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App No : 18/06550/FUL App Type : FUL

Application for : Change of use from agricultural building to 2 bed agricultural workers dwelling and associated alterations

At Hoppers Farm, Cockpit Road, Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire, HP15 6ES

Date Received : 12/06/18 Applicant : Aviagen Turkeys Ltd

Target date for decision: 07/08/18

1. **Summary**

- 1.1. Permission is sought for the conversion of the existing building to a two bedroom dwelling. The application documents indicate that the dwelling would be occupied by an agricultural worker in connection with the management of the adjacent turkey farm.
- 1.2. The site is in the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. The proposed conversion represents appropriate development in the Green Belt and is acceptable in principle. The proposed alterations to facilitate the conversion are appropriate to this rural AONB location. The dwelling would have a modest curtilage and the requisite level of parking and would not have an adverse impact on the amenities of the surrounding area or neighbouring dwellings and is therefore recommended for approval.

2. **The Application**

- 2.1. The existing building is a single storey, brick building with sheet roof, with a lean-to timber clad extension to one side. The proposal would demolish the lean-to and convert the brick building into a single dwelling providing two bedrooms and an open plan living / dining / kitchen space.
- 2.2. The building currently has a single personnel door in the north side and two larger openings in the gable end. The scheme would reuse the door opening and the opening in the east elevation, but would include the addition of new windows in the south, north and west elevations.
- 2.3. A parking area would be provided on the north side of the building large enough for at least three cars, and a modest garden 6 metres deep would be created on the south side in place of the existing lean-to with a 3 metre strip on the west side for maintenance access.
- 2.4. The application is accompanied by:
 - a) Design and Access Statement
 - b) Drainage statement
 - c) Ecology Report
 - d) Structural report
- 2.5. Additional information was provided regarding surface water drainage at the request of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

3. **Working with the applicant/agent**

- 3.1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF Wycombe District Council (WDC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:
 - offering a pre-application advice service,

- as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions, and,
- by adhering to the requirements of the Planning & Sustainability Customer Charter

3.2. In this instance

- the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit,
- the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.
- The applicant was provided the opportunity to submit additional information regarding surface water drainage.
- The application was dealt with/approved without delay.
- The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

4. **Relevant Planning History**

- 4.1. 14/08212/FUL - Demolition of existing office building and ancillary building and erection of 3 x 5 bed and 1 x 4 bed detached dwellings with attached garages, associates parking and access. Refused permission.
- 4.2. 07/08155/OUT - Outline application with all matters reserved for the redevelopment of site for residential use (erection of 36 two storey dwelling houses) with landscaped open space. Refused and dismissed at appeal.
- 4.3. 15/06293/FUL - Change of use of land to allow the stationing of 1 x static caravan (retrospective).

5. **Issues and Policy considerations**

Principle and Location of Development

ALP: C7 (Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside), GB2 (Green Belt)

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS2 (Main principles for location of development),

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development),

New Local Plan (Submission Version): CP1 (Sustainable Development), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation). DM42 (Managing Development in the Green Belt), DM45 (Conversion of Existing Buildings in the Green Belt and Other Rural Areas)

- 5.1. The re-use of existing buildings in the Green Belt is appropriate development in the Green Belt as set out at paragraph 146 of the NPPF (2018). Both Policy C7 of the adopted Local Plan and Policy DM45 of the emerging plan also make provision for the conversion of buildings to new uses.
- 5.2. The existing building was previously used as part of the turkey farm that operates on this site. The building is of single skin brick construction and appears to be of substantial construction which, with normal maintenance and repair, would be expected to remain for many years. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF states that the re-use of buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction is not inappropriate provided it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy C7 of the adopted Local Plan makes allowance for re-use of buildings subject to a number of criteria and Policy DM45 of the emerging Local Plan also allows for re-use of buildings.
- 5.3. A structural report has been submitted with the application which assesses the condition of the building and what work would be required to repurpose it for residential use.
- 5.4. The building is 15 x 6 metres, of single skin brick on a concrete strip foundation with

steel roof trusses supported by the walls carrying an asbestos sheet roof covering. External brick piers are positioned in line with the trusses. The floor is a ground bearing concrete slab on consolidated stone.

- 5.5. The report did not find any evidence of structural movement in the external walls. Whilst some of the brick work has perished, particularly in the brick piers, these could be cut out and replaced. The report indicates that the roof covering will need to be replaced but this can be supported off the existing walls and foundations with new timber trusses. The floor slab can be retained and used as a base for a new insulated reinforced slab with damp proof membrane, and the slab can be used to support the internal walls.
- 5.6. The walls are proposed to be refaced externally with brick and brick and flint. Internally they will be lined, either with block work and insulation built off the floor slab, or with an insulated timber stud partition. A trial hole was dug to expose the existing foundation which is sufficient to support the addition of an outer leaf of brickwork.
- 5.7. The submitted information establishes that the existing building is of sound construction and could be converted without substantial reconstruction. The conversion is acceptable in principle, subject to the details of the works themselves being acceptable in design terms. Although Policy C7 of the adopted Local Plan expresses a preference for conversion to business use this is not in line with paragraph 146 of the NPPF.
- 5.8. The supporting information advises that the intention is for the building to provide accommodation for an agricultural worker in connection with the management of the existing turkey farm. Hoppers Farm is a turkey egg laying farm providing pedigree breeding stock. The supporting information states that the company require a farm manager to be resident at the site to ensure bird welfare requirements are met. The site has also been subject to thefts and the full-time presence would reduce the likelihood of further thefts and improve security to the breeding stock. Alarms within the livestock buildings would be connected to the house to alert the manager to security or welfare issues, enabling a rapid response. The applicant has no objection to the imposition of an occupancy condition.
- 5.9. Since the proposal is for a conversion, which is acceptable in principle, as set out above, under both national and local policy, it is not necessary for the applicant to provide justification for the conversion on the grounds of agricultural need. This also means it is necessary to consider whether it imposing an occupancy condition, restricting occupation of the dwelling to an agricultural worker only, is justified.
- 5.10. The location of the building is well within the larger farm "site". The main complex of buildings is to the south east, at a distance of about 220 metres. Vehicular access to these buildings uses the same access to Cockpit Road. The internal access route passes within 20 metres of the building. Given the potential for amenity impact from noise and disturbance and odour associated with the farming activities, an occupancy condition on amenity grounds would be justified.
- 5.11. Whilst the concern of third parties is noted, about previous disposal of dwellings by the applicant, and possible future pressure for additional dwellings, this application must be determined on its individual merits. Given that a conversion generally accords with planning policy little weight can be given to the sale of dwellings in the past. The conversion of this building to a farm managers dwelling would reduce pressure for further dwellings in the future. If such an application is made for a new agricultural workers dwelling in the future all relevant issues will be taken into account, including the provision of this dwelling as a conversion.
- 5.12. Third parties have objected on the grounds that permitting a conversion would set a precedent for further residential development. This would not be the case as development on land which is not previously developed remains tightly controlled in

the Green Belt under both local and national policy.

Transport matters and parking

ALP: T2 (On – site parking and servicing), T4 (Pedestrian movement and provision), T5 and T6 (Cycling), T7 (Public transport), T8 (Buses), T12 (Taxis), T13 (Traffic management and calming), T15 (park and ride), T16 (Green travel)

CSDPD: CS16 (Transport), CS21 (Contribution of development to community infrastructure)

DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

- 5.13. The proposed scheme includes space for parking next to the building which is sufficient to meet the needs of a dwelling of this size, as set out in the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance. One space is required for a dwelling with up to 4 habitable rooms in Residential Zone B.
- 5.14. The dwelling would be reached via the main entrance to the farm onto Cockpit Road. The Highway Authority's initial comments indicated that they would not have any objections if an occupancy condition was imposed since this would limit the number of additional trips through the access. The Highways Officer was asked to assess whether the vision was below standard to justify such a condition. The Highway Authority has now confirmed that the visibility at the access can be achieved to the required standard and they do not object to the application subject to a condition being imposed to secure the vision splay. This may require the trimming of some vegetation within highway limits.

Raising the quality of place making and design / Impact on the AONB

ALP: G3 (General design policy), G8 (Detailed Design Guidance and Local Amenity), G10 (Landscaping), G11 (Trees), G26 (Designing for safer communities), C7 (Re-use and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside), L1 (The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)

CSDPD: CS17 (Environmental Assets), CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM45 (Conversion of Existing Buildings in the Green Belt and Other Rural Areas)

- 5.15. The existing building is of utilitarian form and materials, and the proposal therefore involves re-cladding the building externally with brick and flint, which are traditional local building materials. The overall shape and form of the building will remain the same, apart from the addition of a modest porch. The scheme proposes new door and window openings to suit the proposed internal layout there being relatively few existing openings, but does make use of two of the existing openings.
- 5.16. The external changes will secure a significant improvement in the external appearance, subject to the use of suitable materials and execution of flint work in the traditional manner, both of which can be secured by conditions. Whilst the re-cladding in some circumstances could amount to re-building, the structural report, which includes an outline methodology for the conversion works, indicates that the existing walls would be retained and that existing foundations are sufficient to allow for this work.
- 5.17. The plans indicate the use of plain clay tiles for the roof, however the existing roof pitches is below the 35 degree minimum required for plain clay tiles. Slate would be an acceptable alternative in this AONB location. Other alternatives include profile sheeting with insulation attached on the underside which, given that the existing buildings have profile asbestos sheet roofs, would be acceptable in this location. The approval of materials can be secured by condition.

- 5.18. The dwelling would be provided with an area of garden immediately adjacent to it with access from within the house, giving surveillance over the garden. The gardens is not excessively large and does not encroach into the adjacent fields. The site measures approximately 16 x 18 metres, and residential use would be restricted to this area. Any future encroachment beyond the application site area would require permission in its own right.
- 5.19. The parking would be provided on plot and would also be visible from within the dwelling. The scheme is therefore considered to achieve a satisfactory layout.
- 5.20. The plans indicated close boarded fencing to surround the garden, however this is not appropriate in this rural location. A post and rail fence with mixed native hedgerow would be a more suitable boundary treatment and it is intended to secure this by condition.

Amenity of existing and future residents

ALP: G8 (Detailed design guidance and local amenity), H19 (Residents amenity space and gardens) Appendix 1

CSDPD: CS19 (Raising the quality of place shaping and design)

Housing intensification SPD

New Local Plan (Submission Version): DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM40 (Internal space standards)

- 5.21. Hoppers House, the nearest neighbouring property, is over 55 metres away from the building and would not be affected in terms of loss of light or privacy. Whilst access to the building passes Hoppers House this is the main entrance for the farm and, given the low number of trips associated with a dwelling of this size, it would not result in a significant increase in use of the access or additional noise and disturbance.
- 5.22. The conversion would provide spacious living accommodation with sufficient natural light. A garden area with sufficient space for sitting out is proposed which is not unduly overlooked or shaded. As such a satisfactory living environment would be provided for future occupiers.
- 5.23. As set out above, the building is located within a working farm, the access to which passes close to the building. Occupation of the dwelling by someone not related to the farm could result in conflict with the operation of the farm due to issues of noise and disturbance, particularly from vehicular movement, and odour. Restricting occupation to a person employed at Hoppers Farm would address this concern.

Flooding and drainage

CSDPD: CS1 (Overarching principles - sustainable development), CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

DSA: DM17 (Planning for flood risk management)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 5.24. The site is not located in an area at risk of flooding. The application is accompanied by details of the proposed method of surface water drainage, which would be to a soakaway. Further details were provided during the course of the application to satisfy the Lead Local Flood Authority that this means of surface water drainage was acceptable. They have indicated that they have no objection subject to an appropriate condition to secure details of the surface water scheme.
- 5.25. The forms state that the drainage would be to a septic tank. Where mains drainage is not available foul drainage should be provided in accordance with the hierarchy set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). For a development of this scale a septic tank would be appropriate.

Ecology

CSDPD: CS17 (Environmental assets)

DSA: DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

- 5.26. The application is accompanied by an ecological report which confirms that there is no evidence of bats using the building, nor of nesting birds such as barn owls or swallows. The report recommended a precautionary approach to the removal of the timber lean-to and potential enhancements such as the provision of bat boxes. These could be secured by condition. There would therefore be no adverse impact on protected species or habitat and enhancements could be secured.

Building sustainability

CSDPD: CS18 (Waste, natural resources and pollution)

DSA: DM18 (Carbon reduction and water efficiency)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval)

- 5.27. Following the Adoption of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (July 2013) and in particular policy DM18 (Carbon Reduction and Water Efficiency) it would have previously been necessary to impose a condition to secure the required 15% reduction in carbon emissions as well as reducing future demand for water associated with the proposed dwelling. However, this was superseded in October 2016 by ministerial policy to transfer the issue to Building Regulations. It is only considered necessary to condition water efficiency.

Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

CSDPD: CS21 (Contribution of development to community infrastructure)

DSA: DM19 (Infrastructure and delivery)

BCSNP: Policy 13 (Connecting the Parish)

New Local Plan (Submission Version): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth)

- 5.28. The development is a type of development where CIL may be chargeable. It is considered that there would not be other types of infrastructure that will be put under unacceptable pressure by the development to justify financial contributions or the direct provision of infrastructure.

Weighing and balancing of issues – overall assessment

- 5.29. This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 5.30. In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a) Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material
 - b) Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (in this case, CIL)
 - c) Any other material considerations
- 5.31. As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers 9468/2C, 9468/20 and 9468/21 unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.
Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.
- 3 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work to the external finish of the development takes place. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.
- 4 Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the flint work shall be constructed in the following manner:
a) The flint work shall be laid on site, not constructed of pre-made blocks
b) The flints shall be laid in a lime mortar mix with slightly recessed pointing, the joints brushed, rubbed or bagged prior to hardening off to avoid a smooth finish
c) The flints shall be random coursed and tightly packed to avoid excessive mortar proportions
Reason: In the interests of reinforcing the local character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through the use of traditional building techniques.
- 5 Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, a schedule and/or samples of all surfacing materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any work to the finished surfaces of the development takes place. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To secure a satisfactory appearance.
- 6 The conversion shall be carried out in accordance with the method outlined in the structural report by Platt White Partnership and the details shown on the approved drawings unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the conversion retains the existing structures and does not result in the substantial reconstruction of the buildings which would be contrary to local and national policies for development in the Green Belt.
- 7 The development, hereby permitted, shall be designed and constructed to meet a water efficiency standard of 110 litres per head per day.
Reason: In the interests of water efficiency as required by Policy CS 18 of the Adopted Core Strategy and Policy DM 18 of the Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (July 2013).
- 8 Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed. The scheme shall also include:

- * Full construction details of soakaways and associated and drainage components
- * Detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers, gradients and pipe sizes complete, together with storage volumes of all SuDS components
- * Calculations to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system can contain up to the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding. Any onsite flooding between the 1 in 30 and the 1 in 100 plus (40%) climate change storm event should be safely contained on site.
- * Details of proposed overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance or failure, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants, or to adjacent or downstream sites.
- * A whole life maintenance and management plan detailing the maintenance activities, their frequency and who will be responsible for this maintenance work.

Reason: The reason for this pre-start condition is to ensure that a sustainable drainage strategy has been agreed prior to construction in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that there is a satisfactory solution to managing flood risk, and because the works below ground may need to be undertaken before other elements of the construction begin.

- 9 Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted a scheme for ecological enhancements shall be implemented in accordance with a detailed scheme which follows the recommendations at paragraph 4.1.2 of the Ecological Appraisal by Dunelm Ecology and has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure the provision of ecological enhancements in the interest of biodiversity.
- 10 The scheme for parking and manoeuvring indicated on the submitted plans shall be laid out prior to the initial occupation of the development hereby permitted and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose.
Reason: To enable vehicles to draw off, park and turn clear of the highway to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the adjoining highway.
- 11 The dwelling hereby approved shall not be occupied until the fencing has been erected to demarcate the site boundary, in accordance with details which have first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fencing should be post and rail, or similar, fencing. The fences and any other means of enclosure which are part of the approved scheme shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the extent of the residential curtilage of the dwelling is clearly defined, to prevent encroachment into the countryside, in a manner which is appropriate to the rural location of the site.
- 12 The dwelling shall not be brought into use before a fully detailed landscaping scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the provision for:
- * mixed native hedgerow planting along the site boundaries ;
 - * native planting to reflect the rural context of the application site;
 - * structural planting of a scale and size relative to the development to soften the appearance of the development and to provide a high quality environment.
- The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.
- 13 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees, plants or areas of turfing or seeding which, within a period of 3 years from the completion of the development, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority first gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping.

- 14 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order), no development falling within Classes A, C, D and E of Part 1 and Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 shall be carried out without the prior, express planning permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority can properly consider the effect of any future proposals on the character and amenity of the locality.

- 15 The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in agriculture as defined in Section 336 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, at Hoppers Farm, or a dependant of such a person residing with him or her, or a widow or widower of such a person.

Reason: In the interest of the amenity of the occupiers of the dwelling given the proximity to the existing farm buildings and access roads and to prevent pressure for an additional dwelling on the site which would result in encroachment into the countryside. .

- 16 Details of the non-mains sewerage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall demonstrate compliance with paragraph 020 (Reference ID: 34-020-20140306) of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) entitled: "Are there particular considerations that apply in areas with inadequate wastewater infrastructure?" Should anything other than a package treatment plant be chosen, the applicant will need to submit a drainage assessment to the Local Planning Authority in accordance with NPPG. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development.

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate foul drainage, to protect controlled waters and residential amenity.

- 17 No other part of the development shall begin until visibility splays have been provided on both sides of the access between a point 2.4 metres along the centre line of the access measured from the edge of the carriageway and a point 43 metres along the edge of the carriageway measured from the intersection of the centre line of the access. The area contained within the splays shall be kept free of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height above the nearside channel level of the carriageway.

Reason: To provide adequate intervisibility between the access and the existing public highway for the safety and convenience of users of the highway and of the access.

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Wycombe District Council (WDC) approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. WDC work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The applicant was updated on the progress of the application which was determined within the timescale agreed with the applicant.

- 2 In accordance with the advice at section 4 of the report by Dunelm Ecology, as a precautionary measure the timber panelling on the western elevation should be removed carefully by hand. In the unlikely event of a bat being discovered, works must cease immediately, and a licensed bat ecologist contacted for advice. Under no circumstances must contractors

handle bats. Additionally, if works take place during the breeding bird season (1 March - 31 August inclusive) a pre works check should be undertaken to ensure no active nests are present.

- 3 It is an offence under S151 of the Highways Act 1980 for vehicles leaving the development site to carry mud onto the public highway. Facilities should therefore be provided and used on the development site for cleaning the wheels of vehicles before they leave the site.
- 4 No vehicles associated with the building operations on the development site shall be parked on the public highway so as to cause an obstruction. Any such wilful obstruction is an offence under S137 of the Highways Act 1980.