenue streams Planning permission granted to

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by Nationwide Business Sales LTD, Castleford

£1,000,000

4,090 sq. ft.

📞 NBS

0113 519 1262

Local call rate

📧 Contact

📌 Save

Give your people the experiences they deserve

Take product tour

Sage

helping business flow

Staying secure when looking for a property

Ensure you're up to date with our latest advice on how to avoid fraud or scams when looking for property online.

[View our security centre to find out more >](#)

Nearby Littleborough

[Rochdale](#)
[Wardle Fold](#)
[Relfield](#)

[www.rightmove.co.uk/commercial-property-to-let/find.html?searchType=RENT&locationIdentifier=REGION%5E811&... A](#)

Littleborough Clear + 1 mile sq. ft. Min Size to Max Size PCM Min Price to Max Price Property Type Filters

Unit 5, Mayfield Parade, Rochdale

Convenience store

Mayfield Parade is prominently situated at the junction of Albert Royds Street (A664) and Samson Street, in which Albert Royds Street is one of the main arterial roads in Rochdale

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by LCP, Commercial

LCP. 01384 437699
part of IM Core Local call rate

Contact Save

£1,458 pcm
1,158 sq. ft.

Additional commercial listings

Hare Hill Road, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL15

Office

The available property comprises of a light first floor office space located within a two storey multi-let, semi-detached office building. The suite is accessed through a front pathway along

COMMERCIAL

Marketed by S. Kershaw & Sons Chartered Surveyors, Manchester

0161 524 6760
Local call rate

Contact Save

£175 pcm
84 sq. ft.

Staying secure when looking for a property

Ensure you're up to date with our latest advice on how to avoid fraud or scams when looking for property online.

[View our security centre to find out more >](#)

Nearby Littleborough

- Rochdale
- Wardle Fold
- Belfield
- Hurstead
- Hamer
- Wuerdle
- Belfield Estate

[Locations within Greater Manchester on a map](#)

Within Littleborough

- Smithybridge
- Hollingworth Lake
- Calderbrook
- Blackstone Edge
- Hollingworth

https://www.zoopla.co.uk/for-sale/commercial/property/greater-manchester/littleborough/?floor_area_units

Littleborough, Greater Man... (within 1 mile) ▼

Property type ▼

£ Any price



Business for sale

4

Hilton Smythe Business Sales, BL1

£49,995

Restaurant/café for sale

Littleborough, England, United Kingdom OL15

Well Established Café For Sale

Littleborough (0.1 miles) Smithy Bridge (1.1 miles)

01204 351867 ** Contact Save Hide

hiltonsmythe
Business Sales



3

£350,000 (£341.46/sq. ft)
Offers in region of

1,025 sq. ft*

Commercial property for sale

52-54 Church Street, Littleborough, Lancashire OL15

The property comprises landmark, dressed stone fronted, former bank premises, fully renovated, in 2017, by our client to provide a contemporary building of 8 individual office/business units over

uk/for-sale/commercial/details/66118773/?search_identifier=41e93660e12cad7b3d5e7679fe2ecc55 kitchen and ...

Breakey
Nuttall

🔍 Littleborough, Greater Man... (within 1 mile) ▼

🏠 Property type ▼

£ Any price



📷 3

Breakey & Nuttall, OL2

£425,000 (£161.66/sq. ft)
Offers in region of



📏 2,629 sq. ft*

[Commercial property for sale](#)

Duke Street Business Centre, Duke Street, Littleborough, Lancashire
OL15

🚗 Littleborough (0.4 miles) 🚗 Smithy Bridge (0.8 miles)

☎ 0161 937 8082 **

✉ [Contact](#)

★ [Save](#)

🚫 [Hide](#)

https://www.zoopla.co.uk/for-sale/commercial/property/greater-manchester/littleborough/?floor_area_units=

Littleborough, Greater Man... (within 1 mile) ▼

Property type

£ Any price



17

Kings Business Transfer, PR2

£650,000 Offers over



Pub/bar for sale

OL16, Newhey, Lancashire

Delightful Detached Free House with excellent food trade located within a sought after semi rural village setting in Lancashire - Turnover £320,007 per annum (y/e 31.03.22) 67% Gross Profit, 6 days only, terrific growth potential, substantial period ...

➡ Smithy Bridge (2.6 miles) ➡ Littleborough (2.8 miles)

☎ 01772 913303 **

 [Contact](#)

★ Save

 Hide



47

£1,000,000



Restaurant/cafe for sale

Blackstone Edge Old Road, Littleborough OL15

Beautiful Award-Winning Grade II Listed 16th Century four-bedroom gourmet coaching inn at the foothills of the South Pennines Three revenue streams Planning permission granted to extend further

Littleborough (0.4 miles) Smithy Bridge (1.5 miles)

(OL16 Newhey Pub Site – too far from catchment area for assessment)

Littleborough, Greater Man... (within 1 mile) ▼

Property type ▼

£ Any price

Littleborough (0.4 miles) Smithy Bridge (1.0 miles)

Nationwide Business Sales, WF10

0113 427 5931 **

Contact

Save

Hide



7

£2,000,000

blacks

Pub/bar for sale

Littleborough, England, United Kingdom OL15

Freehold Pub Hotel & Restaurant - Gtr Manchester

Littleborough (1.1 miles) Smithy Bridge (2.1 miles)

Blacks Business Brokers, BL9

0161 937 5978 **

Contact

Save

Hide

* Sizes listed are approximations. Please contact the agent to verify actual sizes.

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