

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)

Proposed Temporary Rural Workers Dwelling

At

Foxbury Springs, Walnut Hill Road, Istead Rise, Gravesend, Kent DA13
9HL

Consilium Town Planning Services Limited

Northdown House

Lower Street

Leeds

Maidstone

Kent ME17 1RJ

July 2026

Planning Statement- Temporary Workers Dwelling

Commercial Sport Horse Breeding & Event Training Enterprise

Foxbury Springs, Walnut Hill Road, Istead Rise, Kent, DA13 9HL

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of [REDACTED] (the applicant) of Foxbury Sport Horses in support of a full planning application in respect of a temporary rural workers dwelling at Foxbury Springs (referred to in this statement as 'the site'), as shown on the submitted site location plan (Drawing 26-001). The purpose of this statement is to explain the design basis and justification for the proposed development.
- 1.2 The application seeks full planning permission for:
'Proposed Rural Workers Dwelling with associated parking'.
- 1.3 At present, the applicant does not reside on site. However, as has been accepted in similar cases, it is essential for the proper functioning of a commercial equestrian business for one or more of the workers to live on site in order to be readily available at most times. This is because it is not possible to provide adequate management, supervision/ animal husbandry and welfare long with the security for the horses unless there is a responsible worker is living on site.
- 1.4 The applicant also struggles to balance family life and managing the agricultural business from the home due to its size and basic amenities.
- 1.5 The application is supported by the following plans and documents:
- Drawing No. 26-001 Location Plan
 - Drawing No 26-002 Site Layout Plan
 - Planning Statement
 - Business Plan
- 1.6 The Planning Statement therefore describes:
- The site and the surrounding area, including Planning History;
 - The proposed development;
 - Identifies the relevant Planning Policy Framework by reviewing the relevant National and Local planning policy and guidance;
 - Provide a planning analysis of matters relating to the Development against the key material considerations.
- 1.7 The Planning Statement concludes that the proposed scheme is considered to be sustainable development.

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2 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is situated within the rural area to the south of Istead Rise and also within the Metropolitan Greenbelt (MGB).
- 2.2 Foxbury Springs is an existing commercial equestrian site. Access is obtained off Walnut Hill Road. The main stable buildings and hay barns are situated to the rear of two existing residential properties on Walnut Hill Road; namely Walnut Hill Lodge and Three Gables. These properties are separately owned and are not related to Foxbury Springs and the business.
- 2.3 The site is fenced into equestrian paddocks. There is also an equestrian sand school on the site.
- 2.4 There are no public rights of way on or near the site and there are no listed buildings on or adjoining the site.
- 2.5 The site is Flood Zone 1 according to Environment Agency records.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposed mobile home will measure 20 metres by 6 metres, a maximum height of 3.05 metres measured internally. This is a standard size for a twin mobile home as defined under the Caravan and Control of Development Act (1968). The accommodation will comprise of a kitchen, lounge, bathroom and three bedrooms that will be occupied by [REDACTED]
- 3.2 The mobile home will be supported by a concrete slab, which is usual for this type of temporary dwelling.
- 3.3 The mobile home will set against a backdrop of a mature tree and hedge-line. Existing trees will be retained and additional tree planting will be carried out to provide screening (details to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority).
- 3.4 Access to the mobile home will be obtained from Walnut Tree Hill. There is an existing access track leading up the proposed location of the mobile home. No changes to the highway access arrangements are proposed as part of this submission. Parking will be provided on site on hard standing surface adjacent to the mobile home.
- 3.5 Surface water drainage will discharge to soakaway. Foul drainage from the proposal will discharge to a septic tank.

4 Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) encourage the provision of new dwellings within the defined built-up areas, or outside of those areas in certain exceptional circumstances such as for the provision of **rural worker's accommodation (emphasis added)**, or the provision of affordable dwellings to meet an identified local need.
- 4.2 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF, in particular, states that: *'...to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality or rural communities...* Local Planning Authorities should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
- 'The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; (emphasis added)'***
- 4.3 As stated in Section 2 above, the site is situated within the Metropolitan Greenbelt (MGB). Section 13 of the NPPF sets out the policies to protect Green Belt land. Paragraph 143 sets out that "Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'
- 4.4 Paragraph 152 National Planning Policy Framework sets out that inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, due to the Green Belt designation. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF sets out that:
- 'When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'***

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- 4.5 In this case, for the reasons expanded upon on Section 5 below, it is considered that the requirement for a rural worker (in this case specifically for the applicant and his family) to live on the site to manage to be readily available at most times. This is to provide adequate management, animal supervision/ husbandry, welfare and security for the commercial equestrian business unless a responsible worker is living on site.
- 4.6 When considering this against the Green Belt's five purposes, it considered that the proposal would not create a circumstance where sprawl would occur or that neighbouring towns would be at risk of merging into one another. The development proposed is situated within the open countryside and is not surrounded by or close to large built up areas. The addition of a dwellinghouse to essentially create a farmhouse adjacent to the confines of an existing farmyard would not create any form of merging between larger built-up areas which it is remote from.
- 4.7 Due to the sites position not being within close proximity to larger towns, the threat of sprawl is also removed. It is accepted that the proposed temporary dwelling is within the countryside. However, the positioning of the dwelling will ensure that it will be viewed in the landscape at Foxbury Springs. There are no public vantage points in the vicinity from where the proposal can be viewed.
- 4.8 As the rural workers dwelling is a justified addition to meet the functional requirements of the holding, it is considered that this position provides the best opportunity to ensure very special circumstances are met without causing undue harm.
- 4.9 As previously set out, the proposal is not situated within a town or urban setting, so therefore the purpose to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns will not be impacted in terms of the Green Belt. In addition, the equestrian business inherent requirement for a countryside location for the training of horses could not be repeated or function as an alternative in an urban setting.
- 4.10 Therefore, the requirement to recycle derelict or urban land cannot be met by this proposal. It is therefore put forward that this application represents '*very special circumstances*', where the requirement to house an essential rural worker to manage a commercial equestrian business outweighs any potential harm to the Green Belt. In addition, the dwelling will be a temporary dwelling and a tied dwelling to the use of the land.

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Gravesham Local Plan (1994)

- 4.11 The Gravesham Local Plan is based on the first review which was adopted in 1994 that is now over 32 years ago). In 2007 some of the policies were saved, this included Policy C10 relating to agricultural dwellings, the main consideration in this case. Since that time the term 'agricultural dwelling' has been replaced in the NPPF as 'rural workers dwelling'.
- 4.12 This policy makes and relies on policy which itself (Annex E of PPS7) has since been revoked as part of the original NPPF document in 2012. This initially occurred in 2012 when the first version of the NPPF was introduced replacing a suite of Planning Policy Statements with a single 50 page document.
- 4.13 Although this policy has not been identified as having "expired" in 2007 nor was it "replaced or deleted" in 2014 it is considered out-dated due to its dependence on Annex E of PPS 7, which the NPPF has since revoked, and which has not since been supplemented in any of the NPPF updates or in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) documentation.
- 4.14 It is therefore considered that the NPPF and NPPG take policy preference over this.
- 4.15 Setting aside the references to outdated PPS policy, the broad principles of Policy C10 are met in the following ways:
- (i) *The agricultural unit must be commercially viable of itself at the time of the application.*
- 4.16 The business is commercially viable. It is not an emerging rural business and has been long established on the site. *The business operates a professional training yard accommodating up to five horses in full training.*
- (ii) *Where the Borough Council's agricultural adviser indicates that an existing and established agricultural unit is capable of becoming commercially viable, the siting of a caravan for a limited period may be considered.*
- 4.17 As stated above, the existing business is commercially viable and the siting of a temporary rural workers dwelling for a limited period of time is considered to be acceptable
- (iii) *It must be necessary rather than just convenient for an agricultural worker to be resident on the agricultural unit.*

4.18 It is necessary for the applicant to be on site. As the business plan sets out the intention is that the business will breed horses. The applicant has

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experience of breeding horses. The enterprise operates a professional training yard accommodating up to five horses in full training while expanding a selective breeding programme producing at least two sport horse foals annually.

- 4.19 The business focuses on producing a small number of exceptional horses, professionally producing them before sale to maximise value.

(iv) *The Borough Council will need to be satisfied that there is no suitable housing available in the vicinity of the site.*

- 4.20 There is no other suitable housing available near the site. There are no existing dwellings on the site and there are no buildings capable of conversion.

(v) *Care must be taken to select the most suitable site for the dwelling on the agricultural unit, in order to achieve a good relationship with existing farm buildings and the point of access and to minimise impact by making use of natural features.*

- 4.21 The siting of the temporary rural workers dwelling is in close proximity to the existing stable buildings and facilities on the site.

(vi) *The dwelling should be of a modest size and of a design appropriate to its Green Belt and countryside location*

- 4.22 The dwelling is a twin mobile home compliant with dimensions set out in the Caravan and Control of Development Act (1960).

5 Planning Assessment

5.1 The erection of a rural workers dwelling to support an existing rural based enterprise is policy compliant with local and national policies plus local guidance which seeks to encourage sustainable economic development within the rural area.

5.2 The up-to-date National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2024) states in paragraph 84 (a) that in relation to isolated houses in the countryside can be allowed for new dwellings where they relate to

‘...an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.’

5.3 In the circumstances it is necessary to apply a functional test and a financial test in order to judge whether the proposal represents sustainable development

Functional Test

5.4 In order to satisfy the above criteria state a functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times.

5.5 As has been accepted in many similar case, it is essential for the proper functioning of a full time rural commercial equestrian business for one or more workers to live on site in order to be readily available at most times. This is because it is not possible to provide adequate management supervision/ husbandry plus welfare and security of horses unless a responsible worker is living on site.

5.6 The business has had a number of thefts and burglaries recorded by Kent Police relating to the loss of equestrian equipment and also machinery and vehicles necessary for the enterprise.

5.7 There are several aspects to the proper management, husbandry welfare and security of the horses. The business is owned and operated by an international four-star event rider competing throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. Foxbury Sport Horses is an established commercial equestrian enterprise that combines recurring training income with a low-volume, high-value breeding of sport/ event horses. The Applicant's background and experience, owned stallion and existing client base provide a sound basis for long-term commercial viability.

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- 5.8 The current enterprise operates a professional training yard accommodating up to five horses in full training. The intention is that going forward the enterprise will have three complementary activities:
- Professional Training – up to five horses in full training at £1,000 per horse per month.
 - Sport Horse Breeding – two foals per year using an owned stallion and carefully selected broodmares.
 - Horse Production – retaining youngstock for professional backing and production prior to sale.
- 5.9 It is essential for the Applicant to be on site to react immediately to emergency situations during the breeding of horses to monitor the horses and to react in the case of a medical emergency and to contact the veterinary practice.
- 5.10 Also, if there is an electrical power failure or loss of main water supply it is essential to take remedial action very quickly otherwise the horses will get distressed within the stable building.

Financial justification

- 5.11 Having established the functional requirement for the necessity for workers to be readily available at most times the policies and guidance proceed to state that new temporary accommodation cannot be justified on agricultural grounds unless the farming enterprise is economically viable.
- 5.12 A financial test is necessary for this purpose, and to provide evidence of the size of dwelling which the enterprise can sustain. In applying this test authorities should take a realistic approach based on a, taking account of the nature of the enterprise concerned. It is necessary to demonstrate the farming enterprise has to be economically viable based on forecasts and projections.
- 5.13 The applicant has submitted a business plan with financial projections included as part of this planning application (see business plan attached). Projected turnover is [REDACTED] per annum.

The functional need could not be met by another existing dwelling on the unit or any other existing accommodation in the area

- 5.14 There are no dwellings on the land and there is no existing accommodation within sight or sound which is available for occupation by the applicant and his family.

Overview

- 5.15 There are no parameters governing the size of a rural workers dwelling and it is hard to find any guides that give a general idea as to what a commensurate size would be for a workers dwelling.
- 5.16 We therefore believe that the financial test has been met. The dwelling has been designed to be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement and that the income is sufficient to sustain a temporary rural workers dwelling in the short-term.
- 5.17 The proposed size of the dwelling is commensurate with accepted sizes that have been allowed through the southeast for this size of enterprise, and forms a modest sized dwelling in the countryside to support the enterprise.
- 5.18 We consider that the proposal has met the criteria set out in the relevant planning policy completely and that the local authority should embrace the success of this rural enterprise that has emerged at a time when traditional farming is struggling. With regard to Policy CO12, there are no other suitable existing dwelling available nearby. There are no other suitable buildings available for conversion at the enterprise, or secondly, in the case of a demonstrated need for a new building, that it is located as close as possible to existing buildings on previously developed land at the enterprise, or if this is not possible, within the immediate locality on an acceptable site.'
- 5.19 The location, scale and design of the dwelling maintains or the rural landscape and countryside character.

Ecology

- 5.20 The established trees and hedge-lines to the rear of the proposed temporary dwelling and elsewhere on the site will remain unaffected by this proposal.
- 5.21 With regards to Biodiversity enhancements we can provide the following:
- Provision of hedgehog nesting;
 - Provision of integrated bat boxes on new buildings or bat boxes on retained mature trees;
 - Provision of barn owl boxes as the surrounding landscape is judged suitable; and
 - Provision of owl boxes in trees.

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SPA Mitigation (SAMMS).

- 5.22 It is acknowledged that the site is located within the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMM) area for the Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site and Special Protection Area.
- 5.23 We note that the relevant local plan states that no development will be permitted which may have an adverse effect on the integrity of the North Kent Marshes SPA through an increase in recreational disturbance on the over-wintering bird populations. Such development would not be in accordance with the Habitat Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 5.24 It is understood that this would be in the form of a one-off payment subject to confirmation from Natural England that a Strategic Access Management Monitoring Plan (SAMMs) financial contribution would offer suitable mitigation measure against the impacts of the proposed development on the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA.
- 5.25 In this regard we confirm that the applicant is agreeable to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking OR make the necessary financial contribution (£337.49) toward suitable mitigation measure prior to the granting of planning permission against the impacts of the proposed development on the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA.
- 5.26 The Unilateral Undertaking is in the process of being prepared to provide a financial contribution to and will be submitted to the Council for consideration as soon as it has been completed. The actual sums, triggers and precise wording is to be agreed throughout the application process and the contributions justified in the context of the NPPF (2024).

6 Summary

- 6.1 Having considered the relevant planning policies we consider that the proposed development is acceptable in principle in terms of the financial and functional test requirements. This would be rural workers dwelling on commercial equestrian land on a temporary basis.
- 6.2 As the rural workers dwelling is a justified addition to meet the functional requirements of the equestrian holding, it is considered that this position provides the 'Very Special Circumstances' that are met without causing undue harm to the Metropolitan Greenbelt (MGB).
- 5.3 Foxbury Sport Horses is an existing and established commercial business on the site. The business is seeking to expand and to commence the breeding of sport and event horses on the site.
- 6.3 The impact of the development on the visual amenities and landscape has been assessed in detail above. We have concluded that, weighted against the positive impacts that this development would have on the rural economy, the proposal would be acceptable in this respect.
- 6.4 There is no significant disturbance to local residents as a consequence of the traffic travelling past their properties.
- 6.5 We therefore request that planning permission be granted.