

Design & Access Planning Statement

Soho Grange Stud, Box, SN13 8AN.



AGM 2025 039

Design & Access and Planning Statement

The proposed erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn, the erection of an outdoor riding manège, the siting of a temporary rural worker's dwelling for the period of 3-years, in association with the breeding of horses and the erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer.

Soho Grange Stud, Ashley Lane, Box, Wiltshire, SN13 8AN.



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Documents Submitted Alongside This Statement:

Document	Produced By
2025 039-01_P03_Site Location Plan	AGM Planning Consultants Ltd
2025 039-02_P03_Existing Block Plan	
2025 039-03_P04_Proposed Block Plan	
2025 039-04_P03_Existing Site Plan	
2025 039-05_P04_Proposed Site Plan	
2025 039-06_P02_Existing Barn	
2025 039-07_P04_Proposed Barn	
2025 039-08_P02_Proposed Log Cabin	
2025 039-09_P02_Proposed Manege	
2025 039-10_P02_Proposed Muck Heap	
Alternative Accommodation Assessment	
Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment	
SEB3154_01 Preliminary Ecology Appraisal - Soho Grange Stud	Seasons Ecology Ltd
SEB3154_01a Biodiversity Net Gain Statement - Soho Grange Stud	
SEB3154_01a Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool - Soho Grange Stud	
SEB3154_01a v2 Baseline BNG Habitat Plan - Soho Grange Stud	

SEB3154_01a v2 Post-development BNG Habitat Plan - Soho Grange Stud	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Arena Global Management Limited (AGM Ltd) is an independent and professional town planning consultancy in the Bath region, providing specialist planning services in equestrian and rural planning throughout the country. AGM Ltd has prepared this Design & Access and Planning Statement on behalf of the applicant, Soho Grange Stud.
- 1.1.2 This Design & Access and Planning Statement forms part of a Full-Application to support the erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn, the erection of an outdoor riding manège, the siting of a temporary rural worker's dwelling for the period of 3-years, in association with the breeding of horses and the erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer on land at Soho Grange Stud, Box.
- 1.1.3 The full site address is as follows:
- Soho Grange Stud, Ashley Lane, Box, Wiltshire, SN13 8AN.**
- 1.1.4 The proposed development is set to consist of the following:
- The erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn.
 - The erection of an outdoor riding manège.
 - The siting of a temporary log cabin for an essential rural worker.
 - The erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer.
 - Associated landscaping and BNG improvements.
- 1.1.5 This Statement is set out in the Chapters laid out in the Table of Contents.
- 1.1.6 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying documentation submitted alongside this Application. The list of documents associated with this Application can be found within Page ii.
- 1.1.7 Both Local and National Planning Policy has been carefully considered in developing the Proposal and it is understood that the Proposed Development is in accordance with all relevant planning policy.
- 1.1.8 Therefore, the development proposals should be found permissible by the Local Planning Authority and therefore granted consent without delay.

2. SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The application site measures approximately 0.55 Hectares in size and is located within the village of Box, Wiltshire. Both access and egress to the site is served via an existing arrangement off of Ashley Lane which is speed restricted to the National Speed Limit of 60-mph. However, this reduces down to 30-mph when travelling north-east, approximately 20m from the existing access. Therefore, true speeds along this stretch of the road carriageway are expected to be lower. The site is in existing equestrian use and comprises of associated equine paraphernalia and infrastructure including an existing equestrian barn (with 6 no. stables) as well as 2 no. field shelters and associated paddocks.

2.1.2 **Figure 1** demonstrates the application site within its local context.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan with indicative extent NTS (Google Earth, 2025)

2.2 Flood Risk

2.2.1 The application site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, which is afforded the lowest probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The site is also considered to be located within a 'Very low' risk of flooding from surface water.

2.2.2 Core Policy 67 of the adopted Core Strategy states that development in the District will follow a sequential approach to flood risk management, avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing development away from areas at highest risk in line with

Government policy NPPF). In that respect, it is not considered that a full Flood Risk Assessment is required for the purposes of this application. However, a preliminary Assessment has been submitted alongside this application owing to the fact that the application's site boundary is over 0.50 Hectares.

2.3 Local and National Designations

2.3.1 The application site is understood to be located within the following local and national planning-based designations:

- Outside a defined Housing Development Boundary (HDB)
- Bristol & Bath Green Belt
- Cotswolds Natural Landscape (formerly AONB)

2.3.2 The implications of these designations on the proposed development will be discussed further within **Section 8** of this Statement.

2.4 Surrounding Development

2.4.1 Considering its rural setting, the application site is predominately surrounded by agricultural fields. However, residential development in this location is not uncommon, with the nearest dwelling being located approximately 95 metres north-east. Additional dwellings are set out along the road of Ashley Lane in a traditional linear / ribbon form.

2.4.2 As per Core Policy 11 of the adopted Core Strategy, Box is considered to be a 'Large Village' which is defined as being a settlement with a limited range of employment, services and facilities. This includes a convenience store, primary school, and recreation ground as well as a number of different local services and amenities to sustain daily life practices. The city of Bath is also located approximately 7km south-west of the site.

2.5 Planning History Summary

2.5.1 Wiltshire Council's online mapping service has been interrogated for previous planning applications on the land spanning a period of 'All Time' to the present day.

2.5.2 The following applications have been returned and are replicated below for ease:

Application	Description
N/13/01146/FUL	Temporary Agricultural Workers Dwelling, Erection of an Agricultural Building & Formation of Hardstanding (Revision of N/13/00225/FUL). June 2013. Decision: Refused.
14/09422/FUL	Change Of Use From Agricultural To Equestrian Use, Erection Of 2 Stables, storage building & 2 Mobile Field Shelters. (Part-Retrospective). February 2015. Decision: Approve with Conditions.
16/01382/FUL	Erection of American barn and associated works. June 2016. Decision: Approve with Conditions.

3. THE APPLICANT

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Soho Grange Stud is a small, private equestrian holding based in Ashley, Box.
- 3.1.2 The site has been in the ownership of Julieanne (Julie) Regnard and Zachary (Zach) Horn for over ten years, in which they have spent both time and money establishing themselves within the locality. Julie is a life-long equestrian trainer and breeder and has built strong and enduring links within the wider equine community. Her active participation on both the national and international show jumping and dressage circuits has further enhanced her reputation and network. With a considerable depth of knowledge and practical experience in breeding, producing, and competing, Julie has developed a well-rounded expertise that underpins the Stud's operations both now and in the future. Zach provides essential operational support to the Stud, taking responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the site's equestrian infrastructure and land.
- 3.1.3 Up to now, the yard has been used solely for private purposes. However, Soho Grange Stud has been steadily building its reputation by breeding and producing quality sport horses for sale off-site at Kington Langley Stud (in Chippenham). This arrangement, however, has required Julie and Zach to rely on external facilities and absorb both rising livery and covering costs which are becoming increasingly unsustainable. As a result, they now feel as though they are in a position to consolidate the operation and bring both the breeding and foaling arc to their own stud thus allowing them to invest directly in the growth of their business and firmly establish themselves as one of the leading equine breeders and producers in the South West.
- 3.1.4 Horse sales will be carried out on site. However, it should be made known and explicitly clear that the site will remain strictly in private use.

3.2 Justification for the Development

- 3.2.1 At present, they own a total of four horses for the purposes of breeding - all of which are broodmares (namely, three sport horses and one sport pony) who reside on site either within the stables or existing field shelters. As mentioned previously, currently, the holding utilises the services of Kington Langley Stud for both the covering and foaling of its broodmares, paying an associated 'Stallion Stud' fee and Livery fee. They now wish to consolidate and bring the breeding and foaling operations to their own stud.
- 3.2.2 The stud also benefits from access to additional acreage and rents around a further 10 acres on a minimal Land Lease Agreement.
- 3.2.3 The Stud breeds three sport horses each year, however, they want to expand their breeding operation by buying - at least - three new, high-quality, broodmares over a three year period. By adding to their stock, the stud will be able to increase the number of sport horses bred per year and save on expensive foaling livery by switching to artificial insemination (AI) for Warmblood foals. For the time being, Thoroughbred broodmares will continue to be covered naturally via Kington Langley Stud; however, the stud hope to purchase their own stallion in the near future so that everything can eventually be achieved "in house" and on site.

- 3.2.4 Youngstock are to be backed by both Julie and Zach. This will all take place within the proposed new facilities at Soho Grange Stud. In order to expand the breeding programme and care for the number of horses it is proposed a temporary residential unit will be positioned on the land adjacent to the stables to be within sight and sound of the horses. Currently, both Julie and Zach live in a property in Whitchurch (Bristol) which is almost an hour away from the site.
- 3.2.5 With the on-site accommodation, all the mares will be able to be kept at the premises, together with the young horses and the horses in training. It has been proven that it is no longer as financially viable for them to keep broodmares at other studs or livery yards.
- 3.2.6 Once the mares and foals are on site they need to be monitored frequently to ensure the welfare of the horses are kept and that the probability of injury and loss of mares and foals are kept to an absolute minimum.
- 3.2.7 **Appendix A** of this document provides greater detail into the process of horse breeding and should be read in conjunction with this submission.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Proposal Summary

4.1.1 The proposed development is to consist of the following:

- The erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn.
- The erection of an outdoor riding manège.
- The siting of a temporary log cabin for an essential rural worker.
- The erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer.
- Associated landscaping and BNG improvements.

4.2 Extension to the Existing Equestrian Barn

4.2.1 It is proposed to extend the existing equestrian barn by 9m x 9.8m at the rear and 23m x 3.2m at the side. Such an extension would allow for the provision of a dedicated foaling box as well as an associated feed store. A dedicated foaling box provides a safe, clean, quiet, and comfortable environment for a mare to give birth, reducing stress for both mother and foal and allowing for safe observation and potential intervention. It should be noted by the Council that the proposed side extension will visually take on the appearance of a 'lean-to' extension, with the ridge sitting just below the eaves of the existing barn and thus appearing as a subservient structure.

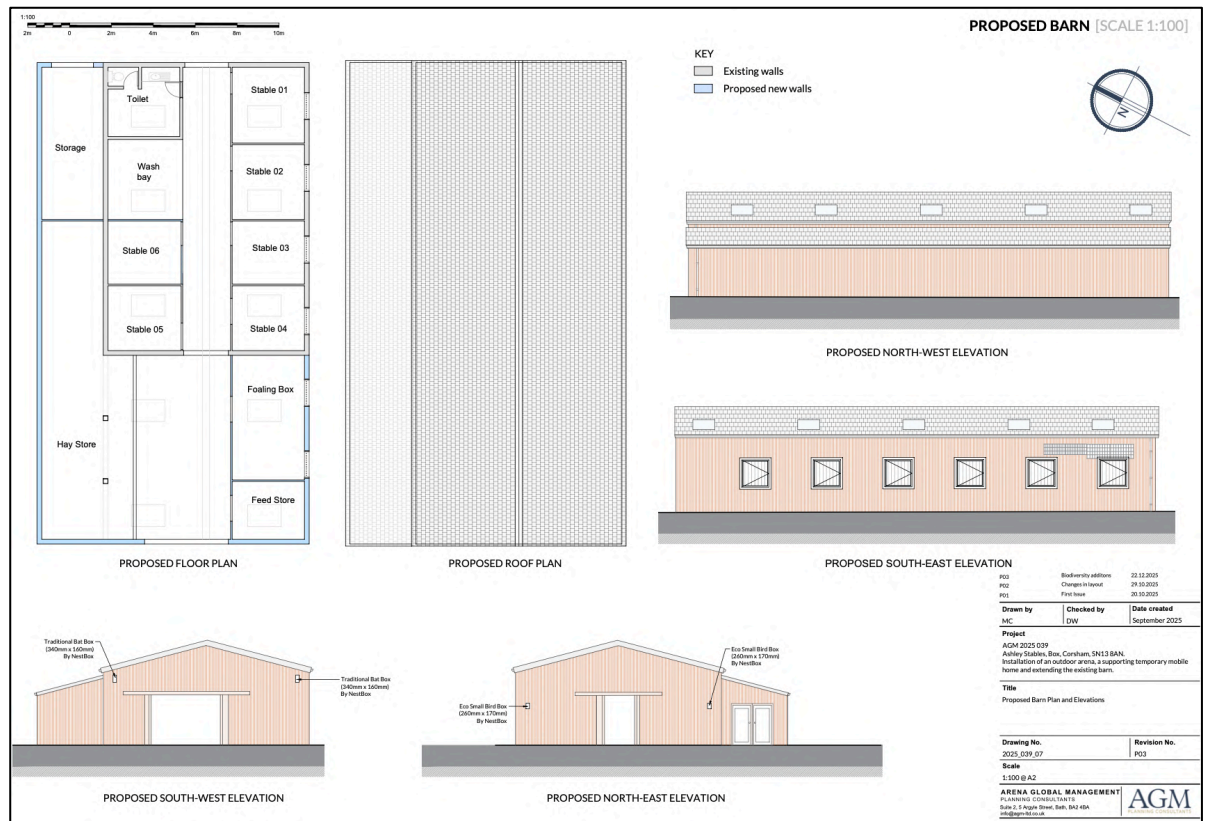
4.2.2 The inclusion of this side extension will also enable the provision of additional storage as well as a dedicated hay store – which is to be open-plan in nature as to allow for the most efficient use of storage space. The primary purpose of this hay store is to provide secure, weatherproof storage for hay. Proper storage is essential to maintain the nutritional quality of feed, prevent spoilage, and ensure a consistent supply of fodder throughout the year, particularly during the winter months when grazing is limited. The barn also helps to reduce wastage and improve efficiency by allowing hay to be stored in close proximity to the stabling area.

4.2.3 In addition, covered storage minimises the risk of fire and protects the surrounding landscape from the visual and environmental impact of exposed bales, which are currently having to be sited outside on the land itself.

4.2.4 Externally, the walls of the extension will be clad in timber boarding to match the existing finishes of the equestrian barn that is currently in situ on the land. Additionally, the roof will be finished with agri-steel cladding, similarly replicating the existing finishes of the barn.

4.2.5 The proposed materials are considered to sensitively respond to the ruralistic nature of the local vernacular. Once erected, the extended stabling barn will be viewed as agricultural in its appearance, seamlessly blending in amongst the local context.

4.2.6 **Figure 2** demonstrates both the proposed Floor Plan and Elevations.



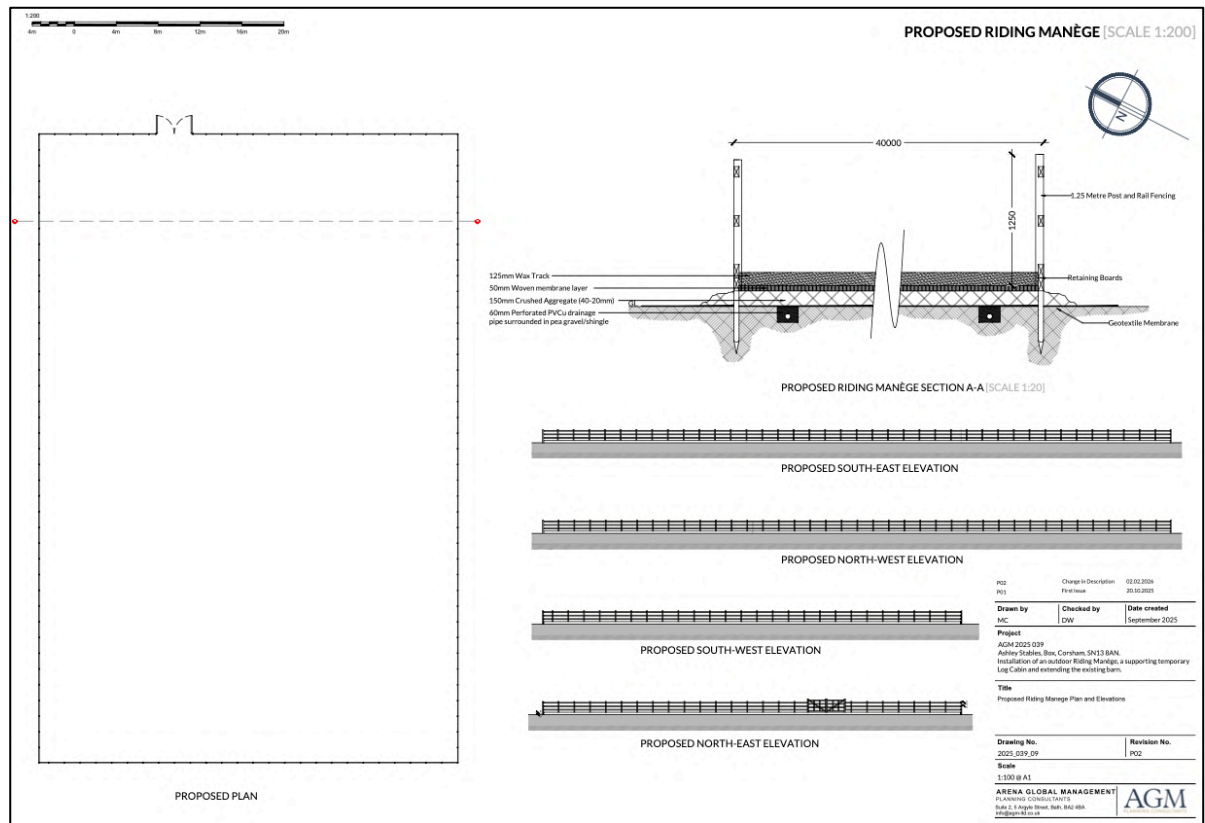


Figure 3: The proposed outdoor riding manège.

4.4 The Siting of a Temporary Log Cabin for an Essential Rural Worker

- 4.4.1 The proposed log cabin is to measure 15m x 6.8m in size and will allow for the provision of two bedrooms as well as an open-plan kitchen, living and dining room as well as a separate bathroom and study. The log cabin is considered to be more than appropriate to its need in delivering accommodation for both the rural worker and their family.
- 4.4.2 It should also be stressed that the log cabin would conform to the dimensions that are stated within The Caravan Sites Act 1968.
- 4.4.3 It is considered that the log cabin will be finished in a palette of materials that are sympathetic to its surrounding locality and wider land use. Furthermore, and given its temporary nature, the log cabin requires no foundations or ground engineering; it will simply be placed on sleepers to prevent any impact on the ground.
- 4.4.4 The proposed log cabin has been located in a position that is as close as feasibly possible to the stables. Thus allowing the applicant to appropriately monitor the horses and act as necessary in an emergency during the critical breeding and foaling period.
- 4.4.5 **Figure 4** demonstrates the proposed floor plan and elevations of the log cabin.

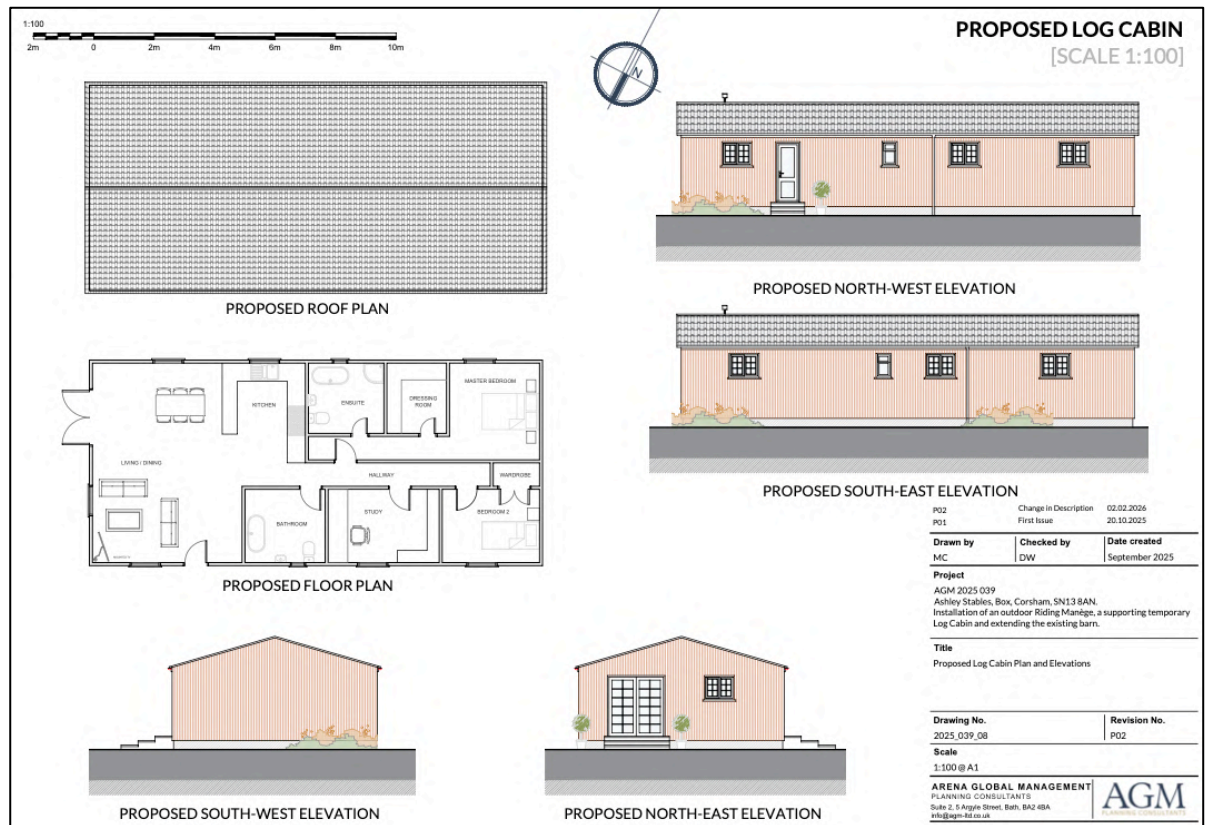


Figure 4: The proposed floor plan and elevations of the log cabin.

4.5 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 4.5.1 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (or BNG) is a mandatory requirement under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of + 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.
- 4.5.2 The proposed development is to provide the necessary Biodiversity Net Gain through the planting of 0.0835 Ha of Traditional Orchard to the south of the development as well as 0.0692 Ha of existing modified grassland which will be enhanced to achieve 'Other Neutral Grassland' in the north of the site.
- 4.5.3 This will result in a total net gain of **+10.18%** Habitat Units. These measures contribute to long-term ecological benefits, align with the Local Plan's green infrastructure and sustainability objectives, and offer additional benefits such as improved air quality through increased tree planting and helping with climate change mitigation.

5. THE SURROUNDING PROPERTY MARKET

- 5.1.1 A separate Alternative Accommodation Assessment has been put together and is submitted as part of this planning application. It collates property searches, from the mainstream online property tool of Rightmove, for the surrounding locality over the period of five weeks (17th of November 2025 to the 19th of December 2025).
- 5.1.2 A search radius of 1-mile (from the site's postcode) has been established as this would represent the absolute maximum distance the applicant could live away from the stud because of the critical breeding and foaling period. However, even this distance is still considered to be too far away and could have a detrimental impact on the stud.
- 5.1.3 Over the course of the five weeks, the average asking price for a property within 1-mile of the site was **£753,163 (Guide Price)**. Furthermore, a total of **0** properties were available to rent within the search parameters during this time.
- 5.1.4 Considering the figures set out within the submitted Business Plan and Accounts, it is therefore not considered that a property at the above price is economically feasible. This is particularly true at a time where interest rates are currently around 5%. Not only would such a property require an average deposit of £150,632 (20%), but the average monthly costs would also equate to £3,522.34. This is clearly not economically feasible.
- 5.1.5 Finally, as mentioned previously, it is absolutely necessary for the Stud Manager to be in close distal proximity to the horses and their stables during the breeding and rearing period. This is because horses are frequently susceptible to life-threatening illnesses such as colic and infection (equine herpes). Therefore, residing anywhere else within the SN13 postcode would not be considered acceptable and is likely to incur a detrimental impact to the management and operation of the Stud.

6. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

6.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy

6.1.1 The following policies have been taken from the Wiltshire Core Strategy document (adopted January 2015) and are to be considered to be relevant to the determination of this Full planning application:

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 11: Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area
- Core Policy 45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Need
- Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

6.1.2 **Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy** – this policy identifies the settlements where sustainable development will take place to improve the lives of all those who live and work in Wiltshire. Wiltshire's Principal Settlements are strategically important centres and the primary focus for development. This will safeguard and enhance their strategic roles as employment and service centres; they will provide significant levels of jobs and homes, together with supporting community facilities and infrastructure, meeting their economic potential in the most sustainable way to support better self-containment.

6.1.3 Box is identified as being a 'Large Village'. The policy states that development at Large and Small Villages will be limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities.

6.1.4 **Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy** – this policy states that In line with Core Policy 1, the delivery strategy seeks to deliver development in Wiltshire between 2006 and 2026 in the most sustainable manner by making provision for at least 178 Ha of new employment land and at least 42,000 homes.

6.1.5 **Core Policy 11: Spatial Strategy for the Corsham Community Area** – this policy states that over the plan period (2006 to 2026), approximately 1,395 homes will be provided, of which about 1,220 should occur at Corsham. Approximately 175 homes will be provided in the rest of the Community Area. Growth in the Corsham Community Area over the plan period may consist of a range of sites in accordance with Core Policies 1 and 2.

6.1.6 **Core Policy 45: Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs** – this policy states that new housing, both market and affordable, must be well designed to address local housing need incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes to create mixed and balanced communities. Housing size and type, including any distinction between flats and houses, will be expected to reflect that of the demonstrable need for the community within which a site is located.

6.1.7 **Core Policy 48: Supporting Rural Life** – this policy states that outside the defined limits of development of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages, and outside the existing built areas of Small Villages, proposals for residential development will be supported where these meet the accommodation needs required to enable workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work in the interests of

agriculture or forestry or other employment essential to the countryside. Proposals for accommodation to meet the needs of employment essential to the countryside should be supported by functional and financial evidence. Residential development will not normally be permitted in the countryside unless it meets the requirements of Core Policy 44 (Rural Exceptions Sites). However, additional dwellings may be justified in certain circumstances when they are required in the interests of supporting rural employment, for example in association with equestrian activities when worker accommodation is needed onsite. In view of the exceptional circumstances, applications will be scrutinised thoroughly and opportunities for accommodation within nearby settlements must be considered initially.

6.1.8 **Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – this policy states that development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

6.1.9 All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

6.2 The Cotswolds National Landscape Monitoring Plan

6.2.1 The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan (CNL) (adopted February 2025) is a statutory plan which sets out policies for the management of the National Landscape. The following policies have been taken from the CNL and are to be considered to be relevant to the determination of this Full planning application:

- Policy CE1: Landscape
- Policy CE8: Nature Recovery and Biodiversity

6.2.2 **Policy CE1: Landscape** – this policy states that proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the location, as described by the CNL Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment.

6.2.3 Proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the CNL, should seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the scenic quality of the location and its setting, views, including those into and out of the National Landscape and visual amenity.

6.2.4 **Policy CE8: Nature Recovery and Biodiversity** – this policy states that biodiversity (including the abundance of wildlife) in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be conserved and enhanced by establishing a coherent and resilient nature recovery network across the CNL and in its setting.

7. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

7.1.1 Legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) require that planning applications are to be decided in accordance with the statutory development plan for an area unless other material planning considerations indicate otherwise. As a matter of policy, the Government has stated in the NPPF (Paragraph 11) that this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay.

7.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated in December 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of Local Plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following have been taken into consideration when assessing the development:

- Part 2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Part 5: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
- Part 13: Protecting Green Belt Land
- Part 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

7.1.3 **Part 2: Achieving Sustainable Development** – Paragraph 7 states that The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Paragraph 8 later states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful, and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

7.1.4 Paragraph 11 concludes that so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. With

regards to decision-taking, Paragraph 11(c) states that development proposals should be approved where they accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

- 7.1.5 **Part 5: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes** – Paragraph 61 states that to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet an area’s identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
- 7.1.6 Subsequent Paragraph 63 mentions that, within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 7.1.7 Later, Paragraph 82 states that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.
- 7.1.8 Finally, Paragraph 84 states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply:
- a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 7.1.9 **Part 13: Protecting Green Belt Land** – Paragraph 142 states that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Later, Paragraph 153 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness.
- 7.1.10 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 7.1.11 Furthermore, Paragraph 154 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the following exceptions applies:
- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
 - b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
 - i. mineral extraction;
 - ii. engineering operations;
 - iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
 - iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
 - iv. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
 - v. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

7.1.12 **Part 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment** – Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

7.1.13 In addition, Paragraph 190 states that when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational

d) opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

- 7.1.14 However, Footnote 67 is clear in that whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

8. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

8.1 The Principle of Development

- 8.1.1 The starting point for assessing the principle of development of the proposed development (as part of this application) is against the requirements and provisions of the Development Plan. The application site is located within the outskirts of Box, Wiltshire, and is outside a defined Settlement Boundary. Furthermore, the site is neither allocated nor identified within the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. Accordingly, it is acknowledged that the proposed development is not supported by the provisions of Core Policy 1, which sets out the overarching spatial strategy for development in the District.
- 8.1.2 However, the National Planning Policy Framework (or NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 8.1.3 Furthermore, Paragraph 61 of the NPPF advises that in order to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, and that the needs of specific groups are addressed. Later, Paragraph 82 states that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs, including proposals for community-led development for housing.
- 8.1.4 Paragraph 84(a) states that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 8.1.5 This understanding is shared with Core Policy 48 which states that outside the defined limits of development of the Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages, and outside the existing built areas of Small Villages, proposals for residential development will be supported where these meet the accommodation needs required to enable workers to live at or in the immediate vicinity of their place of work in the interests of agriculture or forestry or other employment essential to the countryside.
- 8.1.6 Proposals for accommodation to meet the needs of employment essential to the countryside should be supported by functional and financial evidence. Residential development will not normally be permitted in the countryside unless it meets the requirements of Core Policy 44 (Rural Exceptions Sites). However, additional dwellings may be justified in certain circumstances when they are required in the interests of supporting rural employment, for example in association with equestrian activities when worker accommodation is needed onsite.
- 8.1.7 A functional need can exist where there is a requirement for a worker to be on hand day and night in case the housed animals require essential care at short notice (i.e., on welfare grounds). Soho Grange Stud presently own four horses for the purposes of breeding, all of which are broodmares who currently reside within the Stud. Their existing stock are either kept within the stables on site or within the field shelters on additional land. The business specialises in the breeding, rearing, training, and selling of sport horses primarily for dressage and competition.

At present, the Stud breeds three sport horses each year however, they are looking to expand on this operation through purchasing, at least, an additional three new broodmares. **Appendix A** of this document provides greater detail into the process of horse breeding. However, it is considered that a functional need is currently present.

- 8.1.8 The critical period for a mare is between five to eight weeks into pregnancy; this is because the mare's system is especially susceptible to abortion at this time. Likewise, the first three to four weeks in the life of the foal are the most critical period. It is exceptionally vulnerable and susceptible to disease during this time and so sustained observation is paramount. There are many ailments, illnesses and abnormalities that can occur in foals - all will need immediate action and require constant supervision.
- 8.1.9 A separate Business Plan and associated Accounts information has been submitted as part of this application. It demonstrates that over the last three years, the Stud has operated at a profit and is expected to continue doing so over the next three years. Furthermore, the Stud has a clear vision and plan for growth in place to ensure that the Stud remains viable for the foreseeable future. It is therefore considered that the development proposal conforms to this requirement.
- 8.1.10 In order to ensure the successful continuation of this rural business, the Stud will require a Stud Manager (a role to be taken on by Julie Regnard) who shall be employed on a Full-Time basis and will reside in the log cabin.
- 8.1.11 Whilst the site does benefit from the provision of existing buildings, in the form of a barn and equestrian stabling, such infrastructure is deemed necessary for the purposes and continual operation of the business. Therefore, these buildings are not considered to be either available or capable for conversion. Furthermore, there is no existing dwelling on site which can be utilised.
- 8.1.12 As mentioned previously, residential development in this location is not uncommon, with the nearest dwelling being located approximately 95 metres north-east. Additional dwellings are set out along the road of Ashely Lane. Furthermore, the log cabin is to measure 15m x 6.8m in size and would conform to the dimensions that are stated within The Caravan Sites Act 1968. For these reasons, the proposed log cabin is considered to be more than appropriate to its need in delivering accommodation and would be relative to the functional requirements of the business.
- 8.1.13 Finally, the log cabin's occupation would be restricted to that of a rural worker and their family. The Applicant is happy to accept an appropriately worded condition to that effect.

8.2 The Cotswold National Landscape

- 8.2.1 As noted previously, the application site is located within the Cotswolds Natural Landscape (formerly AONB).
- 8.2.2 Paragraph 189 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
- 8.2.3 In addition, Paragraph 190 states that when considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major

development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational
- d) opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

8.2.4 However, Footnote 67 is clear in that whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

8.2.5 It should be made clear that the proposed development has only be tipped into the 'Major' category because of the statutory requirement to provide +10% Biodiversity Net Gain. Without this, the site area would only be 0.48 Ha. Therefore, taking Footnote 67 into account and given the proposed scope and scale of development, it is not believed that the application should be regarded as a 'major' development as its implementation would not result in a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

8.2.6 Policy CE1 of the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan states that proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the location, as described by the CNL Board's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

8.2.7 The application site is understood to be within the 'Enclosed Limestone Valley' character type and the 'Lower By Brook Valley' landscape character area.

8.2.8 The Enclosed Limestone Valleys are characterised by moderately broad, steep sided river valleys separated by areas of Low Limestone Plateaux and High Wold Dip-Slope. The physical enclosure of the valleys and relatively sparse settlement patterns has resulted in a secluded character. However, in some areas transportation routes along the valley floor give the valleys a busier and more developed character. Land cover within the valleys is a combination of both arable and pastoral use, although arable land is more frequently found on lower slopes where growing conditions are more hospitable and soils are deeper.

8.2.9 The Lower By Brook Valley Character Area is located to the east of the Lam Brook and St Catherine's Brook Character Area. The valley is drained by the Lower By Brook, which flows south-westwards to join the River Avon at Batheaston. Smaller tributaries such as Lid Brook flow into the watercourse creating an indented landform. The main valley is fairly broad, with narrower tributary valleys. Land use is a combination of both arable and pastoral land, although the latter predominates. The medium sized irregular fields are enclosed with hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees in some areas. Woodland within the valley is sparse, although where it does occur it is generally confined to the upper slopes and valley rims.

- 8.2.10 The settlements of Box, Box Hill and Ashley have developed along the valley slopes south of the A4 and are connected by a network of minor roads along which scattered dwellings are also located.
- 8.2.11 Taking into account the above, the proposed equestrian use would not result in harm to the character, appearance or special qualities of the Natural Landscape. Equestrian activity is inherently rural in nature and is widely recognised as a land use that sits comfortably within countryside settings, where agricultural and pastoral activities form a defining component of the landscape. In this instance, the use would utilise existing land and facilities where equestrian activity has already been established, and would not introduce incongruous development, urbanising features or materially alter the existing landscape pattern. As such, the proposal would preserve the open, rural character of the site and its wider setting, ensuring that the scenic beauty and landscape qualities of the Natural Landscape are conserved in accordance with national and local planning policy.

8.3 Residential Amenity

- 8.3.1 As set out previously, residential development in this location is not uncommon, with the nearest existing dwelling being located approximately 95 metres to the north-east. Additional dwellings are set out along the road of Ashley Lane in a traditional linear / ribbon form. Furthermore, the site is considered to have an established equestrian use, given the presence of an existing equestrian barn. Taking this into account, it is therefore not considered that the development proposal would cause harm to the residential amenity of existing (or proposed) occupiers both now and in the future. Furthermore, the proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that the proposed rural worker's dwelling achieves appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and natural light.
- 8.3.2 For these reasons, the proposed development is therefore not considered to result in a detrimental impact to the amenity of neighbouring amenity.

8.4 Ecology

- 8.4.1 A Preliminary Ecological Survey (PEA) was carried out by Seasons Ecology and has been submitted in support of this planning application.
- 8.4.2 Modified Grassland is the dominant habitat on site, occupying the majority of the field unit. The grass was horse-grazed and was of varying sward heights at the time of survey and moderate poaching was evident across the grassland. Located in the south corner of the field unit, this area contains some Neutral Grassland with varied sward height as the modified grassland.
- 8.4.3 The west boundary comprises a line of black poplar *Populus nigra* trees along the north end, with a line of mature sycamore trees along the south end. The west end of the north boundary supports a tree line comprising two mature small-leaved limes, each containing PRF-I features in the form of dense ivy coverage, five mature horse chestnut trees, each containing PRF-I features, and one beech also containing PRF-I features.
- 8.4.4 The site is a moderately-sized field unit, compared with the surrounding arable and pasture fields, and is approximately 3.9 hectares in size. It contains one stable building, modified grassland, other neutral grassland, hedgerows with trees and lines of trees. It supports generally low habitat diversity, elevated by the boundary hedgerows and trees. Modified

grassland and other neutral grassland are the dominant habitats, which support a low to moderate diversity of species. The hedgerows are all species-rich and fulfil the criteria for Priority Habitat hedgerows.

- 8.4.5 The site forms part of the wider rural landscape of arable and pasture fields and is typical within this context with no rare or notable habitats recorded on site. The mature hedgerows and trees bordering the site, offer elements of naturalness, permanence and fragility, which is otherwise absent. The hedgerows and trees connect to the wider rural landscape.
- 8.4.6 The site has value beyond the immediate Zone of Influence and is assessed as Local value, provided by the hedgerows and trees, which contribute to the wider network of habitats.
- 8.4.7 The stable building on site offers Negligible suitability to roosting bats, with a very low number of suitable features identified, either being of unsuitable construction and/or being partially exposed to the weather. Internally, although access is provided through gaps in the cladding and around the doorways, there is no suitable roosting habitat or crevices, and the area is well-lit and experiences frequent disturbance.
- 8.4.8 The following protection measures prior to and during construction should be implemented:
- In the area of the works, maintain the grassland as a short sward up to the commencement of construction.
 - Install protection fencing surrounding hedgerows and trees prior to any works, including bringing construction materials and heavy machinery onto the site.
 - During construction, any trenches left open overnight should include a means of escape for animals. A plank angled from the bottom to the top of the trench, will allow animals (such as hedgehog and badger) to escape.
 - Noisy machinery should cease one hour before sunset to minimise any disturbance to wildlife.
 - In the event of a protected species being discovered at any stage during the works, then works should stop and advice sought from an Ecologist.
- 8.4.9 The proposal provides opportunity to enhance biodiversity on the site. The following biodiversity features are considered appropriate to the type and scale of the proposal:
- **Roosting bats** – Two bat boxes could be attached to, or built-in to the new extension to the stable building. These should be located on a south-east, south-west or south-facing elevation at a height of between 3m and 5m off the ground. These have been provided.
 - **Nesting birds** - Two bird boxes could be attached to, or built-in to the new extension to the stable building. These should be located on a north or east-facing elevation at a height of between 1.5m and 2m off the ground. These have been provided.
 - New habitat creation will be required to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain, and a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan implemented for new habitats.

8.5 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 8.5.1 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (or BNG) is a mandatory requirement under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of + 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.
- 8.5.2 The proposed development is to provide the necessary Biodiversity Net Gain through the planting of 0.0835 Ha of Traditional Orchard to the south of the development as well as 0.0692 Ha of existing modified grassland which will be enhanced to achieve 'Other Neutral Grassland' in the north of the site.
- 8.5.3 This will result in a total net gain of **+10.18%** Habitat Units. These measures contribute to long-term ecological benefits, align with the Local Plan's green infrastructure and sustainability objectives, and offer additional benefits such as improved air quality through increased tree planting and helping with climate change mitigation.

9. THE HORSE INDUSTRY

9.1 Industry Facts and Figures

- 9.1.1 The Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales (The Strategy), published in December 2005, was prepared by the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC) in partnership with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and Welsh Assembly.
- 9.1.2 In its Ministerial Foreword, it states that: Government recognise the major contribution which the horse industry makes to the economy, and the important role that horses play in the lives of so many people in both cities and rural areas across England and Wales. The Strategy gives some estimates of horse industry figures:
- Its gross output is £3.4 billion.
 - It employs up to 250,000 people directly and indirectly.
 - 2.4 million people ride.
 - 11 million people have some interest in the horse industry.
 - The horse population in the UK totals nearly 1 million.

9.2 British Equestrian Federation (BEF)

- 9.2.1 The BEF was set up as the senior co-ordinator body for the British Horse Society and the British Show Jumping Association. Affiliated to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the BEF represents the sports of Show Jumping, Eventing, Dressage, Horse Driving Trials, Endurance, Vaulting, and Reining.
- 9.2.2 The BEF plays an important role in representing the common interests of its member bodies to organisations such as the British Olympic Association, Sports Aid Foundation, and several others.
- 9.2.3 The BEF published the 'Facilities Strategy for Equestrian Sport and Recreation' (the Facilities Strategy) in May 2006.
- 9.2.4 Under the heading of Planning, The Facilities Strategy states that: The BEF, through the British Horse Society, Association of British Riding Schools alongside the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will work to:
- Urge Local Authorities to take a more sympathetic view towards criteria for equine development.
 - Actively support and lobby for any application considered to be of regional/national significance that has stemmed from this strategy.
- 9.2.5 The BEF published the 'Facilities Strategy' to assist facility operators, funding bodies, landowners, local authorities, education establishments, voluntary sector organisations national organisations and other relevant bodies in the strategic planning and improvement of sustainable facilities that best meet the development and competition needs of the sport at all levels. It is available in full, from the BEF.

9.3 Sport England

- 9.3.1 Sport England is the government agency responsible for the foundations of sporting success, by creating a world leading community sport system of clubs, coaches, facilities, and volunteers. They want to create a vibrant sporting culture working in partnership with national governing bodies, the HE/FE sector, local government, and community organisations. In 2008 Sport England launched a new strategy entitled 'Grow, Sustain, Excel: Sport England Strategy 2008-2011' This Strategy was written to make at most of the unparalleled opportunities presented by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- 9.3.2 Sport England states that it is committed to working closely with local authorities as they are the main providers of local facilities and opportunities. Riding is one of several sports recognised by Sport England.

9.4 Importance of Sport and Recreation

- 9.4.1 Councils will generally support the provision of sport and recreational facilities where this is consistent with planning policy. Central Government guidance emphasises the importance of sport and recreation both to society and the economy and as contributors to individual health and sense of wellbeing and to civic and national pride. It aims to promote sport and recreation, encourage participation and the provision of a wide range of facilities for all sectors of the population.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1.1 This Design & Access and Planning Statement forms part of a Full-Application to support the erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn, the erection of an outdoor riding manège, the siting of a temporary rural worker's dwelling for the period of 3-years, in association with the breeding of horses and the erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer on land at Soho Grange Stud, Box.
- 10.1.2 The full site address is as follows:
- Soho Grange Stud, Ashley Lane, Box, Wiltshire, SN13 8AN.**
- 10.1.3 The proposed development is set to consist of the following:
- The erection of an extension to the existing equestrian barn.
 - The erection of an outdoor riding manège.
 - The siting of a temporary log cabin for an essential rural worker.
 - The erection of an enclosure for the muck heap trailer.
 - Associated landscaping and BNG improvements.
- 10.1.4 Each aspect of the proposed development is necessary to support the successful operation of the existing equestrian stud business, who specialises in the breeding, rearing, training, and selling of horses.
- 10.1.5 Once a Planning Officer has been allocated to this application, we can directly send across a copy of the Business Plan and associated Accountancy documentation which should be read in conjunction with this application.
- 10.1.6 As has been demonstrated throughout this Statement, any impacts arising from the proposed development have been suitably mitigated through the design and provision of specific measures identified within the supporting material.
- 10.1.7 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with National planning policy and the adopted local Development Plan and should be granted permission by the LPA without delay.