(i) **Procedural Matters**

The proposed development would normally fall within the scheme of delegation. However, Councillor Susie Charles has requested it be referred to the Planning Committee for a decision on grounds that the development is necessary for a rural business and it does not impact on the landscape.

1.0 **The Site and its Surroundings**

1.1 The application relates to a mixed use site at Berrys Farm, immediately adjacent to Conder Green Lane, located approximately 1.3 kilometres to the west of Galgate. The residential dwellings, holiday units and caravan site are accessed via single width compacted stone tracks. The existing building group of the site, approximately 60 metres to the west of the proposed development, contains three two-story traditional agricultural buildings and a more recent agricultural building of a similar height. The site’s ownership is split between the applicant and the sibling of the applicant, but operated jointly as a single site.

1.2 The site is located within the Countryside Area as identified on the Local Plan proposals map. The majority of the site and the proposed development is within Flood Zone 3.

2.0 **The Proposal**

2.1 The application proposes the development of a detached reception office building at the entrance to the site. The proposal comprises a pre-fabricated brown stained timber boarding structure under a dark felted tile roof. The structure proposed is approximately 3.05 metres by 3.66 metres, with an eaves height of approximately 2.77 metres and a ridge height of 3.3 metres. The proposed development includes a 450mm raised plinth base, approximately 4.5 metres by 3.84 metres, as precaution against flooding.

3.0 **Site History**

3.1 Site planning history includes the approval of the change of use from barns to holiday units, and the approval of the change of use of agricultural land to a commercial fishing lake. The latter permission
was not implemented and has now expired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Number</th>
<th>Proposal</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/00416/CU</td>
<td>Application for change of use and conversion of barn to two holiday units</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/00664/CU</td>
<td>Change of use and conversion of farm buildings to two holiday units</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/01227FUL</td>
<td>Change of use of agricultural land to form commercial fishing lake</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/00024/CU</td>
<td>Change of use of agricultural land to form commercial fishing lake</td>
<td>Approved but not implemented (consent now expired)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultee</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish Council</td>
<td>No observations received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>No objections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural England</td>
<td>No observations received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Highways</td>
<td>No highway objections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 One objection received based on the proposed position of the building in a conspicuous and noticeable location away from the existing building group and close to the road and entrance. Caravans stopping outside the proposed reception office would potentially block the entrance to the site.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Paragraph 17 – Core planning principles  
Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy  
Section 7 – Requiring good design  
Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

6.2 Development Management DPD  
DM7 – Economic Development in Rural Areas  
DM9 – Diversification of the Rural Economy  
DM14 – Caravan Sites, Chalets & Log Cabins  
DM28 – Development and Landscape Impact  
DM35 – Key Design Principles  
DM38 – Development & Flood Risk Development and Flood Risk

6.3 Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)  
SC1 – Sustainable Development  
SC3 – Rural Communities  
SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design  
ER6 – Developing Tourism  
E1 – Environmental Capital

6.4 Lancaster District Local Plan Saved Policies  
E4 – Countryside Area
7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The key considerations arising from the proposal are:
- Principle of the development;
- Design and siting, and associated landscape impact;
- Highway implications;
- Residential amenity; and
- Flood risk

7.2 Principle of the Development
The application site is between Conder Green and Galgate in a predominantly agricultural area of countryside. The site is a former farm holding that has been converted to four holiday homes, with a certificated caravan and camping site allowing for 5 caravans and 10 tents to use the site. The proposal development will support a small rural business, however it cannot be considered as agricultural diversification as the farming use of the site has ceased. As such, the proposal will not be supporting an agricultural business. The application seeks consent to construct a detached reception and office building with attached CCTV camera to supplement the caravan and camping use of the site, to improve the management, directions and security of the site. Although it is accepted that caravan and camping sites often require office areas and security measures, a detached reception and office building is considered disproportionate to facilitate a small site accommodating a maximum of 5 caravans and 10 tents at any given time. The principle of a development divorced from the existing building group and adjacent to the road fronting entrance of the site is considered an unacceptably prominent location.

7.3 Design and siting, and associated landscape impact

7.3.1 The second criteria of Development Management DPD policy DM14 states:

“Proposals for new static and touring caravan sites, or the extension of an existing site will be supported in principle within the district and outside of areas of designated landscape importance, in appropriate locations and to an appropriate scale, subject to the following criteria:

II. The proposed development has no adverse impact upon the landscape character or significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the locality, and includes satisfactory proposals for additional landscaping where required.”

Development Management DPD policy DM28 states:

Outside of protected landscapes the council will support development which is in scale and keeping with the landscape character and which are appropriate to its surroundings in terms of siting, design, materials, external appearance and landscaping.

7.3.2 The application site is immediately adjacent to the highway and entrance to the site, in a prominent and visible location. The landscape impact of the proposal is exacerbated by the fact that the structure is sited approximately 60 metres away from any other building. Although the modest size, sympathetic materials and flexibility in colours and finish of the proposal would reduce the potential visual impact of the development, this does not overcome the unsuitable conspicuous siting of the proposal. Considering the close proximity to the highway and site entrance, and the isolation of the proposed structure from the existing building group or landscape screening, the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the landscape characteristic of the countryside area. As a consequence, the proposed development is contrary to Policies DM14, DM28 and DM35 of the Development Management DPD and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Section 7 and the Core Planning Principles contained in Paragraph 17.

7.3.3 Following a site visit, the agent for the application was contacted to discuss alternatives to the proposal that would be considered suitable for this site and proportionate to the use, with an extension to the associated residential property at Berrys Farm to accommodate additional office space considered an acceptable solution. However, as the application is partially retrospective, with the plinth development already constructed, the agent was unwilling to discuss amendments to the siting of the proposed development. The agent indicated a willingness to amend the plans to introduce planting to screen the proposal, however no further details or amendments have been provided. Planting to screen the proposal would have to be carefully considered by County Highways, as screening in close proximity to the highway could have an adverse impact upon
visibility at the site’s access. In addition, under Condition 10 of permission 09/00024/CU at this site, the height of the boundary treatment was restricted to 1 metre tall within 2.4 metres back from the centre of the access junction with the highway, in the interest of highway safety.

7.4 **Highway Implications**

The objection raised from the neighbour representation reiterated the above points regarding the conspicuous location of the proposed development, but also expressed concern regarding the effect of potential queuing of site visitors at the entrance. If a visitor to the site parks outside the proposed reception office building whilst checking into the caravan and camping site, this may temporarily block the entrance, which is also accessed by the residential properties and holiday units on site. This could create a queue onto Conder Green Road, which operates at the national speed limit. This raises a question over the functionality as well as the visual impact of the proposed reception office being immediately adjacent to the entrance of the site. However, the Highway Authority has raised no objections to the original proposal of the reception and office building.

7.5 **Residential Amenity**

The proposed development is not seen to have any adverse or detrimental implications upon the residential amenity. The proposal is a modest size and detached from the residential properties on site by 60 metres, and will not be visible or overlooking any off-site residencies.

7.6 **Flooding**

The entire site is within Flood Zone 3, including the existing building group. The proposed use is defined as less vulnerable to flooding and appropriate to Flood Zone 3. The required sequential test has not been provided on the basis that there is no available alternative location within the site not at risk from flooding. The design of the proposal includes a 0.45m tall plinth and all power points would be at least 1m above floor level to safeguard the development from flooding. As such, it is not considered that there will be unacceptable risks of flooding to users of the development. The proposed development does not contravene policy DM38 of the Development Management DPD or the provisions of Section 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 **Planning Obligations**

8.1 There are no planning obligations to consider as part of this application.

9.0 **Conclusions**

9.1 Supporting business development and the visitor economy in rural areas is an objective of both the Development Management DPD and National Planning Policy Framework, however development should be appropriate to the site and limit the detrimental impact on the surrounding area. The proposed development of a detached reception office building is considered disproportionate to support a caravan and camp site business that can accommodate a maximum of 5 caravans and 10 tents. The prominent siting of the proposal isolated from the existing building group and immediately adjacent to the site entrance and the highway is conspicuous. The proposal cannot be adequately and sensitively mitigated through design, materials or screening to prevent visual intrusion on the countryside landscape. Although the proposed development is modest in size and materials are sympathetic, this does not adequately mitigate the visual sensitive siting of the proposal, unassociated with the existing building group in a prominent location. Development in unsuitable locations should not be encouraged or permitted based on the scale or use of the proposal. Therefore, the application is recommended for refusal.

**Recommendation**

That Planning Permission BE REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application site lies within the Countryside Area, with the proposed reception office building development detached from the existing building group. The prominent siting of the proposal will create a significant and detrimental visual impact upon the landscape, eroding the countryside character of the area. The prominent siting of the proposal isolated from the building group means that the development cannot be adequately and sensitively mitigated through design, materials or screening to prevent visual intrusion on the countryside landscape. As such, the proposal is contrary to the provisions of Policies DM14, DM28 and DM35 of the Development Management DPD and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, especially Section 7 and the Core Planning
Principles contained in Paragraph 17.


In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm the following:

Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been made having regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the officer report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance.

**Human Rights Act**

This recommendation has been reached after consideration of the provisions of The Human Rights Act. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the issues arising do not appear to be of such magnitude to override the responsibility of the City Council to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

**Background Papers**

None