

The Environmental Health Service would wish to object to this application on the grounds of unacceptable impacts from noise, and potentially odour and insect infestation arising from activities at Holms Farm. It is the view of the Service that these impacts have not been sufficiently addressed by the applicant. This view is reached due to the following:-

Given the location of the proposed development a visit was made to the area on 19th October 2022 by two officers. The visit was not prearranged, however the officers were permitted access to the farm and were advised that cattle and horses were due to the farm from summer grazing in the early part of November 2022. During the walk around it was noted that a generator was in operation and created audible noise. Additionally, poultry such as ducks and geese were present in a fenced enclosure at the back of the farm (in close proximity to the development boundary).

5. A response was submitted to the Planning service on 28th October 2022 indicating that assessments carried out in support of the application "were not a true representation of the conditions in which the proposed development would be sited beside" i.e. the assessments were not carried out at a time of year when livestock would be present on the farm. This response also indicated that a number of small businesses were operating from the farm buildings (a Certificate of Lawfulness for Class 5 Industrial Use in Building 9 within Holms Farm was approved on 5th June 2020) and that noise was audible from a generator and poultry present at the farm. Officers also noted the presence of a large midden in close proximity to the development site though no odour was present at the time of the visit.

6. A further visit to the farm was carried out on 7th November 2022 by two officers, however as this was not a pre-arranged visit no access to the farm area was gained. During the visit it was noted that horses were present in a shed and cattle noises were audible. A third visit was carried out on 22nd November 2022. This was pre-arranged with the Mr Smith via email. On this occasion two tractors were on site and these were generating a significant level of noise. Livestock (ten adult cattle, four calves and nine horses) were also present, however officers did not witness significant noise from livestock. The weather conditions at the time of the visit were dry and sunny with no strong winds and no odour was present.

7. In order to best inform the Committee a further visit was carried out yesterday, 12th January 2023. This visit was pre-arranged by officers calling the farmer whilst they were en route to the premises. At this time twelve pedigree Shetland cattle were on site (four of which were in calf) nine horses were housed in the shed nearest to the development site, and a number of ducks were contained within a netted structure at the southern end of the farm. At the time of the visit loud machinery noise was evident from two items of plant, a tractor and a bale shifter. There was also some noise from the cattle which were contained in a pen at the northernmost part of the farm but in close proximity to the development site. There was a strong odour evident from manure in the midden despite the day being very windy.

Also during the visit it was ascertained that at present the midden is holding approximately 1500 tons of manure, the farm has capacity for up to 170 head of cattle, and the underground slurry storage tank has capacity to hold up to one million litres of slurry.

It was also noted that the layout of the proposed site would impact on the pipeline taking domestic sewage and grey water to the septic tank, and thereafter also impact on the liquor percolation drainage from the tank – this drainage runs southward into a field drainage system which would be disrupted if construction work were to proceed.

8. It is also noted that there is a proposal to erect an acoustic fence on the side of the development facing Irvine Road, and also to install trickle vents at properties most likely to be impacted by road traffic noise (this is referenced in the Noise Impact Assessment Report 156961937/rmg/R1 dated 13th September 2022 at paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5 (acoustic fence) and 8.7 (trickle vents)). This does not address the potential for noise impacts from Holms Farm. It is, however, acknowledged that there is a proposal to erect a 3m high acoustic fence to reduce noise impacts on those plots most likely to be impacted by noise from the farm, however as the Noise Impact Assessment report indicates at Paragraph 8.8 it was not possible to conduct a Noise Impact Assessment of noise from the farm due to inactivity at the time of the noise survey being conducted. Therefore it cannot be determined with any accuracy what the noise impacts on affected properties will be during the most active months at the farm, nor how effective this barrier will be in reducing impacts to an acceptable level, or to indicate what if any other mitigation measures will be required in addition to the fence. Therefore this again does not accurately reflect potential circumstances at the development site at those times of year when activity at the farm is likely to be at its height. Additionally, the land south of the development site is grazing land in other ownership which could potentially contribute to noise and odour impacts. It should also be noted that the proposal to create a three metre wide planted barrier at the eastmost part of the site at plots 37-39 will prevent access to a shed structure for maintenance purposes.

In conclusion, taking into account the above, it remains the position of the Environmental Health Service that as the farm is in operation and has sufficient buildings to enable it to continue to do so we would wish to maintain our objection to the proposal until such times as the applicant can address the Service's concerns.