

# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

# LAND EAST OF CASTLELAW, WEST TARF, WEST LINTON, EH46 7AA

# ERECTION OF DWELLING, HOME WORKSHOP/GARAGE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS RELATED TO EXISTING & NEW RURAL ENTERPRISE



**APPLICANT: ERLEND AND KAREN MILNE** 

**NOVEMBER 2019** 



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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement, prepared by Ferguson Planning, is submitted to Scottish Borders Council on behalf of the Applicants, Erlend and Karen Milne, for planning permission in principle for the development of a single dwelling and rural business workshop on land to the east of the dwelling known as 'Castlelaw' at West Tarf. The related equine business to which this relates will also manage and take stewardship of the existing riding track at West Tarf.
- 1.2 While there is considered a grouping of existing residential dwellings nearby this application seeks to come forward with a rural business tie to the land in question should it be deemed necessary. It forms part of servicing the existing and expanding parts of this rural enterprise and that requires to be local to this area as a result.
- 1.3 The application is located in a position that relates well to neighbouring residential dwellings and the existing business enterprise. It was concluded by a previous appeal (18/0037/RREF) that a mainstream dwelling under the auspices of LDP HD2 (A) Rural Building Group came close but did not comply.
- 1.4 However, understanding was expressed by members of the Local Review Body (LRB) with regard to the applicant's need and desire to establish a home for his rural business enterprise. The Decision Notice, related to the local review, is quoted below:

As they did not consider a building group to be present, the Review Body then considered whether there was any substantiated economic need for a dwellinghouse to be positioned on the site. They were aware of the lack of employment space and buildings in the West Linton area and noted that, although the applicants did not intend their leather and saddlery business to be the justification for their application nor anything other than an ancillary use, Members were still required to give the matter consideration under the relevant Policy. They concluded, however, that there was insufficient business information to justify the need for a house at this particular site.

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- 1.5 Circumstance has moved on, as has the applicant's business, which would now also include the stewardship of the local West Tarf riding track should planning be achieved. There is no other suitable location within West Linton for the equine workshop and for reasons explained within this statement and business plan the combined operations are best suited to the site proposed.
- 1.6 Advice expressed by the Local Review Body has been taken into consideration. The Lands in question have been secured and the applicant is happy for all aspects to be tied to the rural business in question.
- 1.7 The applicant has also now undertaken a detailed and fully costed business plan which supports the rural businesses in question and to which the proposed house would be tied. The business plan has been further supported by references and legal documentation to provide further comfort on the validity of that proposed.
- 1.8 This application is advanced primarily under the auspices of supporting Local Development Plan Policies: HD 2 (F) 'Housing in the Countryside Economic Requirement' and ED 7 'Business, Tourism and Leisure in the Countryside'.
- 1.9 The remainder of this statement provides greater context to the proposal and rural enterprise, the relevant planning policy and thereafter, the reasoned justification as to why it is considered that the application should be approved.





### 2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 A Location Plan and Indicative Site Layout Plan, showing the proposed dwelling, workshop, riding track and the relationship of the plot to the grouping of nearby houses are included within this submission.
- The subject site comprises the corner of a field next to the property 'Castlelaw'. The application site extends to c. 2,105 sqm (0.52 acre). The land is fairly level.
- 2.3 Access to the plot is obtained from the existing tarmac-surfaced access which extends southwards from the A702. The road is currently used to serve the two dwellings to the west of the plot and the equestrian sheds that belong to West Tarf House which lie to the west of the road. West Tarf House and Westlands Lodge take access from the junction further west on the A702.

### **Business Plan**

- 2.4 A comprehensive Business Plan has been lodged (under private cover) in support of this application. This is further supported by supporting business and legal references. It also contains a number of public/organisations supporting references.
- 2.5 Erlend Milne has a proven track record of running two successful and profitable rural businesses. The Saddle Specialist focuses on providing modern and innovative saddlery solutions for horse owners. Making Good Products is a specialist workshop that designs and creates bespoke leather-work and products.
- 2.6 The opportunity to build a suitable home workshop at West Tarf provides a unique opportunity that will enable the Applicant to grow his current businesses and develop new opportunities by utilising the current equestrian facilities and riding track at West Tarf. Erlend has been unable to find suitable premises for his workshop with riding facilities in the West Linton locality as there are no suitable units for rent in the surrounding area.





- 2.7 The Business Plan demonstrates how the proposal to relocate Erlend's workshop and business to West Tarf meets the rural development requirements. The nature of the business activities and plans described make evident that living on site is essential for animal care, maintenance and security.
- 2.8 In addition to the business benefits, this plan demonstrates the wider associated benefits of Erlend and Karen Milne taking on the stewardship of the riding track at West Tarf.
- 2.9 They will continue to support activities in light of the current owners' plans to retire.

  Events at the track attract visitors to the area and provide custom for other local businesses such as catering, accommodation and maintenance services. The business plan outlines the community and social benefits of the proposals such as securing ongoing access to this valuable facility for the equestrian community, and an intention to revive the Riding for the Disabled Group when the necessary resources are in place.
- 2.10 The proposals will lead to greater productivity and efficiency for current business activities, resulting in increased profit which will enable the creation of employment opportunities in the local area. Sales are anticipated to increase by 11% in both years 2 and 3 due to less travel time and increased sales from customers. Income is expected to rise over time with more events being organised using the track.
- 2.11 The gross profit margin is expected to rise from 53% in year 1 to 55% in year 2 and then again to 56% in year 3. The new site and home workshop will allow efficiencies to be made in purchasing of materials, more space to carry out multiple projects and through the ability to carry more stock. Profit before tax is expected to increase by 20% in year 2 and 17% in year 3.
- 2.12 The rural business plan has clearly demonstrated the commercial benefits of the proposal whilst retaining and enhancing the sense of place around West Tarf for the benefit of the applicants as well as the wider West Linton and equestrian communities.





### **Equestrian Facilities and Track at West Tarf**

- 2.13 The riding tracks at West Tarf are a unique equestrian facility for Scotland with the only other UK purpose-built oval track which meets international specifications for Icelandic horse competition situated in Dorset. Built in 2000, the track required substantial investment and will now ensure its use well into the future.
- 2.14 The track is currently regularly used for training and competitive events and is a valuable resource for the Icelandic equestrian community.
- 2.15 With the current owners' retirement, Erlend and Karen Milne have secured a long-term lease with right to buy, plus 2.18 hectares of grazing ground at West Tarf.
- 2.16 This creates an opportunity to utilise the riding tracks commercially for Erlend's current saddle-fitting business and grow an additional business running events, training and horse breeding.





### The Saddle Specialist

- 2.17 Erlend Milne has been self-employed in business for over 20 years, developing a modern, innovative saddlery business, *The Saddle Specialist*, and a design and product development company—*Making Good Products*. He currently works with other self-employed specialists and homeworkers across the Borders and Scotland.
- 2.18 Erlend's current workshop is based at the Midlothian Innovation Centre next to the Royal (Dick) Veterinary Campus near Roslin. Here all kinds of equestrian equipment are made, repaired, adjusted and maintained and leather and stitched products are made.
- 2.19 Erlend has sought to relocate his workshop closer to home over the past ten years without success due to the lack of suitable light industrial units within a reasonable distance of West Linton. The current accommodation leased is office-type units in need of refurbishment within Midlothian Innovation Centre, which has an uncertain future as has been purchased by a property developer and significant rental increases are anticipated.
- 2.20 The Saddle Specialist supplies, fits, maintain and repairs saddles for horse breeds of all ages and stages of development in their chosen discipline. Erlend has an extensive customer base and travels a large geographical area covering Scotland and Northern England.
- 2.21 Erlend currently spends a significant part of the working week driving to clients resulting in a loss of productive and profitable time. Greater productivity and efficiency could be realised if travel time was reduced and saddle fitting or client time is increased. In addition, he can only travel with a fraction of his stock at any time his total stock is around 150 saddles plus additional spares and equipment.
- 2.22 In recent years, clients have successfully been encouraged to travel to riding arenas locally that can be hired on an hourly basis. This means Erlend can offer an improved and efficient service.
- 2.23 Working closer to the home workshop and all his stock means he can turnaround customers and products in the same day (with the travelling model, the fitting and adjusting process can take up to 2 weeks).







### **Making Good Products**

- 2.24 Developed over the past 20 years Making Good Products utilises traditional leatherstitching skills to develop, design and produce a diverse range of hand-crafted products such as bagpipe cases to golf bags, bespoke furniture and household goods to protective riot gear.
- 2.25 The business requires a specialist range of equipment and hand tools, from the latest technology in sewing machines to leather cutting, pressing moulding and splitting equipment. Examples of products can be seen below and at www.makinggoodproducts.com/products
- 2.26 Making Good Products demonstrates craftsmanship and innovation at its best. On average, the business has 6 projects at any time and 12 contracts of regular, ongoing work.
- 2.27 It should be noted that no retail premises are on site at the workshop. Customers do not visit the premises; the home workshop is purely to manufacture by hand products which are delivered to clients.







2.28 Erlend currently spends approximately two days per week on Making Good Products with the remaining three days focused on the Saddle Specialist.





### **Proposed Development**

- 2.29 The below images are intended to show how the proposed plans to build a house and home workshop / garage at West Tarf do not adversely affect the landscape setting and the plans are in keeping with the overall location and housing density for the area. It again aids the context regarding the proximity of the existing riding track which again forms part of the overall business.
- 2.30 As supporting plans show, it is intended to enhance the site with appropriate landscaping and tree planting to blend in with the surrounding environment and nature of the location.
- 2.31 The images below shows the area looking southwards from above the A702; West Tarf House and Westlands Lodge are in the foreground and the proposed new house and home workshop site beside the Castlelaw housing group.









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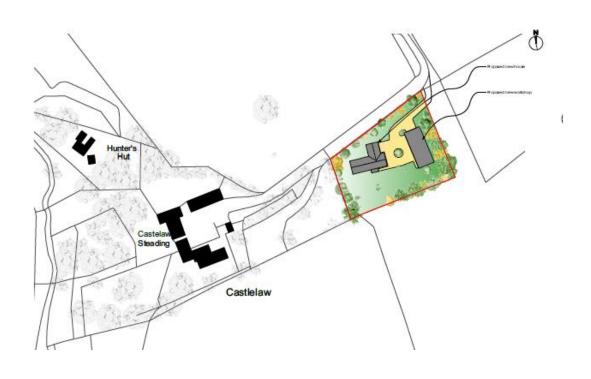
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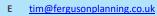


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- 2.32 The indicative site plan below again provides the general arrangement of the residential dwelling and home workshop/garage. The access would be achieved from the existing road which is shared with the neighbouring dwellings. The intention again is to work within the field boundary that currently exists and ensure further containment by significant boundary landscaping.
- 2.33 It is proposed that the new house would be served by private foul and surface water drainage arrangements and mains water supply. All design and infrastructure detail would be sought by way of an appended condition. It is intended that all materials for the workshop and dwelling would be of the highest quality and would respect the rural environment in which it is set. Renewable technologies such as roof top solar and air source heat pumps again would be pursued.



### 3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND ASSESSMENT

3.1 Policy relevant to this proposal is contained within Scottish Planning Policy and the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016).

### **SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY (SPP) 2014**

- 3.2 SPP encourages rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses, whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality. SPP provides that, where appropriate, the construction of single houses outwith settlements should be supported provided such are well sited and designed to fit with local landscape character, taking account of landscape protection and other plan policies.
- 3.3 A key focus for SPP is the creation of well-designed, sustainable places and supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration. SPP creates a presumption in favor of development that contributes to sustainable development. Policies and decisions will be guided by key principles, including:
  - supporting good design and the six qualities of successful places;
  - making efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure;
  - supporting climate change mitigation and adaption;
  - having regard to the principles of sustainable land use;
  - protecting, enhancing and promoting access to cultural and natural heritage;
  - reducing waste, facilitating its management and promoting resource recovery;
     and
  - avoiding over-development, protecting the amenity of new and existing development and considering the implications of development for water, air and soil quality





### SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016

- 3.4 Key policies include:
  - HD2 (F) Housing in the Countryside
  - ED7 Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside
  - HD3 Protection of Residential Amenity.

### **Housing in the Countryside Policy**

- 3.5 While the subject site does sit adjacent to a number of residential dwellings and thus not isolated in the rural landscape the proposal is advanced primarily under the auspices of **Policy HD 2 part 'F'**.
- 3.6 The extensive Business Plan and supporting documentation clearly sets out the economic requirement and justification of the proposal. It seeks to accommodate a multi-faceted equine related rural business. One that has also included taking stewardship of the nearby riding track facility. Again, a review of West Linton has shown no suitable, viable or available sites to accommodate that proposed. Beyond that, this proposal has a specific locational requirement as explained in this planning statement as well as the business plan.
- 3.7 Planning policy outlines that housing with a location essential for a rural business may be acceptable. It denotes its approval when directly related to an operational requirement to enterprises appropriate to the countryside. Particularly when it is for a worker employed in the business and for that person to be on site to ensure an efficient operation.
- 3.8 The Business Plan has explained in great detail that necessity and relationship and need for the specific location. Be that in relation to the saddle fitting business, horse care or being on hand with regard to overseeing the operation and security of the riding track.
- 3.9 Supplementary Guidance 'New Housing in the Borders Countryside' provides additional detail in support of the above policy, setting out requirements where a new house is accepted.





- While the associated detail would be reserved by conditions. The applicant seeks to 3.10 ensure that the scale and siting of the dwelling and home workshop/garage would reflect and respect the character and amenity of the locality and the houses that neighbor it. It seeks to provide and relate to the existing "sense of place".
- 3.11 The proposal occupies a similar plot size to adjacent properties, extending no further south into the agricultural land. Indeed, the proposal offers a 'rounding off' of the grouping at the south eastern edge and includes landscaping as shown on the indicative site plan.
- 3.12 Policy HD 3 Protection of Residential Amenity requires development to have no significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing or proposed houses. The scale, form and type of development proposed must fit with the residential area and it should not have unacceptable effects in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or sunlight. There should also be no unacceptable impact on visual amenity more generally.
- 3.13 The proposed layout and positioning will ensure that all the requirements of this policy can be met in full. There is a reasonable degree of separation between the properties and the home workshop/garage does not involve the use of any other noisy equipment. The scale and exact positioning of the house, together with design and materials use can be controlled by the Planning Authority at the next stage in the planning process.
- 3.14 There is a cross-relationship with this proposal given it is for both residential and rural business purposes. As such, it is important to highlight and comply with guidance contained within Policy ED 7 Business, Tourism and Leisure in the Countryside.
- 3.15 The proposal in fact relates to all three of the aspects covered within this policy. The business directly relates to the rural and equine business and leisure/tourism industries as explained. It also requires the appropriate space in which to operate as well as being close the riding track to oversee that particular operation.



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- 3.16 As such, the proposal is locational specific to this locale and one which would accommodate an existing rural business and enable it to further grow and diversify. It will also bring many local knock on economic benefits and secure a much needed equine related service. There are three closely and inter-related rural business uses being proposed and one where the applicant and his family will be the occupier and operator.
- 3.17 A clear and justifiable business case has been provided and to which the applicant would be more than happy to present or answer any related queries should that be deemed necessary. The proposal fully complies with the ethos of LDP Policy ED 7.

### **Other Matters**

### **Access**

- 3.18 The ability to achieve safe and satisfactory access is a requirement of the creation of any new housing in the countryside. A vehicular access is required to have visibility splays appropriate to the location and to the speed of traffic on the adjoining road system.
- 3.19 The proposal seeks to use existing access with regard to the proposal and to which has been previously consulted upon with both the Council's roads department and Transport Scotland. Neither of which have reported any objection. Again, access to the riding track already exists via Bogsbank Road and which would continue to be the case.

### **Flooding**

3.20 Review of the web-based SEPA indicative flood maps indicate that the site lies out with the area assessed as having high, medium or low flood risk.

### Servicing

3.21 The plot will be serviced by private foul and surface water drainage arrangements with detail to be provided at the next stage in the planning process. Mains water is understood to be available.

### Landscaping

3.22 It is envisaged that robust areas of landscaping would be provided to give a strong edge to the south eastern part of the building group. The detailed landscaping plan, with species mix and design, will be presented at the next stage of the planning process. The indicative site plan, however, shows possible siting of tree planting/landscaping.





### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Ferguson Planning has been appointed by Erlend and Karen Milne (the Applicants) to submit an application for planning permission in principle for the development of a single dwelling together with rural business workshop/garage on land which lies at the south east of the building group and adjacent to properties at Castlelaw.
- 4.2 The development proposals are situated within the corner of a field which is already clearly fenced off and which lies adjacent to existing dwellings. The site measures 2,115 sqm (0.52 acres) and shares a common 'sense of place' with those houses and the creation of defensible landscape boundaries are proposed.
- 4.3 The proposal would comply with Housing in the Countryside policy. It again would comply with policy requirements regarding Residential Amenity.
- 4.4 Access to the plot can be achieved by way of the existing tarmac-surfaced access road which runs from the A702 in a southwards direction. The Applicant consulted with Transport Scotland in July 2018 and they confirmed that they do not have an objection to a single dwelling and garage/home workshop. The current proposal has not changed from that previously consulted upon regarding access.
- 4.5 The site lies outwith the area shown on SEPA's flood risk maps as having any flood risk. Satisfactory private drainage arrangements can be achieved, subject to further details to be provided at the next stage in the planning process.
- 4.6 A comprehensive and fully costed business plan has been provided with the application and which clearly outlines the rural benefits associated with this rural enterprise together with the locality requirements.
- 4.7 The Applicant's would reside and operate the rural business and something they have been seeking to do in the area for over ten years. The various components of this enterprise will support the local equine community and ensure the existing and new businesses last well into the future.





4.8 The Planning Authority is respectfully requested to approve this application which will provide for a dwellinghouse and home-working workshop/garage on land which shares a sense of place at West Tarf and which will allow them to provide security and stewardship to the existing riding track.

