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## **AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION REPORT AND APPRAISAL**

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**FOR AN AGRICULTURAL WORKERS DWELLING  
TO SUPPORT THE EXISTING FARMING ENTERPRISE**

at

**WESTFIELD FARM**

Normanby

York

North Yorkshire

YO62 6RJ

**REVISED DOCUMENT**



Prepared for and on behalf of  
Mr G Bell

At April 2017

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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*This report has been commissioned by the applicant Mr G Bell of Westfield Farm, Normanby, York in connection with a planning application to retain existing farmhouse as a rural workers dwelling.*

*Westfield Farm is a traditional mixed arable and livestock farming business situated between the market towns of Malton and Kirkbymoorside. The farm business has undergone several changes within the last few years mainly diversifying from dairy farming to producing fattening cattle as part of a large suckler cow farming business.*

*The applicant, Mr Graham Bell has lived at Westfield Farm all of his life and throughout that time has managed the farm on a day to day basis farming 138 acres of arable and grassland in addition to over 80 head of breeding cows with a further 120 young calves and fattening cattle.*

*After inspecting Westfield Farm with surrounding land and analysing the business as a whole it is adequately clear, there is a strong need and sufficient justification to retain Westfield farmhouse in its current location to not only meet the needs of local and national planning policy and the needs of the livestock business but to also secure a traditional Ryedale farming business which is expanding and has real opportunities of growth.*

*In relation to demonstrating sufficient justification and the essential need for a dwelling of this size and scale in its location, it is concluded that:*

- The nature of the business and the plans for expansion clearly justify the need for further two rural workers dwellings at Westfield Farm.*
- There is a clear lack of available housing within the vicinity which could meet the functional requirement of the business and any further outside accommodation is not financially or physically viable in terms of calving responsibilities and livestock welfare.*
- The business is well established, profitable and capable of providing a good income at present and It has been confirmed that farm business trading at Westfield Farm is based on a sound and financially viable foundation*
- The dwelling in question is located on an established site, adjacent to existing farm buildings with good access, screening and in an un-isolated position.*
- There is a clear existing functional need for two rural workers dwellings on the holding to within sight and sound of the buildings with a labour requirement of 2 full time workers required on the farm.*
- The applicants have demonstrated the necessary ability and intent to sustain and develop the business on the holding and have a clear desire to expand further.*

## **JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report has been commissioned by the applicant Mr G Bell of Westfield Farm, Normanby, York in connection with a planning application to retain the existing farmhouse as a rural workers dwelling.

The purpose of this report is to provide an objective appraisal of the business operating at Westfield Farm and the report has been prepared from guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework and Ryedale District Council local planning strategy, whilst in addition to having regard to PPS7 Sustainable Development in rural areas and particular reference has been made to annex A.

The justification report and appraisal have been prepared by William Tyson BSc (Hons), MRICS, FAAV of Cundalls, a company specialising in rural planning and agricultural matters. William also holds a Bachelor of Science honours degree in Rural Enterprise and Land Management and is a fellow of the agricultural valuers association, professional member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and an RICS registered valuer.

### **1.1 LOCATION**

Westfield Farm is located to the Southern side of the small rural village of Normanby. The farm is located off a privately owned access road on the Malton side of Normanby village. Normanby village lies approximately 9 miles from the large market town of Malton which offers a wide range of facilities and local shops.

### **1.2 INFORMATION**

It is assumed that the information supplied by Mr Graham Bell is correct at the date of this appraisal and there matters disclosed that would materially affect comments or opinions in the report. The information used in this appraisal has been based a farm inspection of the holding on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### **2.0 PURPOSE OF THE JUSTIFICATION REPORT**

The justification report sets out justification as to why the dwelling is fully justified within the context of National Planning Policy Guidance and Local Planning Policy, and provides an appraisal for the need for a dwelling addressing the following points:

- Background history to the existing farming business
- Assessment of the business as a whole
- A description of the business operating at Westfield Farm
- An appraisal of the need for additional residential accommodation on site
- The National and Local Planning Policy relating to agricultural dwellings
- An analysis of the functional requirements in the context of Planning Policy
- Conclusions and summary of findings.

### **3.0 THE FARM BUSINESS AND HISTORY**

Westfield Farm is a traditional mixed livestock and arable farming business situated in a rural position between the market towns of Malton and Kirkbymoorside. The farm business operating at Westfield Farm has undergone several changes within the last few years mainly diversifying from dairy farming to producing fattening cattle as part of a large suckler cow farming business bought about by a declining dairy industry within the UK.

The farm business is managed on a day to day basis by Mr Graham Bell with his family and partner, Shirley. The family have farmed at Westfield Farm since the early 1950's with Graham born and bred on the farm since his birth in 1960. Over that time the family have invested considerably in the business and farmstead in terms of livestock numbers, arable land and grass acreage.

### **3.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FARMING ENTERPRISE**

The farm extends to approximately 138 acres of arable and grassland comprising 73 acres of owned land with an additional 65 acres of rented land which directly adjoins the farm taken on a long-term tenancy from the applicants' cousin.

The agricultural land forming a main part of the business is all utilised as part of the suckler cow farming enterprise growing winter barley for feed and bedding straw with the additional land used as grazing and improved grassland for silage.

In addition to the arable and grass land the farm business now operates a suckler herd extending to 80 suckler cows with all followers fattened and finished on the farm. All livestock are managed on the main farmstead at Westfield Farm with all feeding responsibilities, calving and general day to day work managed and completed by Graham Bell.

### **3.2 THE APPLICANTS**

Mr Graham Bell is aged 57 and he currently occupies Westfield farmhouse with his partner. Mr Bells' two children Abigail and Nicholas have both grown up on the farm with Nicholas now living away from home and Abigail living in Malton. The applicant's mother Dorothy May Bell aged 83 currently resides in the second dwelling at Westfield Farm known as Westfield Lodge.

It is noted that there are currently two dwellings at Westfield Farm, one occupied by the applicants mother Dorothy May Bell known as Westfield Lodge and the second main farmhouse occupied by Graham and his family.

This application seeks full planning approval for the retention of the main Westfield Farmhouse and this report aims to justify the need for two rural workers dwellings for the applicant and his family.

#### **4.0 AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DESCRIPTION**

Westfield Farm yard is made up of an extensive range of modern and traditional farm buildings extending to 24,000 square feet of livestock housing, feed storage and general farm produce storage. Further information about the extensive range of farm buildings is as follows:

##### **Milking Parlour Building**

52ft × 30ft

Traditional red brick and pantile farm building utilised as milking parlour and milk tank room.

##### **Large Livestock Feeding and Housing Shed**

90ft × 72ft

Steel portal frame construction consisting of main building with lean-to. Building utilised as cattle housing.

##### **Steel Portal Frame Building**

60ft × 30ft

A steel portal framed building utilised as cattle housing and feed storage to the South of the farmstead.

##### **Traditional Timber Frame Building**

28ft × 12ft

Traditional timber pole building utilised as machinery and produce storage.

##### **Lean-to/Meal House**

30ft × 72ft

Large lean-to building used for store cattle housing and feed storage.

##### **Fold Yard**

70ft × 70ft

Steel portal frame building utilised as calving shed and livestock housing.

##### **Large Cattle Shed**

45ft × 120ft

Extensive livestock building used to house in calf cows.

##### **Traditional Fold Yard Building**

15ft × 90ft

Traditional red brick and pantile building adjacent to the farmhouse utilised as storage and cattle housing.

##### **Yard area**

An extensive concrete yard area adjacent to the farm buildings utilised as silage clamp and muck storage where cattle feed and straw is stored.

## **4.1 ARABLE LAND**

The arable farming aspect of the applicants' business farms a modest arable acreage which is mainly utilised to grow winter barley for feeding to livestock. Yields range from 3.5 to 4 tonnes per acre with a newly seeded grass mixes used as a break crop.

In addition to growing arable crops the applicant also grows new seeds every year on arable land which are used to make three cuts of silage on an annual basis which is an essential feed source for the business. The remaining land owned and farmed by the applicant is used as summer grazing for livestock.

All manure produced by livestock is spread on the applicants' own land which is used to boost arable yields and replenish soil structures each year.

All feed and straw produced from the arable and grassland is stored at Westfield Farm and used as part of the larger livestock business throughout the year.

## **4.2 FARM MACHINERY & PRODUCE**

### **4.2.1 Machinery**

The applicant owns and maintains an extensive range of agricultural machinery details are as follows:

- JCB Telehandler Forklift with additional muck grab, gain bucket, bale spike, shear grab, pallet tines
- John Deere 6340 4WD Tractor with loader which includes bucket and bale spike and pallet tine
- Traditional vintage Dexter Tractor
- Hitachi 4 tonne mini digger with attachments
- Easterby 12 tonne corn trailer with hydraulic door
- 30ft Straw trailer
- Fertiliser spreader
- Slurry tanker
- Traditional slurry tanker
- Straw bedding machine for the agricultural forklift
- Large grass roller
- Grass harrows
- Traditional cultivation drag
- Chisel plough
- Suzuki quad bike
- Quad trailer
- Ifor Williams livestock trailer
- Farm pick up
- Various small cultivation tools and equipment
- Range of workshop tools including compressor, welding materials and small tools

#### **4.2.2 Farm Produce**

- Approximately 1000 tonnes of clamp silage
- Approximately 700 5ft large round bales of barley straw
- Approximately 120 tonnes of feed barley
- Approximately 20 tonnes of Nitrogen and compound fertiliser
- Various range of chemicals and herbicides
- 5-10 tonnes of cattle minerals and concentrates

#### **4.3 LIVESTOCK**

##### **4.3.1 Fattening Cattle**

At any one time throughout the calendar year the applicant will house approximately 160 - 220 head of Belgian Blue, Limousin and Friesian x suckler cows and fattening cattle all at Westfield Farm.

All cattle now form part of a large closed herd with all replacements bred on the farm to improve the health status. Fattening cattle such as steers and heifers not suitable for breeding are fattened from calving to an age of 30 months on farm then to be sold for slaughter.

Fattening cattle are housed 365 days a year at Westfield Farm and are fed a mixed ration of cereals, minerals and grass silage with an aim of achieving over 650kgs liveweight (400kg deadweight) before slaughter. The Bell family have finished cattle in this way for several years and more recently in larger numbers however even during dairy farming over the years they have always finished their own stock to a good standard. The family can now achieve a good rate of conversion and liveweight gain is between 1.5 – 2.0kgs per day.

The applicants will finish approximately 100 head of fat cattle per annum at an average value of £1300-£1400 per head. Cattle are sold for slaughter off the farm on a monthly basis to rotate stock numbers and provide an excellent cash flow system for reinvestment.



#### **4.3.2 Suckler Cow Herd**

The applicant has now built up an extensive suckler cattle herd of approximately 80 in calf and suckling cows made up of Limousin, British Blue and Holstein Friesian x cows and heifers.

The applicant artificially inseminates his breeding cows throughout the year with calving taking place mid-February right through until November. The applicant calves year round to provide his fattening cattle business with a constant supply of replenished stock numbers for improved cash flow and stock rotation.

The applicant chooses to use artificial insemination to help improve livestock hybrid vigour without the use of expensive breeding bulls, which need replacing on a frequent basis. In addition it also allows the applicant to control breeding patterns and pregnancy cycles for improved welfare, stock management and building cleaning.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

The farm business operating at Westfield Farm has been trading for several decades on a sound and profitable basis.

The applicant produces farm business accounts which show a good profit each year which allows Mr Bell to take an income from the farm whilst still leaving an excess for investment and improvements not only at the farm but livestock breeding numbers and genetics.

I can confirm that any future investment for improvements to the on-site accommodation and any necessary damp improvement costs of Westfield Farmhouse can easily be met by the farm business and will have no adverse effects whatsoever on the trading status of G Bell.

It is therefore confirmed that farm business trading at Westfield Farm is based on a sound and financially viable foundation and due to the nature of this application not needing to invest heavily in the construction of this second dwelling and the fact that any damp improvement to Westfield Farm house will be minimal the financial implications of an approval to this applicant will be considerably minimal.

#### **6.0 LABOUR REQUIREMENTS**

Mr Graham Bell works on a full time basis on the farm with all livestock and land work completed in hand.

National and Regional planning policy states that it is required that the need for a dwelling relates to full time workers or one who is primarily or previously employed in agriculture therefore as the labour requirements for the business are met solely by Mr Graham Bell the labour requirements for the business are assessed in the context of standard industry figures.

With regards to the labour requirements and the second dwelling known as Westfield Lodge which is occupied by the applicants mother, a retired farmers wife. Mrs Bell still has an active role in the ongoing business with valuable experience and farming knowledge to assist her son and the business on a day to day basis.

The standard figures available to assess the labour requirements are detailed within the farm management pocket book by John Nicks 47<sup>th</sup> Edition 2017 details are as follows:

<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Number/Hectares</b>	<b>Standard Man Days (SMD)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Winter Barley	12	1.75	21.00
Grassland	44	2.80	123.00
Fattening Cattle	75	1.60	120.00
Store Cattle	22	1.90	42.00
Breeding Cows	80	1.35	108.00
Suckling calves	35	1.20	42.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>456.00</b>
Maintenance 15%			<b>68.00</b>
Management 7.5%			<b>34.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>558.00</b>

Using the Standard Man Days figures as prepared by DEFRA it is assumed that 275 standard man days are provided annually by a man. Therefore based on the total figure of 558 man days for the applicants business it is estimated that the labour requirements for the holding is over 2.03 labour units and thus at least 2 full time workers are required.

This therefore proves that there is an essential need for not only one rural worker but two rural workers to be accommodated at the farm within the two rural workers dwellings.

## **7.0 ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION**

Westfield Farm has the benefit of one farmhouse known as Westfield Farmhouse and an additional farm workers dwelling known as Westfield Lodge. Both farm houses are situated within the main farmstead with Westfield Farmhouse being directly adjacent to existing farm buildings and in close proximity to the calving shed.

The proposal for this application is for the retention of Westfield Farmhouse following planning condition number 6 of approval notice 12/00467/FUL and a demolition order of the farmhouse as stipulated as the condition. Westfield Farmhouse is currently occupied by Graham Bell and his family.

Given the fact that Westfield Farmhouse lies directly adjacent to the main farmstead and livestock buildings and in particular the calving shed it is imperative that Graham Bell resides on the farm from not only the maintenance and management of the farm but from a stock welfare aspect.

With regards to alternative accommodation for the applicant the next residential dwelling is located some distance from the main farmstead and the small rural village of Normanby lies approximately 0.25 miles to the North of Westfield farmstead.

The table below shows available properties within one mile of the applicants holding and associated prices as at April 2017.

<b>Agent</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>No of Beds</b>	<b>Price</b>
YOPA	3 Bed Detached house	Normanby	3 Bedroom	£325,000

As the above table demonstrates there is a clear lack of affordable housing within the surrounding area, with an average price of £325,000.

Therefore, as the proposed accommodation is in situ at present and adjacent to the agricultural buildings it is clearly evident that the accommodation already provided by Westfield Farm is most suitable and the only viable option to meet the needs of a rural worker.

## **8.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

### **8.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

In the last few years national planning policy with regard to new dwelling within the countryside has undergone several changes, the most important being the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework which has replaced national planning policy statements and guidance. However given the detail of Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7) Annex A with regards to development in the countryside it is envisaged that Ryedale District Council will use PPS 7 Annex A in conjunction with the newly published Ryedale Local Plan Strategy when determining proposals such as this one therefore the criteria outlined by PPS 7 Annex A has been considered in the context of this application.

Chapter 1 paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework aims to help build a strong, competitive economy via the support of existing business sectors that are expanding. Furthermore the facilitating of flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit is a key area for delivering sustainable development.

Chapter 6 paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework relates to the promotion of sustainable development in rural areas. It states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

Paragraph 55 also states that Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the **essential** need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. Specific guidance on 'Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings' is Contained in Annex A of PPS7. This guidance stresses that there will be cases where it is essential for an agricultural worker to live at, or very close to, the site of their work. The guidance then provides two main tests to establish the need for a dwelling to be associated with a particular farming enterprise, namely a 'functional' test to establish a need for a dwelling and a 'financial' test to establish the viability of the farming enterprise in question.

Paragraph 4 clarifies the requirements for the functional test: '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. Such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night.

- In case animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice.
- To deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products, for example, by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems.'

Paragraph 3 (ii) and (iv) contain the requirements that:

- 'The need relates to a *full-time* worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement'.
- 'The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned'.

As well as the requirements to show the functional need for a new dwelling, PPS7 Annex A states that there should also be evidence that the existing enterprise is financially sound. Paragraph 3 (iii) states that:

- ‘The unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so.’

This guidance is further expanded in paragraph 8, which states that:

- ‘New permanent accommodation cannot be justified on agricultural grounds unless the farming enterprise is economically viable. A *financial test* is necessary for this purpose, and to provide evidence of the size of dwelling which the unit can sustain. In applying this test authorities should take a realistic approach to the level of profitability, taking account of the nature of the enterprise concerned. Some enterprises which aim to operate broadly on a subsistence basis, but which nonetheless provide wider benefits (e.g. in managing attractive landscapes or wildlife habitats), can be sustained on relatively low financial returns.

Although PPS 7 notes that agricultural will remain the major use of rural land, it identifies that due to considerable change in the countryside, the agricultural industry is now adapting and many farmers now need to look at diversification into other activities to supplement their income and the need for landowners to have the flexibility to consider a range of options. However whilst many farmers can diversify, many farmers are located in unsuitable locations for diversification and many tenant farmers are restricted due to their tenancy agreements preventing non-agricultural uses.

Therefore farmers have to look at making their business more efficient and this often involves the expansion of certain key areas in their business.

## **8.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY**

Westfield Farm is situated within the Ryedale District Council Local Plan Area. The policies within the adopted plan of March 2002 did represent the current local plan policy guidance for development within Ryedale District Council until the newly published Ryedale Local Plan Strategy came into effect in September 2013.

New policies such as SP 9 (land Based and Rural Economy) have replaced Policy AG7 which dealt with Agriculture workers dwellings. These new policies deal with sustained support for the land based economy including farming, forestry and equine. The policy is worded as follows:

Ryedale’s land based economy will be sustained and diversified with support for

- New buildings that are necessary to support land based activity and working countryside including farming, forestry and equine purposes.
- Replacement dwellings for land management activities
- Replacement of non-traditional general purpose storage buildings to support farming, forestry and equine related activities.

- Conversion of traditional buildings for tourism and residential uses (subject to the occupancy conditions set out in Policy TP21)
- Conversion of existing buildings and provision of new buildings to support appropriate small scale rural economic activity in line with Policy SP6
- Appropriate farm and rural diversification activities including innovative approaches.
- Appropriate new uses of land including flood management and energy production, related research and education in this field.

Policy SP 9 Section 5 Paragraph 5.34 of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy details that land based economy activity is integral to the district economy, culture, heritage and identity. Farming has been a long standing traditional component of economic activity. Many of these activities have helped to ensure that Ryedale's valued landscape is carefully and sensitively managed.

Furthermore, Paragraph 5.35 indicates that this Local Plan Strategy is intended to support and be flexible to the needs of those that rely on the land based economy. It also supports new opportunities that may arise for future changes. These range from alternative cropping to renewable energy schemes. It is essential that new land uses and economic activity must support and encourage where appropriate if Ryedale's countryside is to continue as a living and working countryside that is intrinsic to Ryedale's cultural identity.

Policy SP21 and Section 8 of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy indicates at Section C Agricultural, Forestry and Land based activity that proposals for new residential development in the open countryside (outside development limits) should support land based activity that demonstrates an essential need for a dwelling that cannot be met elsewhere.

In addition to the above Policies SP16 Design and Policy SP20, Generic Development Management Issues are also important criteria of the Local Plan Strategy which encourages development proposals that create high quality durable places that are accessible, well integrated and are in keeping with surroundings. In addition new developments will respect the character and context of the immediate locality and the wider landscape/townscape character in terms of physical features and the type and variety of existing uses.

Aspects such as access, parking, servicing, design, amenity, safety and character are all major aspects of the Ryedale Local Plan Strategy of which must be considered. Other than for developments falling within the provisions of Policies SP9, SP16, SP20 or SP21 new dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted if a need for a dwelling to support existing agricultural, forestry or commercial equestrian activities on a well-established unit can be demonstrated.

## **9.0 ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTIONAL NEED**

Given the scale and management requirements of the applicant's farm business in the context of livestock numbers it is clear that there is a functional requirement for Mr Bell to reside and be present on the farm at all times. Therefore an assessment of each part of the applicants business is as follows.

### **9.1 FUNCTIONAL NEED – FATTENING CATTLE**

Given the fact that the farm accommodates approximately 160 - 220 fattening and breeding cattle at any one time throughout the calendar year there is a clear requirement for all stock to be fed, bedded up and checked on a daily basis. In particular the fattening cattle ranging from young calving age of a few weeks to 30 months there is a constant requirement for health checks, weighing and management completed solely by Graham Bell on a day to day basis. At present Mr Bell feeds all livestock first thing each morning with constant checks and management processes completed throughout the day between maintenance of machinery, arable and grassland operations and milking.

Mr Bell is constantly grading cattle and sending some for slaughter on a weekly basis which all need to be sorted, tagged and receive routine health checks and medication to ensure they are recorded and maintained to the correct standard before being sold.

The usual routine when sorting store cattle for sale is to assess identification tags and sort between finished and unfinished cattle in the bespoke cattle handling system, which has been specifically designed for sole management of cattle. However some operations do require assistance such as cattle hair clipping, some medical procedures and identification checks and this assistance is sought by his partner and daughter.

Like any livestock farm there is the frequent need to identify cattle in distress and identify pneumonia problems therefore the need for the applicant to constantly check cattle is paramount to maintain a healthy herd and a good profit margin.

Fattening cattle therefore require essential care at short notice to ensure emergencies such as illness or cattle stuck in feed and water troughs can be dealt with straightaway for improved stock welfare, reduced mortality and to prevent loss of income.

This essential need relates to a full time worker to be within sight and sound of the livestock buildings to identify stock in distress on a day and night basis.

## **9.2 FUNCTIONAL NEED – BREEDING HERD**

The applicants breeding herd of suckler cows is constantly being improved and has increased dramatically in the last few years following his declining dairy herd and change in business policy.

At present the applicant currently manages 80 in calf and suckling breeding females which are calving at present and due to continue calving until the end of November 2017. As and when cattle calve they will be observed for a week or two, tagged with identification tags and receive routine medical care before being turned out to grass if summer grazing is available.

Please note that all the applicants' cattle remain inside until they have calved to ensure Mr Bell can observe calving patterns correctly and make sure calving cattle are not in distress at any time.

Post calving cows are identified to be in season and are brought in for artificial insemination which is completed by the applicant in the bespoke cattle holding area.

In addition to the cattle being artificially inseminated the use of the covering stock bull is run with the cows when out at grazing and in buildings as a precaution and to serve any missed cattle.

Suckler calves are weaned at approximately 6 to 8 months depending on weight and condition with one suckler cow producing one calf per year. Once calves have been weaned from their mothers they are stored in separate buildings within the main farmstead and fed a mixed ration of fattening pellets and silage before being penned with fattening cattle.

To ensure the applicants cattle remain to a high health standard Mr Bell does not buy in any new stock to the farm therefore the need for one calf per year per cow is of the utmost importance.

The loss of a calf has massive implications on farm profitability and can result in a good suckler cow being unfit for future breeding purposes thus confirming the point further that constant supervision and management of the breeding stock is of the utmost importance to this business.

To prevent a loss of calf the applicant supervises heavily pregnant cows throughout the night at different intervals to ensure he can assist with calving if cows are struggling or in distress. Mr Bell has a lifetime of experience in calving cows however some younger / smaller females do require more calving assistance and a local vet is used for breached calves or caesareans.

Without onsite supervision day and night by a skilled rural worker this farming business would undoubtedly loss calves during birth or within the first few hours afterwards therefore there is a clear essential need for care at short notice at this farming business and this will be met by the applicant residing at Westfield Farmhouse, if approved.



### **9.3 FUNCTIONAL NEED – BREEDING SHEEP**

The applicants now farm a small flock of Suffolk and Texel breeding females which are all housed and lambled from Westfield farm. The family have plans to increase the breeding flock to 40 breeding females by 2018 to finish all lambs on farm and sell to local livestock markets and butchers.

### **9.4 FUNCTIONAL NEED – ARABLE ENTERPRISE**

All arable operations including cultivation work, fertiliser application and corn leading are completed in hand by the applicant. The use of third party contractors for drilling, spraying and combining is required given the relatively small scale arable unit of the applicant and the extensive machinery costs for a drill, sprayer and combine.

During the harvest months of July to September grain is transported from the fields to the farm and is sorted with the applicant's silage in a highly unique way. This allows grain to be stored with silage to provide excellent feed source for the cattle.

## **10.0 EVALUATION OF BUSINESS IN THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

It is noted that the planning legitimacy of Westfield farmhouse is in question. However, the needs of this existing farm business require suitable accommodation within the holding which has therefore brought about this application to retain Westfield Farmhouse in its current location.

Within the context of local planning policy Westfield Farm has demonstrated that the needs of the business cannot be met by just one dwelling. This is due to the fact that one of the existing dwellings is occupied by the applicant's mother and given the fact that the second dwelling (Westfield Farmhouse) does not currently have planning consent, there are no other legal dwellings to be used by the applicant for extensive working hours and management responsibilities of the cattle.

Local policy states the re-use of a suitable traditional buildings or extension or adaption of another dwellings will help support the rural economy and will therefore be more favourable. With regards to this application, the applicants are applying for the re-use of an existing dwelling being retained therefore no further redevelopment of the farmstead or Greenfield land is required and thus fully meeting the requirements of this aspect of local policy.

The size and specification of the existing farmhouse is already demonstrated to be commensurate with the functional requirements of the unit as it does provide on-site family accommodation for the applicant and this will allow the agricultural business as a whole to remain competitive and efficient going forward.

The use of this existing dwelling as the farmhouse and main accommodation will not only allow the applicant to continue to improve stock welfare, managing crops and maintain good feed conversion rates but will also result in no additional time travelling between the farm and a second offsite dwelling with all associated fuel costs etc.

The existing farmhouse does not cause any unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the landscape, farmstead or its setting as the proposal is for the retention of an existing dwelling, which now currently sits comfortably within the landscape, farmstead and setting.

#### **10.1 ESSENTIAL NEED FOR A RURAL WORKER AT SITE**

The location of the existing dwelling is chosen above that of another location or new building on the site as it will provide additional security for the farmstead going forward, be within sight and sound of the livestock / calving buildings and mainly because it is the most suitable solution to meet the essential need for a rural worker on the farm.

The retention of this existing dwelling within the holding will not only provide everyday additional assistance for the farm business in the context of the fattening and calving livestock and the arable needs but also provide onsite security against theft or fire and provide assistance in the event of calving difficulties day or night.

#### **10.2 BUSINESS BASED ON A SOUND FINANCIAL BASIS**

In the context of PPS 7 Annex A paragraph 3 and 8 it is confirmed once again that the business trading at Westfield Farm by the applicant Mr Graham Bell has been trading for more than 3 years and has been profitable for at least one of those. The business is currently financially sound and has a clear prospect of remaining so for the future. The business overall is economically viable and can sustain the cost of maintaining a second dwelling on the holding.

The business has remained profitable throughout difficult times in the agricultural industry and throughout recent years with changing policy and a declining dairy industry and this has been achieved by the business' multi diverse thinking and good quality stock welfare grounds. The applicants spread their risk with having the benefit of fattening cattle in addition to breeding cattle and arable land and have also diversification opportunities going forward.

In the future the business has plans of improving and expanding suckler numbers to further increase livestock throughput at the farm which will only strengthen the applicant's financial situation further.

Due to the fact that the applicant breeds their own stock on an annual basis with breeding numbers improving each year they do not have the financial outlay for replacement fattening stock that some similar businesses have. Therefore, a calf is produced each year from the breeding stock which does not need to be bought thus with continued high health status, good breeding routines and management with low arable costs and feed produced on the farm the business has an excellent business model for producing a good profit.

### **10.3 SUPPORTING THE LAND BASED ECONOMY**

Due to the nature of the applicants business and the need for assistance during combing and silage operations the applicant always seeks local assistance from various contractors within the area thus allowing them to have an annual contract with the applicant and providing work for local businesses and contractors.

Furthermore the business trades with all local retailers and suppliers in the surrounding area and uses local livestock hauliers, local vets, local accountants, local advisors, local abattoirs and local markets in conjunction with their rural business and livestock.

This retained onsite accommodation will allow Graham Bell and his family to live on the farm permanently which will provide permanent long term accommodation and housing for someone who has been born, bred and grown up as a Ryedale farmer all his life.

This will therefore not only enhance the applicants farm business from the reasons already stated but also continue to support another rural Ryedale family on a permanent basis to support the local economy.

## **11.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The applicants business is a long established and forward thinking agricultural enterprise which has built its success on traditional farming methods and a high quality breeding and fat cattle enterprise.

The business operates an extensive livestock enterprise producing approximately 100 fat cattle per year in addition to breeding upwards of 80 suckler calves on an annual basis which is all supported by 138 acres of arable and grassland within a ring fence within the Normanby area.

After inspecting Westfield Farm with surrounding land and analysing the business as a whole it is adequately clear, there is a strong need and sufficient justification to retain Westfield farmhouse in its current location to not only meet the needs of local and national planning policy and the needs of the livestock business but to also secure a traditional Ryedale farming business which is expanding and has real opportunities of growth.

In relation to demonstrating sufficient justification and the essential need for a dwelling of this size and scale in its location, it is concluded that:

- The applicants have demonstrated the necessary ability and intent to sustain and develop the business of this sort on the holding and have a clear desire to expand further.
- The nature of the business and the plans for expansion clearly justify the need for two rural workers dwellings at Westfield Farm.
- There is a clear lack of available housing within the vicinity which could meet the functional requirement of the business and any further outside accommodation is not financially or physically viable in terms of calving responsibilities and livestock welfare.
- The business is well established, profitable and capable of providing a good income at present and It has been confirmed that farm business trading at Westfield Farm is based on a sound and financially viable foundation.
- The existing dwelling is located on an established site, adjacent to other existing buildings with good access, screening and in an un-isolated position.
- There is a clear existing functional need for two rural workers dwellings on the holding to within sight and sound of the buildings with a labour requirement of 2 full time workers required on the farm.

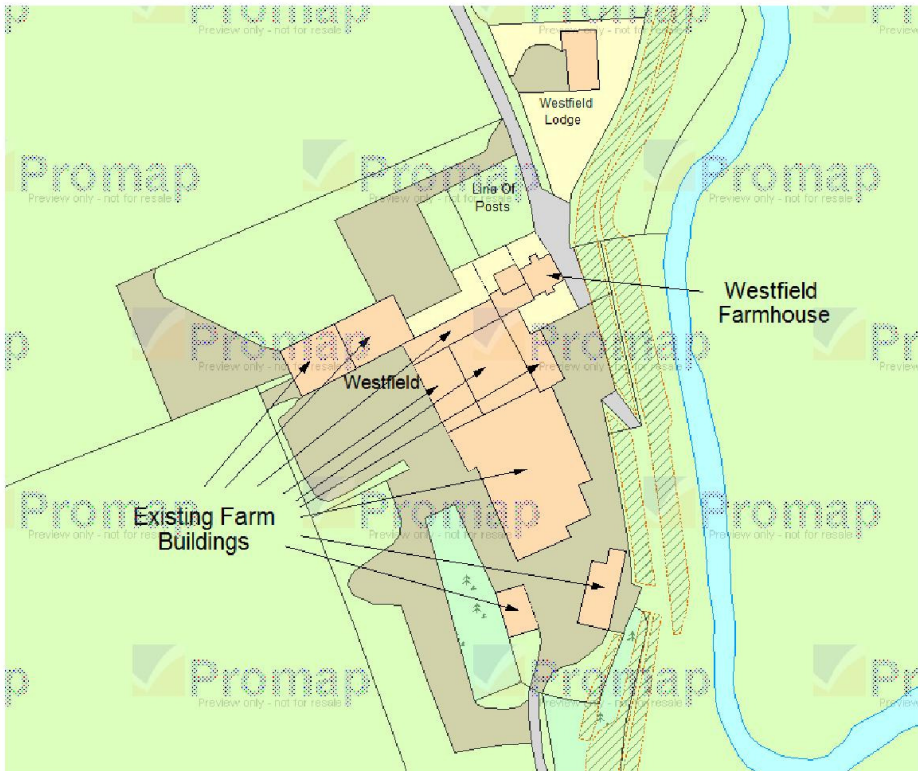
The development is therefore consistent with the approach identified within the Local and National Planning Policy and in the light of all of the above, it is hoped that the retention of Westfield Farmhouse in its current location will be determined and considered for approval.

Approval will ensure the applicants continue to improve their business and build on a local family farm that has identified a viable aspect of agriculture which is proving profitable and with the potential for significant growth.

**APPENDIX I**

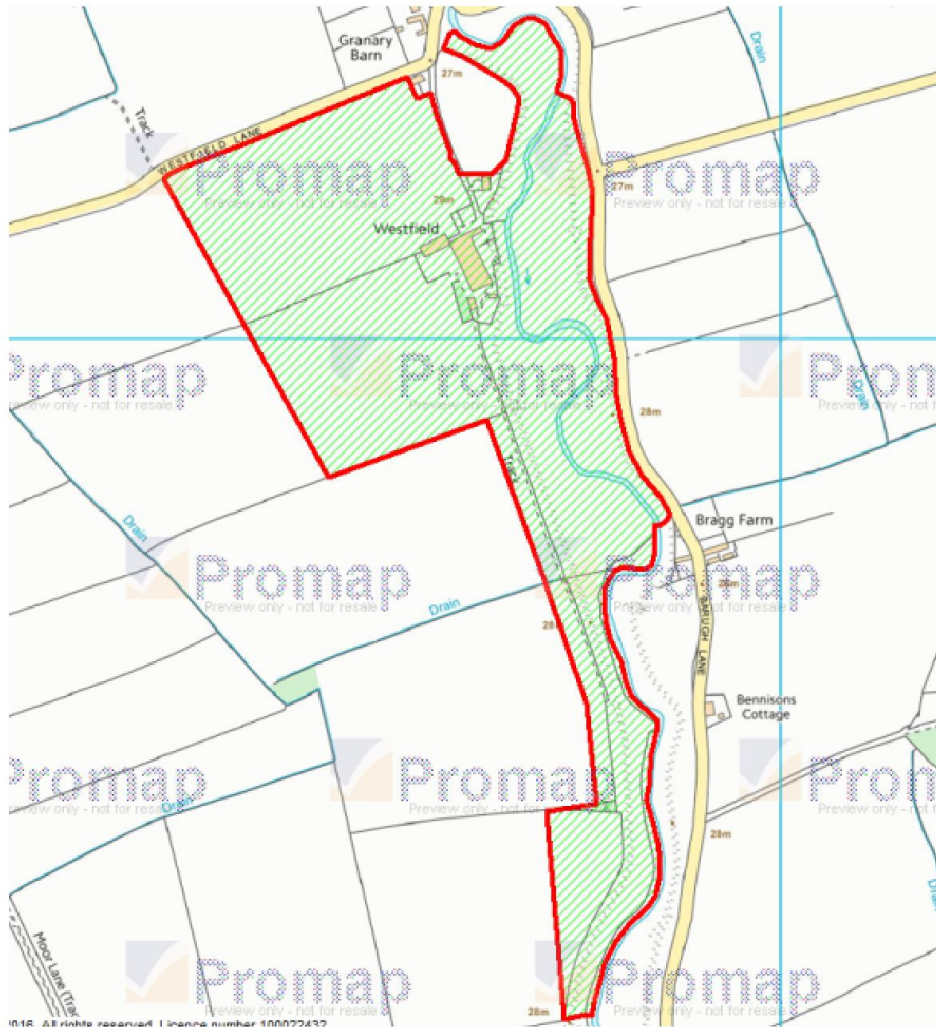
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**FARMSTEAD PLAN – for reference only (not to scale)**



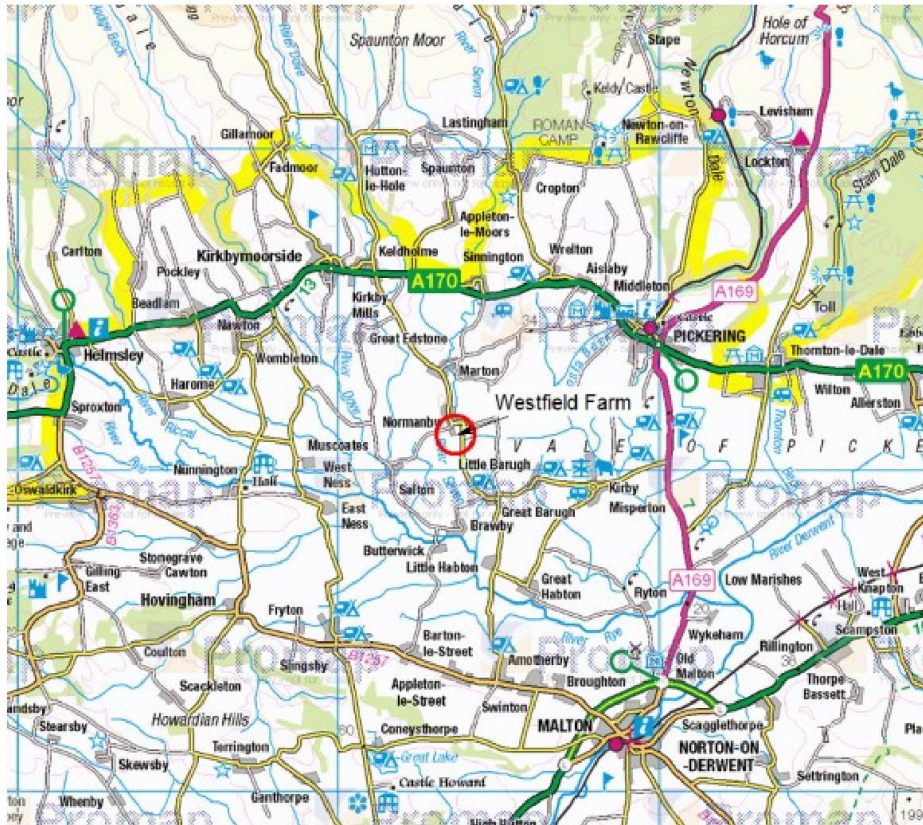
**APPENDIX 2**

**WESTFIELD FARM HOLDING PLAN – for reference only (not to scale)**



### APPENDIX 3

#### LOCATION PLAN – for reference only (not to scale)



**APPENDIX 4**

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**PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE FARM**



**Westfield Farmhouse**



**Westfield Farmhouse**



**Entrance to farm**



**Entrance to farm**



**Westfield Lodge**



**Farm yard**





**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Farm building – Cattle housing**



**Milking Parlour**



**Cattle handling system**



**Breeding cattle**



**Fattening and store cattle**



**Breeding cattle**



**Breeding cattle**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm machinery**



**Farm produce – bedding straw**



**Farm produce - Silage**



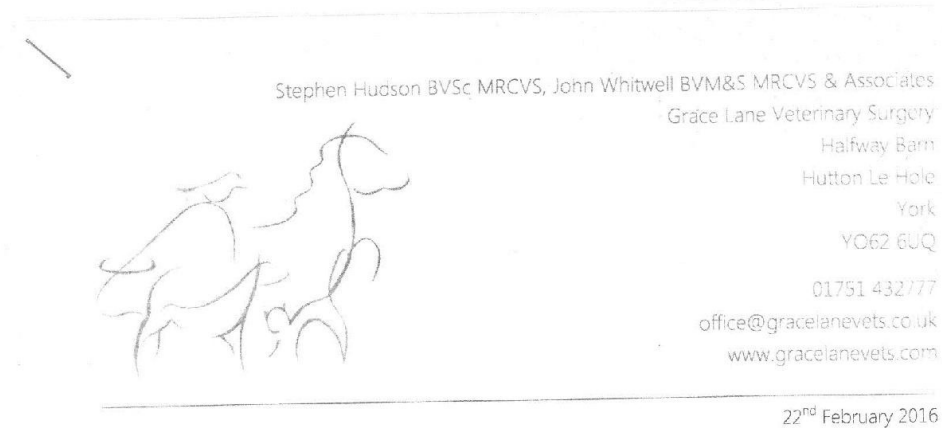
**Agricultural land**



**Farm machinery**

## APPENDIX 5

### LETTERS OF SUPPORT



To whom it may concern,

I write in support of the planning application of Mr Graham Bell's for a permanent dwelling at Westfields Farm, Normanby, North Yorkshire.

My Practice has provided veterinary care for the livestock at Westfields Farm since July 2010. During this time I have been impressed with the diligence and stockmanship of Mr Bell.

As there are 150 head of cattle currently at Westfields Farm, 100 of which are pregnant and due to calve during 2016, I feel that it is vital that Mr Bell is able to live at the farm, in order to supervise the cattle, and in particular to oversee the heifers as they calve.

In my opinion, the health and welfare of the Cattle at Westfields Farm would be severely compromised if Mr Bell was not able to live on-site.

Yours Faithfully

John J Whitwell

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