



Report to North Buckinghamshire Area Planning Committee

Application Number:	20/00472/APP
Proposal:	Golf driving range/practice area consisting of 12no. customer bays and 4no teaching bays
Site Location:	Cowpasture Farm "Experience the Country Ltd", Drayton Road, Newton Longville, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0BU
Applicant:	Mrs Valerie Wood
Case Officer:	Danika Hird
Ward(s) affected:	Former Great Brickhill & Newton Longville
Parish-Town Council:	Mursley
Date valid application received:	10.02.2020
Statutory determination date:	11.05.2020
Recommendation	Approval subject to conditions.

1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 The application seeks the provision of a new golf driving range/practice area utilising the existing access, parking and toilet facilities of the existing, adjacent "Experience the Country" facility. In summary, the proposal would represent the provision of a new sports and recreation facility within the open countryside, associated with an existing enterprise. The proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of the site, surrounding area and its natural qualities, providing an adequate level of parking, satisfactory access arrangements without causing harm to highway safety and would not give rise to any significant residential amenity concerns.
- 1.2 The application is being reported to the Northern Buckinghamshire Area Planning Committee as Councillor Scott Raven has called the application to committee. The reasons for calling this in are set out in the appendices at the end of this report. It is considered that the application raises material planning considerations which would be appropriate for the Committee to consider.
- 1.3 Overall the proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant policies within the Development Plan (AVDLP), its relevant emerging policies (VALP) and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole. There are no considerations that indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

1.4 Recommendation: It is recommended that the application be **Approved** subject to the conditions listed below in 8.1 of this report.

2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The application seeks the provision of a new golf driving range/practice area located off Drayton Road in Newton Longville. Whilst the address references Newton Longville, the application site itself falls within the Parish of Mursley. The site itself is situated adjacent to the existing, associated “Experience the Country” facility which is located approximately 900m from Newton Longville and 2400m from Mursley. The existing wider site is a collection of buildings within the open countryside off a large access. Towards the entrance of the site is a set of piers forming a gated entrance to the site, with a residential dwelling, known as Hounslow Hall situated just beyond. Within the collection of buildings as part of the wider site there are a variety of uses.
- 2.2 To the south-west of the application site lies an agricultural notification area with pipelines and footpath MUR/3/1 located to the west. Connecting to this footpath is footpath NLO/16/1 which is situated to the north of the site. The site itself is situated within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.3 The proposal seeks to utilise 45,000sqm of land in order to provide a purpose built golf driving range adjacent to the existing “Experience the Country” facility (comprising of quad treks, off-road driving, segways, medieval weapons/ axe throwing, archery, clay shooting, 4x4 truck driving, air rifle shooting, arena, corporate events, meeting rooms & private hire). In order to facilitate this, a single storey structure is to be built, measuring 75.6m in length by 5.6 metres width with a maximum height of 5.3m. The proposed building will comprise of 4 teaching bays and 12 practice bays. The building will be constructed of steel frame with green profiled vertical metal clad with the roof being light grey profiled metal deck and fascia. The proposal seeks to retain the existing natural boundaries of the parcel of land which it seeks to utilise and does not seek the provision of any new boundary (walls, fences etc.), including netting.
- 2.4 The existing access of Drayton Road and seeks to share the existing parking and toilet facilities with the “Experience the Country” facility. The existing car parking which is to remain unaltered provides parking for 90 vehicles.
- 2.5 The provision of 7 floodlights are also sought which have a maximum height of 5 metres. The floodlights would be mounted along the length of the driving range and above the bay structure. The lighting scheme will be controlled to ensure the lights switch off automatically no later than 21.00hrs.
- 2.6 The existing hedgerow along the perimeter of the field will be retained, providing a 3m wide ecological buffer zone with the provision of a swale to the south of the site.
- 2.7 The application is accompanied by:

a) Application Form

- b) *Car parking facilities*
- c) *Design and Access Statement*
- d) *Environmental/ Ecology Statement*
- e) *Flood Map (map extract from EA) and supporting note*
- f) Photographs and Aerial Photography (Views towards site)
- g) Land Quality Assessment
- h) Methodology for selecting the site
- i) Soil Nutrient Level Field Summary
- j) Visual Impact Assessment

2.8 During the course of the application, amended plans and information was received in order to respond to concerns raised by the Council's Ecologist and Highway's Engineer. The most up-to-date plans being considered are therefore:

- Site Block Plan – Drawing No .002 (received 22 April 2020)
- Elevations – Drawing No. 004 Rev A (received 22 April 2020)
- Part Site Block Plan & Floor Plan – Drawing No. 003 Rev A (received 22 April 2020)
- Site Location Plan – Drawing No. 001 Rev A (received 22 April 2020)
- Car Parking Allocation (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Nearby Driving Range Car Park (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Nearby Driving Range Entrance (received 22 April 2020)
- Flood Risk Assessment (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Hounslow Hall Entrance Road Passing Plan (1 of 2) (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Hounslow Hall Entrance Road Passing Plan (2 of 2) (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Hounslow Hall Overspill Car Park (1 of 2) (received 22 April 2020)
- Photograph of Hounslow Hall Overspill Car Park (2 of 2) (received 22 April 2020)
- Lighting Information (received 22 April 2020)
- Traffic Survey 20th March 2020 (received 22 April 2020)
- Traffic Survey at Nearby Driving Range (received 22 April 2020)
- Ecology Design Strategy including Defra Biodiversity Enhancement Calculator, Prepared by Ark Ltd, dated June 2020 (received 10 July 2020)
- Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation Tool (received 13 August 2020)

- Floodlight Hours of Operation (received 13 August 2020)

3.0 Relevant Planning History

01/01152/APP - Erection of agricultural building – Approved

05/01513/APP - Change of use from agricultural buildings to B8 (Warehouse) and change of use from farm office to B1 (General Office) – Approved

08/02186/APP - Erection of grain storage building – Approved

12/00947/APP - Change of use from offices to creation of No. 2 dwellings and No.1 Residential Holiday Let – Approved

12/02430/APP - Retention of 10 metre mast for further 12 months and erection of 80 metres mast for three years – Approved

13/03455/APP - Erection of four wind turbines (maximum height 115 metres) with ancillary infrastructure including substation, access tracks and crane hardstandings and temporary storage compound for temporary period for 25 years – Refused

14/00346/APP - Variation of Condition 1 of 12/02430/APP to extend temporary period (10 Metre mast only). Conditions (s) Removal: To enable continued collection of wind data for a further period Variation of period for a further 18 months. – Approved

12/A2430/DIS - Submission of detail pursuant to Condition 2 - The 80m high mast to be erected within three years of date of permission and be retained on site for a period no longer than 3 years from the date of installation after which three year period the mast and all associated apparatus to be removed from the site and the land reinstated for agricultural use and Condition 3 - Details of a warning light or lights to be erected on top of the 80m mast on planning permission 12/02430/APP – Satisfies Requirements

14/03134/AGN - Water tanks for storage of rain water to be used for crop spraying. – Proceed with Works

4.0 Representations

Comments have been received from Mursley and Newton Longville Parish Council. In addition, a total of 65 representations have been received, 63 in support of the proposal and 2 objecting. Whilst these representations have been more clearly set out below in Appendix A of this report, the key matters are as follows:

Support:

- Increasing demand due to loss of facilities within the area and the amount of residential development taking place within Milton Keynes and Aylesbury.
- A positive community facility for all which supports active living and mental wellbeing

Objections:

- Incorrect applicant details published on site notice
- Highway Implications – Located on a main road with high amounts of traffic usage at peak times; not well lit; probability of regular traffic blocks; higher probability of accidents taking place; the entrance is on a sharp bend with bad sight and vision of oncoming drivers which again would cause a high risk of road traffic accidents and traffic blocks.

5.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP 2004): The report will identify where policies are not consistent with the NPPF and the weight to be afforded if not full weight.

Emerging Vale of Aylesbury District Local Plan (VALP): This is now at an advanced stage and weight can be given to the relevant policies in the plan in accordance with the NPPF. The overall approach is:

- Limited weight: if there is a new and untested policy introduced by a main modification and subject to consultation.
- Moderate weight: where there are objections and the Inspector has requested main modifications and therefore objections can be regarded as being “resolved”. The context being that the Inspector has considered the proposed modifications and in agreeing them for consultation, has confirmed that he is reasonably satisfied that they remedy the points of unsoundness identified in the examination process so far (as set out in Inspector’s note ED185).
- Considerable weight: where there are objections but the Inspector has not requested main modifications (and as such the policy will not be changed in a material way) and the objections can therefore be regarded as being “resolved”.
- Significant weight: where there are no objections and no modifications. These policies are not going to be changed and the next step will be adoption and very significant weight.

The report will identify the weight to be given to the relevant emerging policies.

The Neighbourhood Plan Area for Mursley was approved on 12th July 2017. At this early stage in the process, the neighbourhood plan cannot be afforded any weight in the decision making process.

Supplementary Planning Guidance 1: Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan – Parking Guidelines 1

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

Principle and Location of Development

AVDLP: RA.4 (Considerations for countryside recreation), (RA.5 New Golf Courses)

Emerging VALP: S1 (Sustainable development for Aylesbury Vale) (*Considerable weight*), S2 (Spatial strategy for growth) (*Moderate weight*), S3 (Settlement hierarchy and cohesive development) (*Moderate weight*), S5 (Infrastructure) (*Moderate weight*), I2 (Sports and recreation) (*Moderate weight*).

5.1 It is identified within AVDLP that certain recreational uses or sports by nature are not appropriate within or adjacent to settlements as they require large amounts of land or a countryside setting, or would be unneighbourly if located close to dwellings. Policy RA4 of AVDLP is supportive of countryside recreation on appropriate sites and therefore proposal for the recreational use of land outside the built-up areas of settlement will have particular regard to:

- a) The visual effect of car parking and access roads;
- b) The siting and design of any associated buildings;
- c) The accessibility of the site, including public transport links and walking or cycling networks; and
- d) Agricultural land quality and the effect on land drainage.

5.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed development is associated with golf activities, policy RA5 of AVDLP is not wholly applicable in this instance as this policy relates to the provision of a golf course, whereas the development proposed is for a golf driving range only which provides a practice area and offers lessons. Although, the land utilised by driving ranges tend to be significantly less than a golf course, large areas are still required with similar paraphernalia and therefore the aims of policy RA5 are applicable in ensuring the proposal does not have a detrimental effect on the countryside and on nearby settlements.

5.3 In terms of the principle of a driving range, this would represent a recreational activity that could take place in the countryside and therefore the principle of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable subject to the scheme satisfactorily addressing the remaining requirements of policy RA4, the aims of RA5, the impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and all other relevant material considerations which are to be considered in detail below.

Transport matters and parking

AVDLP: GP.24 (Car parking guidelines), RA.36 (Development causing traffic adversely affecting rural roads)

Emerging VALP: T1 (Delivering the sustainable transport vision) (*Moderate weight*), T4 (Capacity of the transport network to deliver development) (*Limited weight*), T5 (Delivering transport in new development) (*Moderate weight*), T6 (Vehicle Parking) (*Moderate weight*), T8 (Electric Vehicle Parking) (*Moderate weight*)

5.4 The site is located within a rural area, remote from any local services and footpaths and would be reliant on the use of the private motor vehicles rather more sustainable modes of transport. There are bus stops located to the north of the site on Drayton

Road, however these are located further than the recommended walking distance, and there is no footway linking the site to these bus stops. The bus service serving these stops is sporadic and is unlikely to be used by visitors to the site. However, the NPPF recognises that accessibility to non-car modes will not be as good in rural areas as it will in urban areas.

5.5 The proposed development seeks to utilise an existing access off Drayton Road.

Drayton Road is a C class road and the proposed development site lies on a part of the road which is subject to a 40mph speed limit. The road width at the entrance road to Hounslow Hall is approximately 6m which can safely accommodate two-way flow. The current access track measures 4m where it adjoins the highway and does reduce to 3m as it nears the site. This reduction however only occurs on private land and would not cause issues with vehicles on the public highway.

5.6 Due to the existing access narrowing to 3m, the Highways Engineer requested the provision of passing bays along the narrowing section of the access. In order address these concerns, the applicant providing images of passing areas near Hounslow Hall (which is located on the private section of the access track) where vehicles can safely wait to move past one and other on the 3m wide access track. Whilst the narrow road width past Hounslow Hall is not ideal, it is private land and therefore the Highway Authority have advised that they would not be able to pursue this matter any further. Furthermore, the road width greatly improves on the public highway section of the access track and that this section benefits from a passing bay with a width of nearly 7m. This makes two-way vehicular flow much more achievable in this section.

5.7 In addition, the applicant has provided a traffic survey of an appropriately similar site 'Windmill Hill Driving Range, Milton Keynes' on a Friday and Sunday in March 2020. This site in Milton Keynes has a comparative number of bays to the proposal (23 Bays compared to 16 Bays), it should be noted that the site in MK also has other golf related facilities taking place on the site that would be likely to generate vehicle movements, therefore the survey is considered a very robust indication of the likely vehicle movements that could be generated by the proposed development.

5.8 In order to established whether the existing parking facilities would be sufficient, the Highways Engineer requested further survey information. The first being a survey to capture the vehicle movements currently taking place at the existing site with the remaining survey showing the vehicle movements associated with an appropriately similar site. On Friday, the applicant found that the site had a total number of 60 vehicles in the site with a peak between 4.00pm - 5.00pm of 12 vehicles. On Sunday, the applicant found that the site had a total of 30 vehicles in the site with a peak of 4 vehicles from 3.00pm - 4.00pm. The Highway's Engineer has therefore advised that they are satisfied that the local highway network could support a similar level of movements without a severe detrimental impact.

5.9 With regards to the level of movements expected at the existing site, the applicant has provided a survey demonstrating that there are 49 vehicular arrivals per day and 49

vehicular departures per day. Therefore, there is a total of 98 vehicular movements per day at the existing site.

- 5.10 Overall, in terms of the highway network impact, highway officers are satisfied that the highway network can support the increased level of movements as the public highway section of the access road is generally wider than the private section at almost 4m wide. Furthermore, a passing bay of almost 7m in width is located near the junction with Drayton Road to allow vehicles to safely pass near the site access point. Whilst the width of the private section of the access is not ideal, the Highway's Engineer has advised that there would be no impact on the publicly maintained highway.

Parking:

- 5.11 The proposed development seeks to utilise the existing parking facilities at the adjacent "Experience the Country" facility. As such, no additional parking is sought to be provided. The proposal seeks to share the existing 90 parking spaces which are to be retained.
- 5.12 Within the AVDC Parking Guidelines SPG there is a requirement for indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facility to provide 1 space per 6 seats of public accommodation or 1 space per 11m² of public floorspace. Given the nature of the development and the limited floorspace being created, it is considered that the existing Parking Guidelines do not reflect the operational use of the development. As part of the application, the applicant has advised that the maximum number of parking spaces that would be required would be 20.
- 5.13 As part of the additional surveys requested, the survey of the existing site identified that the maximum number of vehicles parked in the car park on the day of the survey was 15 and this was between 13.00pm -14.00pm. Having assessed the traffic survey from a similar site in Milton Keynes, the Highways Engineer believes that 20 parking spaces should adequately serve the driving range from a highway safety perspective. Subsequently, it is considered that the applicant could provide more parking if required as it is stated that there is a surplus capacity of 40 car parking spaces in the 'Experience the Country' car park.
- 5.14 Highway officers consider that whilst the driving range will lead to an intensification of the site, the existing car parking provision of 90 spaces will be enough to accommodate this additional level of movements expected at the site.
- 5.15 Overall, the proposed development is considered to accord with saved policies GP24 and RA36 of AVDLP, emerging policies T1, T4, T5 and T6 of VALP, Supplementary Planning Guidance 1: Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan – Parking Guidelines 1 and the advice within the NPPF.

Rights of way:

AVDLP: GP.84 (Public Rights of Way)

Emerging VALP: C4 (Protection of public rights of way) (*Moderate weight*)

- 5.16 The site would result in an intensification of vehicular use of the bridleway which shares access to site for 260m at around 4m width. Ideally, the access would be widened to 4.8m in order to allow two vehicles to pass simultaneously however for the reasons expressed above this cannot be pursued any further. Nevertheless, there are two opportunities for vehicles to pass in the vicinity of the bridleway, the first being at the entrance to the property called Hounslow Hall with the remaining area at the bridleway turning.
- 5.17 As officers do not consider they can insist on the access being widened to 4.8m, the Strategic Access Officer has requested the provision of an additional passing place along the bridleway near to the existing access gates. This will allow vehicles to wait while bridleway users pass or *vice versa*. This also avoids vehicles reversing long distances into the path of bridleway users. The Strategic Access Officer has also requested that the existing gravel-surfaced passing space at the bridleway turning should be improved with a bitumen surface to withstand regular vehicular traffic braking, turning and accelerating within this space. Both improvements can be secured by condition in order to mitigate the impact of the development on walkers, horse riders and cyclists. Subject to these improvements being condition, the proposal is considered to accord with policy GP.84 of AVDLP, emerging policy C4 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Landscape Issues

AVDLP: GP.35 (Design of new development proposals), GP.38 (Landscaping of new development proposals), GP.39 (Existing trees and hedgerows), GP.40 (Retention of existing trees and hedgerows)

Emerging VALP: BE2 (Design of new development) (*Moderate weight*), NE4 (Landscape character and locally important landscape) (*Moderate weight*), NE7 (Best and most versatile agricultural land) (*Moderate weight*), NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) (*Moderate weight*)

- 5.18 The application site is located within the open countryside not within any specific landscape designations. The proposed development is sited within the Newton Longville-Stoke Hammond Claylands landscape character area which is part of the Undulating Clay Plateau landscape character type in the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics are gently undulating to rolling landform, heavy clay soils with mixed agricultural use, nucleated settlement pattern and parliamentary enclosures with thorn hedges. Overall, the condition of the landscape is considered to be moderate.
- 5.19 The site itself where the driving range is to be located extends to circa 4.5hectares lying approximately 900m from the south-west of Newton Longville and 2400m from the north-east of Mursley. The application site is situated off Drayton Road, forming a parcel of agricultural land which is bound by native hedgerows which

contain sporadic clusters of trees. The site is open and exposed with rising topography from the north to the south of the driving range.

- 5.20 The application was accompanied with an agricultural land classification map which identified the site as falling within Grade 3b agricultural land. In accordance with emerging policy NE7 of VALP, the proposal would therefore not represent a loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a).
- 5.21 The proposed development seeks the provision of a purpose built driving range. The proposal would be a local change in character from a rural field to a more manicured suburban character however the proposed development would not have an irreversible impact on the agricultural land although the field would be taken out of cultivation for the foreseeable future.
- 5.22 In order to accommodate the proposed development a single storey structure is required in order to provide sheltered bays for practising and teaching. Whilst the span depth of the building is large (75.6m) the impact of the building is reduced given its single storey nature (5.3m). To further mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the scheme seeks to share the existing "Experience the Country" facilities (parking, access and toilets) in order to limit the amount of new built development within the open countryside.
- 5.23 Given the exposed and open nature of the site, it is acknowledged that the proposed development would be highly visible when viewed directly and from the existing Cowpasture site and adjacent footpaths. However, this application was supported by photographs, an aerial photography which shows there would be limited long distance views due to the nature of the works, the surrounding topography and intervening planting. The provision of floodlight will have an impact on the landscape, particularly in the evening and during the winter months and therefore a condition should be imposed securing exact lighting details to ensure the lighting for the site is controlled and to prevent unnecessary light spillage.
- 5.24 To further limit the presence of the proposed development, the building will be simple in form and design, constructed of matching materials to a number of building found within the wider Cowpasture Farm site. This will allow the building to be seen in the context of the existing enterprise ("Experience the Country") which is situated adjacent to the proposed driving range. Additionally the applicant has confirmed that no new boundary treatments (walls, fences etc.) will need to be erected/ installed including netting. The existing native hedgerow and the sporadic clusters of trees along the perimeter field will be retained providing further mitigation. Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with saved policies GP35, GP38, GP39 and GP40 of AVDLP, emerging policies BE2, NE4, NE7 and NE8 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Environmental issues

Emerging VALP: NE5 (Pollution, air quality and contaminated land) (*Considerable weight*), C3 (Renewable energy) (*Moderate weight*)

5.25 As a result of the proposed development, the main environmental impact would be the provision on lighting. The accompanying information for this application states that approximately 7 floodlights are also sought which have a maximum height of 5 metres. The floodlights would be mounted along the length of the driving range and above the bay structure. Within the supporting information the applicant has advised that the “floodlights will be positioned and aimed in such a way so as to provide a target illuminance across the range at ground level and to provide sufficient illuminance at 250m to see the object ball at 3m above ground level. Furthermore, care will be taken to avoid any unwanted spillage of light above 30m. or beyond the Range boundaries, which will be achieved by the onsite adjustment of the fixtures by the specialist lighting supplier/contractor. The lighting scheme will be controlled to ensure the lights switch off automatically no later than 21.00hrs”.

5.26 Whilst this additional information is welcomed and demonstrates that careful consideration has been given to the siting of the lights and their impact on the surrounding area, further information is required to show the exact location and amount of floodlights. In addition, details of the light shields and lighting plan will be required to limit the light spillage. This additional information can be secured via condition and will prevent the lights from being altered once the details have been agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Subject to the imposition of a lighting condition(s) the proposal is considered to accord with emerging policy NE5 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Ecology

5.27 Emerging VALP: NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) (*Moderate weight*)

5.28 The application is supported by an Ecological Design Strategy (ARK Environmental, June 2020), Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation (ARK Environmental, 7th June 2020), details of floodlighting hours of operation (ARK Environmental, 11th August 2020) and a response to comments (ARK Environmental, 11th August 2020). These proposals involve the construction of a golf driving range/practice area with artificial lighting and the change of habitats management from a cultivated field to a managed driving range with biodiversity buffers surrounding this. The Ecological Design Strategy provides the necessary information to determine that there is no adverse impact upon biodiversity – this includes the impact of the proposed artificial lighting upon bats. The proposals will result in a net gain in biodiversity as demonstrated by the biodiversity metric. The council’s ecologist has no objections to the proposal subject to conditions requiring a more detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan , lighting and its control and therefore it is considered that the proposed development accords emerging policy NE1 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Raising the quality of place making and design

AVDLP: GP.35 (Design of new development proposals), GP.38 (Landscaping of new development proposals), GP.45 (“Secured by Design” considerations)

Emerging VALP: BE2 (Design of new development) (*Moderate weight*)

5.29 The proposal seeks the provision of new driving range within the open countryside adjacent to the existing “Experience the Country” facility. This adjacent facility already provides a number of countryside recreational activities and therefore it is considered that the proposed development would complement this existing provision and provide an extended service. The proposal seeks to utilise an number of the Experience the Country’s existing provisions (access, parking & toilet facilities) in order to limit the need for new built development within the open countryside.

5.30 The driving range itself would be located on a parcel of land adjacent to an existing collection of buildings used by “Experience the Country”. These existing buildings have predominately been constructed of red bricks of corrugated steel and are simple in design and form and are largely agricultural in appearance. The land where the driving range itself is to be located is situated on gradual incline from the north to the south of the driving range.

5.31 In order to accommodate the proposal, a single storey structure is to be built, measuring 75.6m in length by 5.6 metres width with a maximum height of 5.3m. The proposed building will comprise of 4 teaching bays and 12 practice bays. The building will be constructed of steel frame with green profiled vertical metal clad with the roof being light grey profiled metal deck and fascia. Whilst the structure would have a large span depth, the building is considered to be relatively low level. Its impact is further reduced by its simple form and use of matching materials to some of the adjacent buildings, ensuring the building sympathetically integrates with these existing buildings and prevents the building appearing stark within the surrounding area. Consequently the proposed scheme is considered to accord with policies GP35, GP38 and GP45 of AVDLP, emerging policy BE2 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Amenity of existing and future residents

AVDLP: GP.8 (Protection of amenity of residents)

Emerging VALP: BE3 (Protection of the amenity of residents) (*Considerable weight*)

5.32 Due to the remote location of the application site there are a limited number of residential properties which would be effected by the proposed development. From review of the Council’s records permission has been granted for a number of residential properties at Cowpasture Farm including the farmhouse itself. These residential properties are shown to be located to the south-east of the existing car parking facility which is to be retained and approximately 192m from the driving range itself. In addition to this there are a couple of properties located near to the entrance of the

site. Parklands is located adjacent to the access junction serving the site and Drayton Road and is served by its own access of Drayton Road. The remaining nearby residential property is Hounslow Hall which utilise the existing access which this proposal seeks to utilise and sits just beyond the piers entrance to the site, to the south of the access. Hounslow Hall is shown to be situated approximately 435m from the driving range itself.

- 5.33 The building would not result in any loss of light, privacy or outlook to those properties. There would be some impact in terms of the lighting to the driving range, however this would be directed to the range itself and not towards these properties and the hours of operation would limit the impact on light pollution which could be secured by condition.
- 5.34 In terms of the impact from traffic noise, there would be an intensification of the use of the access over and above that generated by 'Experience the Country', however environmental health do not have any objections and it is considered that it would be difficult to argue that any greater noise or disturbance would arise and demonstrate a greater harmful effect. Overall, the proposed development is considered not to have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of residential properties and therefore accords with policy GP8 of AVDLP, emerging policy BE3 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Flooding and drainage

Emerging VALP: I4 (Flooding) (*Moderate weight*)

- 5.35 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 thus having a low probability of flooding with the Environment Agency Flood Map for Surface Water showing the majority of the site to lie within an area of very low risk of surface water flooding. Greater risks of surface water flooding are shown predominately along the perimeter of the site where the driving range is to be located. The application was accompanied with a Flood Risk Assessment.
- 5.36 The Infiltration SuDS Map provided by the British Geological Survey 2016, indicates that the water table is anticipated to be within 3m below the ground surface, as such this may have implications on subsurface components and suitable measures will need to be undertaken.
- 5.37 Surface water runoff from the proposed development will be managed through a connection to the nearby ordinary watercourse at 1l/s. Calculations indicate that the 1 in 100 year storm event plus 40% climate change allowance is able to be accommodated within the proposed swale.
- 5.38 In order to assess the viability of an infiltration-based scheme the applicant will be required to conduct ground investigations including infiltration rate testing in accordance with BRE365 and groundwater monitoring over the winter period. Consequently, the Lead Local Flood Authority has raised no objection to the proposed

development subject to conditions securing an adequate surface water drainage scheme and a whole-life maintenance plan for the site. Subject to these conditions the proposed scheme is considered to accord with emerging policy I4 of VALP and the advice within the NPPF.

Historic environment (Conservation Area, Listed Buildings & Archaeology)

AVDLP: GP.53 (New development in and adjacent to Conservation Areas) GP.59 (Preservation of archaeological remains)

Emerging VALP: BE1 (Heritage assets) (*Moderate weight*)

Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

5.39 The application site does not fall within or is it located near to a Conservation Area nor are there any listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets which would be affected by the proposed development. Furthermore due to the nature of proposed works, the Council's Archaeology Officer has advised that there is unlikely to be any significant harm to the archaeological significant of any assets and therefore it is considered not to be necessary to apply a condition to safeguard archaeological interest.

5.40 Overall, it is considered the proposed works would not result in any harm to the setting of a conservation area, nearby listed buildings or any archaeological assets. Consequently, there is no requirement to offset the impact of the proposals against any public benefit. Great weight has been applied to the consideration of this application and the impact it would have on any designated heritage assets. As such it is considered that the local authority has discharged their statutory duty to pay special regard and attention to the desirability of preserving the setting of nearby listed buildings and the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, as required by section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It has been concluded that the development would preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, the setting of nearby listed buildings and the archaeological interests of the area. In addition, it is considered no harm would be caused to the significance of these heritage assets, and as such the proposal accords with policy GP53 and GP59 of AVDLP, emerging policy BE1 of VALP and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

6.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment

6.1 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 (such as CIL if applicable), and,
- c) Any other material considerations

6.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision taking means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

6.3 There are relevant development plan policies that apply to this application. Those policies which are most important for determining this application are RA.4 and GP.35 are up to date and consistent with the NPPF. Consequently, the proposed development is considered to comply with the relevant policies within the Development Plan (AVDLP), its relevant emerging policies (VALP) and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole. There are no considerations that indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. It is recommended that the application be Approved subject to the conditions listed below in 8.1 of this report.

7.0 Working with the applicant / agent

7.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council 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.

7.2 The Council 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.

7.3 In this instance, pre-application was provided and the applicant was provided the opportunity to submit amendments to the scheme/address issues. The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 The Officer recommendation is that the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 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 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2) The materials to be used in the development shall be as indicated on the submitted application form.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to comply with policy GP35 and RA4 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, BE2 and NE4 of the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3) 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 and to comply with policies GP24 and RA4 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policies T5 and T6 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4) Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, 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:
 - Assessment of SuDS components as listed in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) and provide justification for exclusion if necessary
 - Demonstrate that water quality, ecological and amenity benefits have been considered
 - Water quality assessment demonstrating that the total pollution mitigation index equals or exceeds the pollution hazard index; priority should be given to above ground SuDS components
 - Existing and proposed discharge rates and volumes
 - Ground investigations including:
 - Infiltration in accordance with BRE365
 - Groundwater level monitoring over the winter period
 - Subject to infiltration being inviable, the applicant shall demonstrate that an alternative means of surface water disposal is practicable subject to the drainage hierarchy as outlined in paragraph 080 of the Planning Practice Guidance.
 - Full construction details of all SuDS 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 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.
- Flow depth
- Flow volume
- Flow direction

Reason: The reason for this pre-start condition is to ensure that a sustainable drainage strategy has been agreed prior to construction in accordance policy RA4 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policy I4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and Paragraph 163 of the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that there is a satisfactory solution to managing flood risk.

- 5) Prior to the commencement of the use as a golf driving range/practice area hereby permitted a whole-life maintenance plan for the site must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall set out how and when to maintain the full drainage system (e.g. a maintenance schedule for each drainage/SuDS component), with details of who is to be responsible for carrying out the maintenance. The plan shall also include as as-built drawings and/or photographic evidence of the drainage scheme carried out by a suitably qualified person. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The reason for this prior to use condition is to ensure that arrangements have been arranged and agreed for the long term maintenance of the drainage system as required under Paragraph 165 of the National Planning Policy Framework in accordance policy RA4 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policy I4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

- 6) No other part of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the access has been modified to include: 1) an additional, suitably located passing bay which widens the access to 4.8m between the turning for Hounslow Hall and the commencement of the bridleway; and 2) surfacing of the existing loose-stone surfaced passing bay with bitumen; and the aforementioned shall be in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To minimise danger and inconvenience to bridle way users to accord with policy GP84 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policy C4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7) The external lighting hereby permitted shall not be used after 21:00 hours nor before 15:00 on any day.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and biodiversity in accordance with policy GP35 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policies BE2, NE1 and NE4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8) Prior to the installation of any external lighting, a lighting strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination.
- identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for wildlife and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging; and
- show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall not thereafter be altered without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority other than for routine maintenance which does not change its details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and biodiversity in accordance with policies GP8 and GP35 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policies BE2, BE3, NE1 and NE4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The content of the LEMP shall include the measures outlined within the agreed Ecological Design Strategy (ARK Environmental, June 2020 and the following:

- Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- Aims and objectives of management.
- Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- Prescriptions for management actions.
- Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan. Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out

(where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of improving the biodiversity of Aylesbury Vale and to accord with policy NE1 of the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 10) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no fences, gates, walls or any other enclosure/structure shall be erected within the application, the subject of this permission, without permission being sought from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and biodiversity in accordance with policy GP35 of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan, emerging policies BE2, NE1 and NE4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.

Appendix A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Appendix B: Site Location plan

APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations

Councillor Comments

Cllr Scott Raven: “Due to local concerns, both from Mursley and Drayton Parslow Parish Councils, regarding traffic and parking around the site, I believe that if being recommended for approval, the application would benefit from being brought before planning committee”.

Parish/Town Council Comments

Mursley Parish Council: “Objects to this application. The application is not up to standard. The current iteration has no proper assessment on:

- Traffic
- Ecology
- Environment (the increased lighting needs to be assessed as it has an accumulative effect in the community).
- Heritage and the proposed development’s potential impact on any heritage”.

Newton Longville Parish Council: Raised some technical questions however no formal comments were received.

Consultation Responses

Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board: The site falls outside the Boards district, in this instance the Board raised no comments.

Ecology: Raised no objection subject to conditions securing a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and a lighting design strategy. In addition to a condition restricting the use of lights.

Strategic Officer: Raised no objection subject to condition securing an additional passing bay and the surfacing of the existing loose-stone surface passing bay.

Landscape: At present this proposal is not one that could be supported from the landscape perspective. Further information is therefore needed before a recommendation can be made. In particular, further information on lighting would be helpful, accompanied by a computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility assessment to supplement the information provided in the Visual Impact Assessment. Will ball stop fencing be provided, since the driving range ground levels fall away from the booths, and what will the remainder of the field be used for?

- In daylight hours there would be a local change in character from rural field to a more manicured suburban character which would be apparent in views from the nearby public right of way, but after dark the additional lighting, added to existing security lighting would have the effect of urbanising a wider area of the local countryside.
- The proposed development would not have an irreversible impact on agricultural land although at least part of the field would be taken out of cultivation for the foreseeable future, and apart from the lighting/floodlighting, the features as described would have relatively little wider visual impact as they are sited near a group of existing buildings.

- There is concern that if the application were to be approved there could be future additional landscape impact in the form of extra floodlighting: ball stop fencing which is usually required and can be quite high; targets, signage and posts; paths; additional booths, car parking, storage and other facilities if the enterprise is successful, etc.
- The heavy clay soil does not seem ideal for the proposed use and may require drainage and other modification.

Environmental Health: Raised no comments

Highways: Raised no objections subject to a parking condition.

Archaeology: Raised no objection to the proposed development and do not consider it necessary to apply a condition to safeguard archaeological interest.

Natural England: Raised no comments

Environment Agency: This planning application is for development the Environment Agency do not wish to be consulted on.

SUDs: Raised no objection subject to conditions securing a surface water drainage scheme and whole-life maintenance plan.

Representations

63 comments have been received supporting the proposal:

- Leisure facility would be a great asset for the immediate catchment area given the large housing developments that have sprung up over the last few years
- Greatly enhance and provide a further reasons for visitors from further afield to visit the Cowpasture Farm, Experience the Country Ltd as a destination in a great location
- There are too many golf facilities being taken for housing
- Support it whole heartedly
- The loss of Wavendon has greatly reduced accessibility to such facilities and therefore it is welcomed and support any new establishment.
- Golf needs to encourage new participants and this is a great way to promote the sport and develop local business.
- It would be a good leisure amenity and practice facility for local golfers and people wishing to learn the game.
- At present there are too many leisure and golf facilities closing. This will help redress the balance.
- Depending where you reside there are limited opportunities for golfing practice enjoyed at the range.

- Many local members courses do not have their own ranges or the land enabling facilities so it's a useful extension.
- It provides interest and entry points for families to play golf and get conversant with the game.
- Golf is an expensive sport and driving ranges offer a viable option to enjoy the pastime.
- A very good leisure facility for all.
- It will be beneficial to the Community and reaches all ages and physical capabilities
- The recent closures of golf related facilities has led to overcrowding, unacceptable queuing times and the need to travel longer distances.
- This planned facility would offer local residents the opportunity to practice their game without having to travel long distances.
- There are reduced places to practice and have high quality lessons from a leading PGA professional.
- Milton Keynes and Aylesbury has a growing population and leisure facilities which are available regardless of weather conditions are growing in importance.
- Fully support the need for this facility
- Having a dedicated range and teaching facility would add value for the local golf community.
- This application is by an experienced golf professional, will offer much needed golf teaching and practice facility. The Instructor (Andrew Rouse – down as agent on the file) is an excellent teacher who can inspire the next generation of golfers.
- It is especially important to have a facility that allows greater use during adverse weather conditions i.e. faces North. The location of the new range would give a really good simulation of weather conditions (wind) which can challenge a golfers skill.
- As local residents we need as much social interaction as possible, it will help the local economy and give many people the chance to learn something new and keep fit.
- Supportive of all new sports centres opening as this is something a lot of kids and young adults can go to and participate in health sport related activities.
- It's a unique opportunity to attract all ages to a sports activity that our community lacks at the moment.
- The Council should support & encourage people who want to start their own business in the area.
- Due to the loss of Wavendon golf academy, Kingfisher golf and the proposed plans for Windmill golf centre, golf academies/ driving ranges are becoming very limited within our region.

- Difficult to see how something like this would not be a positive move for that area of the city bringing custom to the area that other businesses would benefit from.
- At a time when NHS bosses are crying out for people to live healthier lifestyles, it seems sensible to provide facilities to encourage participation in sport wherever possible.
- This would be an excellent idea and serve to encourage people of all ages to take up a sport that contributes to our health, competitive spirit and emotional and mental well being.
- Refreshing considering somebody is trying to build a sporting facility rather than tear one down.
- A project like this would offer employment. The Council should be encouraging new business in the area.
- The proposed location would have a very small environmental footprint.
- The proposed site is within an area currently used for other country sports and will be sited such that any noise or pollution from the lights will have no affect on local residents.
- The site appears to be ideal, it will have north facing bays so will not have any wind, rain or facing into the sun issues.
- Ever increasing demand due to the growth of Milton Keynes and Aylesbury
- No reason to reject this application
- Desperately needed recreation

2 comments have been received objecting to the proposal:

- There is no person with the name Mr Valerie Wood who lives or has permission to make any application called Mr Valerie Wood
- There is a legal discrimination issue involved No.4 Cowpasture Farm pending legal resolve
- The amount of additional daily traffic would cause a high amount of daily distribution to the main road leading to the Cowpasture estate and the flow of traffic in and out of the estate
- The main road is a well used road with high amounts of traffic usage at peak times, not well lit in the winter periods and would pose an issue with the probability of regular traffic blocks on the main road and a much higher probability of accidents taking place and the entrance to the Cowpasture estate is on a sharp bend, with bad sight and vision of oncoming drivers which again would cause a high risk of road traffic accidents and traffic blocks.
- The additional daily traffic reaching levels of over 100 cars in and out of the Cowpasture estate on a daily basis.

- There is no inclusion on the online application platform for this application that accounts for the poor electrical installation to the property estate and the electrical usage on the farm for 'Fire Risk' as no current electrical installation checks have been carried out on the estate. The last time the Aylesbury council attempted to check the electric wiring installation and usage, the Aylesbury Council EHO Officers were refused access by Mr and Mrs Wood to the estate to complete the checks and as such there is still a high fire risk on the estate.
- There may additional objections but as the wrong persons name has used to make the application as advertised, the public have not been given the correct information for the objections to be made.

