

## **Erection of new dwelling for agricultural worker**

Challen's Chick Farm Marsh Lane Taplow Buckinghamshire SL6 0DE

Ref. No: PL/20/3519/FA | Validated: Tue 03 Nov 2020

Taplow Parish Council makes the following comments on this application.

Our position is that this application should be refused.

When purchased by the current owner the site in question was a grazing meadow in the Metropolitan Green Belt, not part of any working farm.

The applicant installed a small number of portable sheds for free range egg laying hens, for which he was advised he did not need planning permission, although the council reserved the right to reassess in the future. Since that original development he has continued to expand the operation and it is extremely difficult to view these newer buildings as portable - see attached photo – but no planning application has been made in respect of them. The scale of this operation is clearly affecting the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and as such the operation must be re-assessed before any other applications can be considered.

The present application for permanent accommodation is based entirely on the scale of operations that the applicant wishes to undertake on this Green Belt field for which he has no planning approvals. The council correctly refused an earlier application for a quail barn and it is significant that that application made no mention of the requirement for residential accommodation although it could be highly relevant. We are strongly supportive of the council's refusal and are writing to the appeal inspector on this matter.

It may well be true that an industrial scale chicken enterprise and a quail barn might need on-site residential accommodation but that is not a justification. Residential development in the Green Belt is by definition harmful, so the only consideration is whether any exceptional circumstances apply to outweigh the harm.

We contend that a justification based on the business scale of the existing operation is incorrect. If a single combined application was made for a large scale egg producing unit, a quail barn and an on-site residence for an undeveloped Green Belt meadow, it would be refused. To permit the accommodation because the owner is already operating a partial business is not a relevant consideration. To approve a residence in a Green Belt meadow carrying no other planning approvals would be a travesty of protection of the Green Belt. As a Green Belt site the owner needs to restrict operations to a level compatible with its Green Belt status. We do not see any Exceptional Circumstances.

If the application for accommodation is granted in this case it lays out a path by which any part of the Green Belt can be subverted to industrial scale operations with housing. Permitting this by creeping stages would be a failure of the council's responsibility to the protection of the Green Belt and to its citizens.

The application should be refused, the three year approval for temporary accommodation should not be renewed and the site should be re-assessed against the relevant planning criteria, with operations limited to comply.