
Feb 2025

**Proposed Agricultural Building for sheep and storage of hay / feed
/ agricultural machinery / equipment**

Land at Cockermouth Farm, Cockermouth Lane, Flockton, Huddersfield, WF4 4BS

Planning Policy Statement

Prepared by:



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for a new agricultural building on land at Cockermouth Farm, Flockton.
- 1.2 The planning application follows approval for a similar, but smaller agricultural building in Feb 2024 (LPA ref 2023/92899). The approval for the 2023 building accepts the principle of development at Cockermouth Farm and demonstrates the need for such a building.
- 1.3 The proposed building is for use by the applicant and will provide space to store hay / feed / farm machinery / equipment and provide covered space for sheep (in particular during lambing). The building is required for farming operations at Cockermouth Farm (County Parish Holding No 49/344/0759 and Flock Number UK-135829).

Background, Planning History & Relevant Appeal Decisions

- 1.4 The site sits in the Green Belt
- 1.5 The landholding at Cockermouth Farm extends to 2.2ha with a further 6ha farmed in Flockton, Lepton and Almondbury used for grazing and hay making.
- 1.6 The proposed agricultural building will provide covered area for lambing and housing of sheep together with storage of hay bales / feed and machinery / equipment in a purpose-built building appropriately designed for its purpose and sited on land in the applicant's ownership. The hay is taken from fields owned and farmed by the applicant. The bales are currently stored outside.
- 1.7 This application follows grant of planning permission for a smaller building in Feb 2024 (LPA ref 2023/92899) for sheep, feed and equipment. The application for the building approved in 2024 was retrospective and was not large enough at the time for the number of sheep farmed by the applicant. The 2024 approval confirms the principle of agricultural buildings on this site and need.
- 1.8 In the last 12 months the flock has increased further, hence the need for an additional building on the site. The applicant now has 46 sheep, of which 43 are in lamb, expecting 58 lambs.
- 1.9 It is also noted from the Officer's report in respect of the previous scheme that there are no issues with the proposal in terms of residential amenity, highways or ground conditions / contamination. The main issue relates to appropriateness of the building in the green belt and its design. These matters are addressed in this Planning Statement.

Relevant Appeal Decisions

- 1.10 Consideration has also been given to two recent appeal decision (letters dated 12 April 2022 and 6 July 2023) for agricultural buildings in Farsley, Leeds (PINs ref APP/N4720/W/22/3290573 / LPA ref 21/01082/FUL) and Drighlington, Leeds (PINs reference APP/N4720/W/23/3319915 / LPA ref 22/06942/FU) respectively.

- 1.11 In both cases, the appeals were allowed with the Inspector confirming that an agricultural building in the green belt for the use of storage of equipment / machinery and hay bales was an agricultural activity and as such was an appropriate form of development (in the green belt). This application also includes the housing of sheep and lambs which is also an agricultural use.
- 1.12 There are clear similarities with this proposal as it involves storage of hay bales (made from hay grown and cut by the applicant) as well as keeping of sheep.

The Application Site

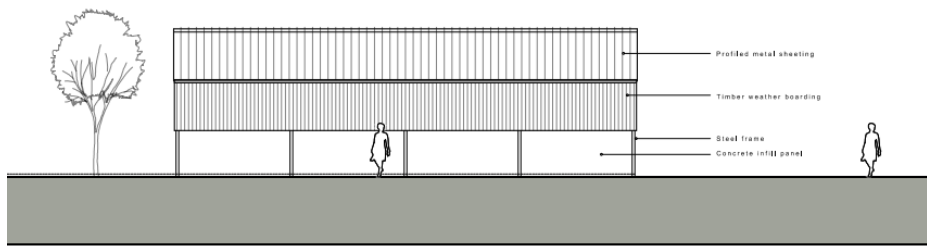
- 1.13 The site comprises a parcel of land at Cockermouth Farm, Flockton. The agricultural holding extends to 2.2ha with a further 6 ha farmed in Flockton, Lepton and Almondbury. The holding number for the farm is CPH 49/344/0759.
- 1.14 The site is accessed via a track from Long Lane with dwellings to the west of the site.
- 1.15 Within the site there is the previously approved (Feb 2024) agricultural building used for sheep, lambs, machinery, feed and haybales – this building is not large enough for the current flock size and the expected growth as lambs are born during the spring. Farm machinery is kept on site together with external storage of bales.
- 1.16 The site sits within the Green Belt. The site is not subject to any landscape, heritage or ecological designations or interests.

The Proposed Development

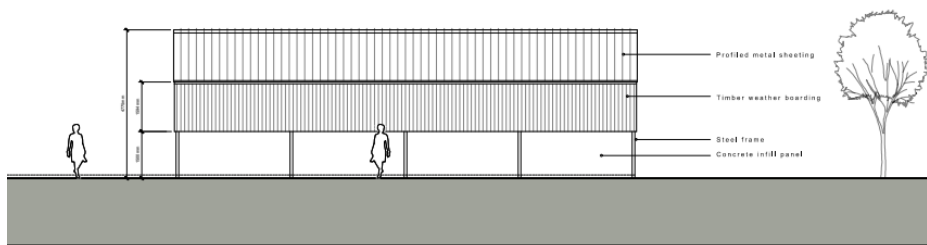
- 1.17 The application is for the erection of an agricultural building. The building is located to the south of the existing agricultural building.
- 1.18 The proposed agricultural building is a simple rectangular portal framed building measuring 9135mm x 14520mm x 3094mm to eaves and 4775mm to ridge.
- 1.19 The building is steel portal frame (built in sections at c9m x 3.5m [internal] – there are 4 bays proposed giving a floor area of 126sqm) with concrete infill panels (up to 1500mm) with Timber boarding above (up to eaves) and then profiled sheet roof. A set of timber doors are located on the northern gable facing the existing agricultural building.
- 1.20 The building is designed and built to reflect the dual use of the building and ensure safe access to animals with secure storage areas for the hay.
- 1.21 The elevations are copied below – see over the page.

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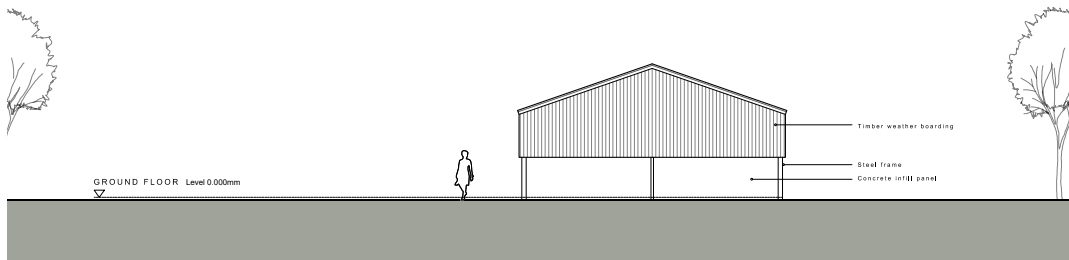
Proposed agricultural building – Cockermouth Farm, Flockton



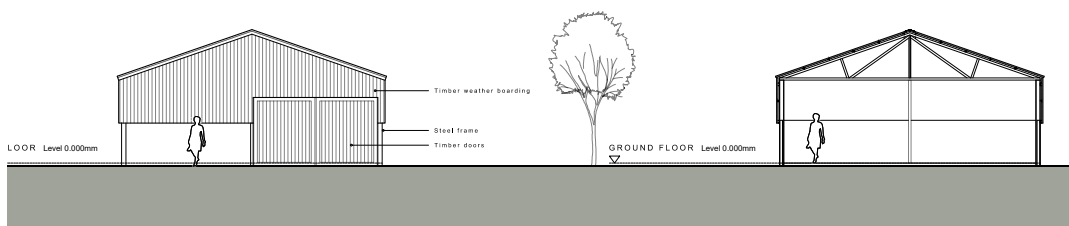
Elevation A



Elevation C



Elevation B



Relevant Planning Policies

- 1.22 A full summary of the relevant planning policies is set out in Chapter 2 and assessed in Chapter 3. However, in summary, the key planning policy documents considered relevant in the assessment of the proposal are:
- NPPF 2024 – in particular guidance on Design and Green Belt;
 - Relevant Policies from the Kirklees Local Plan, namely those relating to design and green belt:
 - LP 24 – Design
 - LP 54 – Building for agriculture and forestry in the Green Belt

The Planning Application

- 1.23 This statement describes the application site and nature of the proposal (above) together with an assessment of planning policy issues (Chapter 2) of relevance to the application. Assessment of the planning application is set out in Chapter 3 with conclusions set out in Chapter 4.
- 1.24 This statement will fully justify the proposal for the site and will advance justification for proposal.
- 1.25 On the basis of the information provided in this statement, the associated supporting documents and on the application drawings, a presumption in favour of development can be maintained in this particular instance, the application being in accordance with the advice set out in the NPPF.
- 1.26 The planning application is supported by the following:
- i. Completed application forms, with all certificates signed and dated;
 - ii. Location and proposed plans (AHJ Architects)
 - iii. Planning Statement prepared by Alistair Flatman Planning

The submitted additional technical information is considered sufficient to enable the Local Planning Authority to determine the clear merits of the proposed development.

2 Planning Policy Review

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (revised Dec 2024) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 2.2 Set out below is a summary and assessment of the relevant sections of the NPPF in respect of design and green belt.

Design

- 2.3 Chapter 12 of the NPPF refers to Design and advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 2.4 Paragraph 135 sets out a number of design criteria to be considered in terms of design to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character
- 2.5 The proposed agricultural building is a simple portal frame structure with concrete panel walls with timber above all set under a sheet roof. A doorway is proposed to the north facing into the yard in front of the existing agricultural building. The height of the building is 3m to eaves with ridge at 4.7m ensuring its sits comfortably on site and will not be unduly prominent. The design is informed by its use, i.e. housing of sheep / lambs and storage of hay together with machinery / equipment required to look after the applicant's land holding.
- 2.6 The proposal results in an appropriately designed building that will be seen in the context of other existing buildings in terms of height and materials.

Protecting Green Belt Land

- 2.7 The application site is located within the defined Green Belt. The essential character of the green belt is its openness. The Green Belt serves the following five purposes (para 143);
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.8 Given the location of the site and surrounding land uses the role of the green belt in this location is limited to that of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The site comprises an existing yard / paddock with stables and agricultural buildings to the north of the proposed building and existing dwellings to the west. The proposed building will be seen in the context of existing buildings / agricultural

activities on site and farmhouse to the west. As such there is no encroachment into the surrounding countryside arising from the proposed development.

2.9 The NPPF also sets out the types of development considered appropriate in the green belt. This includes at para 154 (a):

a) buildings for agriculture or forestry;

2.10 The proposed agricultural building is designed and built to reflect its use and will be used for housing sheep / lambs and storage of hay together with machinery / equipment used in association with maintaining the associated landholding.

2.11 Further details on the number of sheep / bales and hay bales harvested are set out in Section 3.

2.12 In light of the above (and given previous approval in 2024 for similar building), it is considered the proposed agricultural building is therefore appropriate development in the Green Belt and is acceptable in principle.

Compliance with the NPPF

2.13 Assessing the proposal against the main objectives of the NPPF, it is clear the scheme accords with the overarching approach to planning in that:

- The site sits in the green belt, but the proposal will not result in any encroachment into the countryside;
- The proposal consists of an agricultural building (housing of sheep / lambs and storage of hay, equipment and machinery) related to applicants land holding (CPH ref 49/344/0759 and Flock Number UK-135829) and is therefore an appropriate form of Green Belt development; and
- As illustrated by the submitted plans, the building is small scale, built in block and timber and designed to reflect its agricultural use – the proposal is sympathetic to and reflective of the character of the surrounding area.

2.14 It is therefore considered that the proposal is consistent with this national guidance and the Council are asked to take a proactive approach when assessing this proposal.

Statutory Development Plan Policies

2.15 The sits in the Green Belt between the settlements of Lepton and Flockton. As such the development plan consists of the adopted Kirklees Local Plan (2019).

2.16 The relevant policies are:

LP 24 – Design – the policy encourages good design and sets out a number of criteria against which proposals should be considered

LP 54 – Building for agriculture and forestry in the Green Belt – this is the most relevant policy dealing with principles and design matters – it is referenced in the previous reason for refusal – the policy is copied below for completeness:

Policy LP54

Buildings for agriculture and forestry

Proposals for new buildings for agriculture and forestry will normally be acceptable, provided that;

- a. the building is genuinely required for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- b. the building can be sited in close association with other existing agricultural buildings, subject to the operational requirements of the holding it is intended to serve. Isolated new buildings will only be accepted exceptionally where there are clear and demonstrable reasons for an isolated location;
- c. there will be no detriment to the amenity of nearby residents by reason of noise or odour or any other reason; and
- d. the design and materials should have regard to relevant design policies to ensure that the resultant development does not materially detract from its Green Belt setting.

2.17 These will be assessed in Chapter 3.

3 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 3.1 The site is located in the Green Belt and as such guidance set out in the NPPF (in particular para 154) and Local Plan Policy LP54 are particularly relevant. It is noted that the LPA have previously accepted agricultural building on this site – LPA ref 2023/62/92899/E.
- 3.2 Development within the Green Belt is considered inappropriate, with a closed list of exceptions, including the construction of buildings for purposes of agriculture or forestry (NPPF para 154 [a]). Local Plan Policy LP54 refers to development proposals for agricultural buildings setting out 4 criteria for consideration.
- 3.3 In respect of need, the building is required to provide additional space as farming activities grow on site. The following details are provided to clearly justify the agricultural use on site and need for the building:
- In Spring 2025, there were 43 ewes (up from 26 ewes in Spring 2023). 43 of these ewes are in lamb with 58 lambs expected this spring. The flock size is expected to
 - There are 3 tups in the flock as well
 - In terms of breeds, the sheep are a mix of Suffolk, Texel, Mule and Beltex. The Flock number is UK – 135829.
 - With regards lambing, a covered area is required.
 - In terms of pen sizes for lambing in the proposed building, a single feeder pen for a lamb should be a minimum of 1m x 2m (i.e. 2 sqm in area). Larger pens are required where you have sheep and lamb in the same space or indeed want to put more than one lamb in a pen, circa 2.5sqm. The existing agricultural building has 36sqm of area for sheep / lambs – at 2sqm per pen, that would house 18 lambs or 14 sheep / lamb pairings (28 animals). This is clearly well below the number of sheep farmed by the applicant, hence the need for the new building.
 - The new building is circa 9m x 14.5m with an internal floor area around 126sqm. The building will be used for storage of hay, feed and machinery as well as pens for the sheep / lambs. The whole building would be used for pens during lambing (assume 100sqm to allow for circulation space between pens and space at the entrance to enter the building with feed / hay), that would allow for 50 lamb pens or 40 sheep / lamb pens. As stated above there are currently 43 ewes and 58 lambs expected giving a total of 101 animals. The existing building has circa 36sqm and proposed would provide 100sqm for lambing – total of 136sqm – 43 sheep and 43 lambs could be housed in a 2.5m pen (43 x 2.5m = 107.5sqm) with 15 lambs left in single (2sqm) pens, so 30 sqm which equates to the internal space available.

- In terms of future animal numbers, whilst lambs are likely to be sold, the main flock of 43 ewes and 3 tups will be retained so similar lamb numbers can be expected in 2026.
 - It is therefore a clear need for this new agricultural building to ensure sufficient pens can be provided to safely and comfortably house the number of sheep / lambs farmed by the applicant.
 - Once the lambing season is over, the animals are sent to the fields with the internal space used to store hay, machinery and equipment which is currently outside.
 - With regards storage of hay, based on the landholding farmed, an average crop would generate approximately 40-50 larger round bales or up to 450 smaller rectangular bales. Last year 42 large bales were formed (and wrapped – currently stored externally on site) and 180 smaller rectangular bales were formed – some have been kept and others sold. A larger round bale has a diameter of circa 1.5m and is 1.8m tall whilst the smaller rectangular bales are 0.4m x 0.55m x 1.1m in length. The new building is large enough to store the larger hay bales and avoid outside storage.
- 3.4 The evidence set out above clearly demonstrates the applicant's agricultural operations and there is a need for the building in terms of housing sheep / lambs and storage of hay.
- 3.5 The housing of sheep and lambs, together with machinery, equipment, feed and hay are all agricultural uses.
- 3.6 There is therefore clear evidence and justification that the building is genuinely required for the purposes of agriculture and as such the proposal complies with part 'a' of Local Plan Policy LP54 and comprises an appropriate form of development in the green belt consistent with NPPF para 154.
- 3.7 In respect of parts 'b' and 'c' of Local Plan Policy LP54, it was accepted previously that the building would not be isolated and would not give rise to any harm to residential amenity.
- 3.8 The final criteria relates to design. This is addressed below.
- Design and Appearance**
- 3.9 Local Plan Policy LP24, together with criteria 'd' of LP54 refer to design whilst the advice contained within the NPPF seek to promote new development that responds to local character, reflects the identity of local surroundings, and reinforce local distinctiveness (para 135 NPPF).
- 3.10 The proposed portal framed building is designed to reflect its agricultural uses, namely housing of sheep / lambs and safe / dry storage of hay as well as secure storage for machinery and equipment used on the agricultural holding. The building comprises 4 bays with use of concrete panels with timber boarding above, the roof being sheeting.

- 3.11 The use of concrete and timber panels is commonplace on agricultural buildings. The building is laid out to meet its use and ensure it can be accessed safely and efficiently by people, animals and machinery. Furthermore, the building is sited close to existing buildings such that it will not be prominent or incongruous in the landscape.
- 3.12 The building is designed to fulfil its function as an agricultural building – the agricultural character and appearance of the building will sit comfortably within the green belt with no harm to its visual amenity.
- 3.13 Overall the design, scale, siting and materials for the proposed agricultural building are considered to be entirely acceptable in this location in terms of ensuring there is no harm to character and appearance of the site and its surrounds.
- 3.14 As such it is considered the proposal is compliant with Local Plan Policies LP25 and LP54 as well as guidance set out in the NPPF.

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 This Planning Policy Statement has been prepared to support a planning application for an agricultural building at Cockermouth Farm, Flockton.
- 4.2 The planning application follows approval for a similar, but smaller agricultural building in Feb 2024 (LPA ref 2023/92899). The approval for the 2023 building accepts the principle of development at Cockermouth Farm and demonstrates the need for such a building.
- 4.3 The proposed building is for use by the applicant and will provide space to store hay / feed / farm machinery / equipment and provide covered space for sheep (in particular during lambing). The building is required for farming operations at Cockermouth Farm (County Parish Holding No 49/344/0759 and Flock Number UK-135829).

Background, Planning History & Relevant Appeal Decisions

- 4.4 The landholding at Cockermouth Farm sits in the Green Belt and extends to 2.2ha with a further 6ha farmed in Flockton, Lepton and Almondbury used for grazing and hay making.
- 4.5 The proposed agricultural building will provide covered area for lambing and housing of sheep together with storage of hay bales / feed and machinery / equipment in a purpose-built building appropriately designed for its purpose and sited on land in the applicant's ownership. The hay is taken from fields owned and farmed by the applicant. The bales are currently stored outside.
- 4.6 This application follows grant of planning permission for a smaller building in Feb 2024 (LPA ref 2023/92899) for sheep, feed and equipment. The application for the building approved in 2024 was retrospective and was not large enough at the time for the number of sheep farmed by the applicant. The 2024 approval confirms the principle of agricultural buildings on this site and need. In the last 12 months the flock has increased further, the applicant now has 46 sheep, of which 43 are in lamb, expecting 58 lambs.

The Application Site

- 4.7 The site comprises a parcel of land at Cockermouth Farm, Flockton. The agricultural holding extends to 2.2ha with a further 6 ha farmed in Flockton, Lepton and Almondbury. The holding number for the farm is CPH 49/344/0759.
- 4.8 The site is accessed via a track from Long Lane with dwellings to the west of the site. Within the site there are 6 stable buildings and a smaller agricultural building. Farm machinery is kept on site together with external storage of bales (these will be stored in the building in future).
- 4.9 The site sits within the Green Belt. The site is not subject to any landscape, heritage or ecological designations or interests.

The Proposed Development

- 4.10 The application is for the erection of an agricultural building. The building is located to the south of the existing agricultural building.

- 4.11 The proposed agricultural building is a simple rectangular portal framed building measuring 9135mm x 14520mm x 3094mm to eaves and 4775mm to ridge. The building is steel portal frame (built in sections at c9m x 3.5m [internal] – there are 4 bays proposed giving a floor area of 126sqm) with concrete infill panels (up to 1500mm) with Timber boarding above (up to eaves) and then profiled sheet roof. A set of timber doors are located on the northern gable facing the existing agricultural building.

Assessment

- 4.12 The site is located in the Green Belt. As such guidance set out in the NPPF (in particular para 154) and Local Plan Policy LP54 is particularly relevant.
- 4.13 Development within the Green Belt is considered inappropriate, with a closed list of exceptions, including the construction of buildings for purposes of agriculture or forestry (NPPF para 154 [a]).
- 4.14 The application proposes a new agricultural building. The application sets out clear justification for the need for the building in terms of number of sheep farmed and space required per sheep / lamb during lambing together with space required for haybales commensurate with the numbers produced from the agricultural landholding. The design, siting and materials are appropriate for the buildings use and will not harm openness nor does the proposed agricultural use conflict with Green Belt purposes. The proposal is therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is acceptable in principle.
- 4.15 Assessing the proposed development against the main objectives of the NPPF, it is clear the scheme accords with the overarching approach to planning in that: -
- The site sits in the green belt, but the proposal will not result in any encroachment into the countryside;
 - The proposal consists of an agricultural building (housing of sheep / lambs and storage of hay, equipment and machinery) related to applicants land holding (CPH ref 49/344/0759 and Flock Number UK-135829) and is therefore an appropriate form of Green Belt development; and
 - As illustrated by the submitted plans, the building is small scale, built in block and timber and designed to reflect its agricultural use – the proposal is sympathetic to and reflective of the character of the surrounding area.
- 4.16 The Proposed Development therefore complies with requirements set out in the NPPF and Local Plan Policies LP24 (Design) and LP54 (Buildings for Agriculture).
- 4.17 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies national and local policy and represents a suitable and sustainable development proposal for the site that addresses all the relevant and material considerations.
- 4.18 In this context, the proposal satisfies Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.

